

1. Community Solar. The meeting began with discussion of Strafford Community Solar (the Maclay array) with our guest Dori Wolfe, former Strafford resident and Energy Committee member/chair.

Our role is defined as advisory to the town and the selectboard specifically. Brokering a purchase of the array by some other entity is not really our role. Dorian mentioned Vanessa's report on her conversation with Jeff Forward, who addressed strategies he's seen work for municipal purchase of energy resources.

The Peacham, Vermont school has an array on their roof that Dori owns, and they get 10% of the energy; after 10 years if they choose to buy it, they'd get 100% of the energy. They would be able to easily see the costs and benefits.

Dori said that when these arrays were established with nonprofit partners, the assumption was that they would eventually be donated to municipalities and nonprofits. Ecology is not that kind of owner.

The current asking price is \$294,000 for a 100 kW array: \$267 per kilowatt. They (Dori was one of them) took the proceeds off the top and it's now depreciated.

If they're not willing to consider a tax write-off, this might be "an exercise in futility," Dori said.

Dori said if someone else bought it, would they replace the present off-takers with different off-takers or maintain the arrangements in place?

If the town has said from the get-go that they don't want any risk, and aren't in the energy-generation business, and Ecology isn't willing

Presently Ecology is paid 90% rate from the participating off-takers for their energy use, and with that they pay for maintenance and distribute profits to shareholders. Dori emphasized that if the off-takers don't change, then the net-energy benefits would be the same as now if there were a new owner.

There needs to be a manager; Dori manages three other arrays, and her rate is \$1,055 a year, less than \$100 a year.

Dori is back and forth, positive then negative then positive again. She suggested that we find a lawyer who'd be willing to look at the agreement with the town (which Dori will send us, and which is like the agreements with the other partners) and give us an opinion about whether the off-taker relationships would stand if the array were sold. **ACTION ITEM: Vanessa** will ask Jeff Forward if a buyer were mainly interested in a purchase for depreciation, would the off-taker arrangements be left in place? And she will ask who is now coordinating the Vermont Law School Energy Clinic, and ask if someone there could look at the off-taker agreement will carry over through a sale. **Matt** will tell Ecology that the town isn't presently in a financial position to make an offer to purchase the array.

If the off-takers wouldn't be the same, then we need to tell the selectboard this.

And once this has been clarified, we could do a better job of celebrating that this array powers community activities and buildings. There should be a parade.

Vanessa brought the focus back to our role: To help the town understand how to make sound decisions about our energy present and future.

2. Approve minutes from previous meeting (January). Approved.

3. Thermal Camera: The library is going to do a comprehensive energy evaluation and audit, and Matt will be advising on this. Harry Falconer is helping identify grant funds to assist. He could do a demonstration of how the thermal camera works as part of this process.

Discussion of how frequently building owners and organizations replace furnaces with oil or propane without fully assessing the viability of electric systems. Barrett Hall just did so, and the United Church and Morrill Library are now facing the need for improved energy-efficiency and heating equipment. As Vanessa

said, the planning has to be done longer-term, before a furnace fails. Matt is interested in helping people make good investments in these areas—weatherization and efficiency measures, then electric technologies. These aren't complicated buildings, he said, and they're relatively easy to audit and plan for. **ACTION ITEM:** **Dorian** offered to contact each of the community organizers and ask them if they'd like to arrange for an energy audit. **Vanessa** will contact Efficiency Vermont to ask what forms of assistance they offer for community organizations, including a church building that is now a Nursery school. **Jim** will ask Dori if she has any records on the energy upgrades at the church around 2011(?); was there an audit? **Susan** suggested that there will be role for Strafford Climate Action to help inform town residents about audit and energy-efficiency resources,

Meeting adjourned at 8:31 pm. Next meeting is March 20, 2026 at 7 pm at Dorian's house, weather-permitting.