

MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 15, 2015 STRAFFORD SELECTBOARD – Special Informational Meeting on Renewal Energy Credits /Vermont’s Energy Policy & Large Scale Solar Sites Like Elizabeth Mine Solar 1

Members of the public body present: John Freitag, Toni Pippy, Brian Johnson

Absent: Brent Cadwell and Stephen Marx

Other active participants: Kerry Claffey, Town Moderator; Kevin B. Johns, Professor of Energy Technology and head of Energy Clinic and Greg Freeman of Vermont Law School; Chris Recchia, Commissioner, Vermont Public Service Department; Dori Wolfe, Wolfe Energy; Ron Kelly and Julia Chase of Brightfields Development LLC; Dorothy Schnure, Spokesperson for Green Mountain Power (GMP); State Representatives Jim Masland and Tim Briglin; State Senator Mark MacDonald

Over fifty attendants from the public (see attached).

Meeting called to order in Barrett Hall at 7:05 p.m.

John, welcomed everyone and outlined the purpose of the meeting. He said, “The reason we are here tonight is that at the last Informational Meeting and in the proposal by the developers a crucial part of this project was not presented to the Selectboard or people of Strafford. It was not until after the Selectboard voted on sending a letter of support that we found this project would not be going “to meet Vermont's renewable energy needs” as presented by the developers in their formal proposal, but that between 80% to 90% of the renewable energy credits would be sold to other states. The Selectboard after realizing this project would not as we had been led to believe have an impact reducing the need to build other solar sites on Vermont agricultural or forestland voted to condition our continued support on 100% of the Renewable Energy Credits (REC's) going to meet Vermont's renewable energy requirements. The Selectboard also decided that another Informational Meeting was needed to cover what had been previously left out of the discussion for both ourselves and the public.” He turned the meeting over to Kerry Claffey, Town Moderator.

The first to speak was Professor Jones. He and law student Greg Freeman outlined how renewable energy credits work. His main point was that selling the renewable energy credits out of state would end up with the facility in Vermont producing renewable energy to meet the requirements of other states and not towards the Vermont requirements. Vermont in turn must buy other power, mostly from coal and nuclear to meet its own energy needs. His presentation will be posted on the Town Website, [www.straffordvt.org](http://www.straffordvt.org) under the Energy Committee section. After a question and answer session on the presentation, our legislators gave their perspectives. Senator Mark MacDonald and Representative Jim Masland made the point that the purpose of selling the RECs was to stimulate the industry and get more solar facilities built. Commissioner Chris Recchia of the Public Service Department emphasized that even if the renewable energy did not get credited to Vermont, it was still renewable energy and a benefit towards helping address climate change. He added that selling the REC's also helps keep Vermont ratepayer’s bills down as solar renewable energy is much more expensive than the Canadian hydro power that makes up the largest share of Vermont’s renewable energy portfolio. He compared selling solar credits to other states is like selling maple syrup from Vermont to people from down country. Dotty Schnure from Green Mountain Power spoke about the need to balance competing needs. She said that eventually the solar facilities in Vermont would have to sell their REC's in state when new lines taking renewable hydro power from Canada are able to be used in the lower New England states and there needs to be a phase in of the more expensive solar power. There will be increased costs to Vermont ratepayers when this happens. Ron Kelly, from Brightfields one of the developers for Elizabeth Mine Solar 1, spoke on how Massachusetts requires that to meet the renewable energy from solar power it must be done with instate solar power projects, therefore there is solar development being done in that state as well. There were many good questions as people tried to get a handle on the complexities of how the energy market works. In summing up John Freitag spoke of the need for better communication on the cost and benefits and better planning on how much and where large scale solar takes place. Selectboard member Toni Pippy expressed her frustration at

how little control the Town has over telecommunication and energy projects in our community. Janet Cavanaugh asked if the Board would reconsider tonight its decision to condition base its support for the project on the renewable energy being used to meet Vermont needs. John said that the Board would consider all that has been said but no decision would be made tonight. He thanked all who had presented that night and all who came to listen and to learn more about the issue. Another hearing will be held by the Public Service Board on the Elizabeth Mine Solar 1 Project sometime in the next few months. Brian made a motion which was seconded by Toni to adjourn the Informational Meeting at 9:11 p.m. All agreed and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Toni M. Pippy