

Action Item: Dorian will ask Toni Pippy if the Selectboard chose to apply for ARPA (federal recovery) grant in the current round. **The Town will be getting ARPA money but not sure how it will be spent yet.**

Dorian reported on Town Office planning committee. They acknowledged a need to incorporate energy-efficiency and ecological materials, in keeping with our town's resolution. David added that they are considering higher ground, not the present site; and David suggested a mixed-use plan that would incorporate residences, which would generate revenue and better utilize a space for more time each day.

When we resume meeting in person: Barrett Hall is available for no charge, and the library is also available for meeting.

3. Doc report on Community solar: SB and PC joint special meeting. There were two people who objected to the Route 132 site and one person objected to the Alger Brook Road site (concerns raised included decommissioning costs; noise from inverters; and tree-cutting, and these were addressed).

Both sites were approved by the Planning Commission and both were approved by the Selectboard as "preferred sites," which earns a greater return per watt and also expedites the permitting process.

There are fourteen abutters to the 132 site, and only 4 for the Alger Brook site (all of whom were enthusiastic), so the Law School favors proceeding with the Orgains' lease first; also 3-phase hookup on 132 would be more expensive than the single phase on Alger Brook Road; and Sandy wanted a yearly payment while the Orgains would like a share on the array. The contractor will be Catamount Solar, who is willing to pay a per-watt rate and for now not be involved in the marketing aspect (the renewable energy credits). There is a lease agreement being drawn up and an engineering plan is being developed; also the state is rechecking that the brook won't be affected. For ten years, this site will pay 13 cents per kilowatt hour.

4. Preliminary discussion of what "net zero" means for our future goals and in response to Rett's questions: How do solar projects in our town, privately or publicly owned, count toward our town's zero-emissions goals? One thought is that the copper mine array, even though owned by a company outside of Strafford, counts in our figures. We also discussed the possibility that a Strafford resident purchasing a share of a renewable energy source outside of our town would count towards our goal. If the town supports a solar array and residents outside of Strafford participate then does that count toward our zero emission goal? Conversely, and hypothetically, what if a Strafford resident owns a large offset in Wyoming, for example? So just speaking for myself, I believe these seemingly simple questions should be answered definitively before I would support a process funded by the town." Geoff Martin responded that it's up to the town to decide how to count steps toward goals; his strong recommendation that we only count generation occurring within town and where the Renewable Energy Credits are retired here, not sold as a credit to users elsewhere. If someone buys a share in a community solar elsewhere, that's beneficial in other ways, but can't be credited to Strafford's goal-meeting measuring.

Matt advocated being precise and narrow in order to make the accounting really clear and clean and transparent.

ACTION ITEM: Jim will work with Matt and also Geof Martin to make a statement for the committee on this issue as an advisement to the Selectboard and a response to Rett Emerson's good questions. Dorian asked that we acknowledge the other benefits for supporting and investing in renewable energy beyond meeting Strafford's resolution's goal of net-zero within ten years.

5. Monday, August 16th special Planning Commission meeting re: Town Enhanced Energy Plan (EEP), this time properly warned. Current plan is to meet both at the Homestead education center in person and on Zoom. Dorian has asked Tory Littlefield for TRORC for the version that will be discussed, which includes some additional maps. Dorian will be at the meeting.

6. August Webinar/presentation update and designation of who is posting:

Wed, Aug 4: David on EVs was postponed. After August 17: better in September?
 Wed, Aug 18: Matt on heat pumps. Has questions about platform.
 early Sept: WindowDressers, with Doc; still need a date.
 Wed, Sept 16: David on EVs. Post the Friday/Saturday and Tuesday before.
 Sept Date? Pocket Park climate/energy “expo”/demos: Best to do as part of their annual party
 (date to come); could use the church’s tents and tables.
 Sept 28: Tim Briglin talk in Barrett Hall; they don’t have A/V equipment but have wifi
 Susan H: when are you doing Plastics? Still to be scheduled.

For his session, Matt will post a Teams link to the list-serve and the Strafford Facebook page; Dorian will re-post to the Thetford list-serve. Dorian recommends we post twice: Saturday the 13th then again on Tuesday the 17th.

7. Jim and Dorian update on website updates. Discussion of revision process and invitation for additional resource links (for instance 350-Vermont). Susan T. requested more “narration” or guidance text on the page to explain what the resolution is and what the resources are meant to offer, etc. **Action Item: Jim** will send an invitation to committee members inviting additional resources links; **Dorian** and **Jim** will continue work revising the committee’s Mission summary, incorporating elements from the four versions that presently appear in various places.

8. Sub-committee and other reports: monthly updates, if any:

Transportation: David. Many people have made reservations to try out the 4 bikes he has.

Weatherization / home heating / construction: Doc & Matt. No report.

Community Solar/renewables: David & Doc. No report.

State Legislature and networking: Susan H. reported that Vanessa Rule is now working for 350.Vermont and she’s working with Susan’s group on planning a community meeting (Barrett Hall, Union Village Dam picnic area, somewhere else sometime in September).

Susan also reported on Strafford’s co-purchase of the Greater Upper Valley Solid Waste District site, which will have a solar array and could have an arrangement like the one at the Elizabeth Mine site where after a specified time the RECs will be retired.

Agriculture, forestry: Dorian, Tii, Jenevra

Pocket Park: Barbara

Education & Communications: Jim Schley. See report on website and mission updates, above.

10. Dorian would like to create some kind of timeline with steps from here to 2030 (or working backwards from net-zero). We can’t manage a project if we don’t have a plan.

Top priority: a Framework/CAP (Climate Action Plan) for us to use as a resource and planning tool.

Matt: First we need clean, clear definitions of what we’re counting, then a functional way of measuring: a mechanism. The measuring will be muddy; there are privacy issues, and we’ll need to use guesswork and averages then explain our method. For instance how much carbon do our forests sequester? Someone may know placeholder numbers based on real data. We can also say where we don’t know how to count something, or the reasons why we’re estimating, and how.

David: Do we know anyone doing this kind of accounting at this kind of small town municipal level? Matt: There might be towns doing this somewhere — in California or the Northwest. Perhaps we could borrow language and tools from another community.

Dorian: Hartford, Vermont has hired a firm to develop modeling and the results so far seem unclear and general (fluffy). In a community of our scale, much smaller, could we create a survey that would get information from people in a fun and interesting way about household behaviors and practices, including vehicle usage (miles driven), electric and heating loads.

Matt: A self-report data is really susceptible to selection bias, and often unreliable. In the Enhanced Energy Plan we tried to estimate this, based on the grand list, but this is weak data. For now, we could see if there are other towns that have been developing tools for goal-setting and measuring progress. **ACTION ITEM:** Dorian will contact Geof Martin, Sarah Brock at Vital Communities, and VECAN to see if there are other Vermont towns that we could learn from in terms of specific ways of counting our collective and individual carbon impacts.

Next Meeting: September 14, 2021, 7 pm via ZOOM

Adjourned: 8:56 pm

Respectfully submitted by Jim Schley, Recording Secretary