

services we could offer is to provide advisement and training to local building inspectors. Matt is co-author of the California building code and can provide guidance and interpretation of the Vermont building code.

Dorian commented that the challenge in this area is political and cultural, not technical. People here are very leery of what they see as infringements on their private rights and property. Therefore the important aspect is education, including finding ways to convey to people that they will save money using energy-efficient standards, and their homes will be worth more should they choose to sell them.

Matt previously met with the Thetford group, which is advocating for use of “HERS ratings” to ensure compliance (see www.resnet.us/about/hers-index-and-energy-codes/). Matt feels that this approach adds complications and expense and even the requirement that the home must be better than code. There are very few HERS raters in our region.

A very effective mechanism to consider promoting is a “point-of-sale energy effectiveness” evaluation for new houses or houses on the market for resale, with detailed criteria and a score. The “home energy score” is a Department of Energy evaluative tool (www.energy.gov/eere/buildings/articles/home-energy-score).

Jenevra is going to represent Woodstock on this project committee, because she’s particularly interested in developing standards that will improve efficiency for rentals. Jenevra asked Matt if he could come speak to the group working on this, even if he doesn’t have time to be our group’s representative on this subcommittee.

David wonders if there could be an opportunity with seven towns to share a couple of inspectors for energy evaluations. It would be nice to have a voluntary process where people felt motivated to try and improve their score, even with a competitive verve.

Matt says that he can be our representative for the building code subcommittee.

Dorian addressed the question of dissemination of the information provided by Green Buying Guide group, then we could approach stores in our community to carry the products recommended.

4. Community Solar project:

Doc reported that according to current sign-ups (twenty investors, eleven or twelve from Strafford), the array is “sold out.” Some people are still in their consideration process, but Catamount is prepared to go ahead with contracts — ordering modules and scheduling the racking company. The utility will be installing switching equipment.

There is some urgency, since any solar installation not permitted by September 1 will pay an additional 2 cents per kilowatt-hour. Also, lead-times are horrendous now in every industry, Doc says, and this is affecting solar as well.

This is the last year for a 26% federal tax credit; next year will be 22%. There is hope that Biden will extend the current level of tax credit.

People are no longer as “warm and fuzzy” about Green Mountain Power. Rates are going up, and this makes the payback sooner.

A benefit for us in being an LLC and working with the Law School’s Energy Clinic is that the legal and permit-application work was done by them, which meant that Catamount didn’t have those expenses. The only drawback was that new students cycled in each semester and they needed time to get oriented.

Geoff Martin also did a lot of legwork on this project.

5. Discussion of activities by other subcommittee area:

* State Legislature: Susan reported that there are two opportunities to hear from the Democratic candidates for the August primary: one for State Representative candidates (**Thursday, July 14, 6:30–8 pm via Zoom:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88569751764?pwd=cwseQTSY4NWDhwGPEzlkYdra6uOz7g.1#success>
(ID: 88569751764, passcode: 848233);

The other is for US Congress and state Lt. Governor candidates (**July 17, 2022, 3:00 to 5:00 pm at the Strafford Town House**).

Susan did not find anything local for Republican, but you can check out Republican events here:

www.vtgop.org/dynamicventpage

Susan also just received an announcement that Vermont is going to do a comprehensive review of Vermont's renewable energy programs.

And she reported that Stuart Blood of Thetford has written an analysis of the Ryegate power plant, which burns wood and generates as much pollution as a coal plant.

* Agriculture, forestry: Dorian reported that after summer when the nights get longer, she's interested in organizing a TREES reading group, inviting people to read and discuss a book each month.

* Education & Communications: Jim reminded the committee that we received an inquiry from *Valley News* environment reporter Frances Mize about our group's current activities. **ACTION ITEM: Dorian will reply, and if Frances would like more detail, Dorian will refer her to Doc, David, or Matt.**

Adjourned: 8:12 pm Next Meeting: August 9, 2022, 7 pm via ZOOM

Enthusiastically submitted by Jim Schley, Recording Secretary