
Meeting called by: Dorian Yates

Type of meeting: SECC monthly meeting

Facilitator: Dorian Yates

Note taker: Jim Schley

Attendees: Dorian Yates, Susan Hodges, David Lutz, Susan Tiholiz, Matt Christie, Jenevra Wetmore, and Jim Schley

Next Meeting: January 11, 2021, 7 pm via ZOOM

Minutes

ACTION ITEMS from this meeting:

Action item: Committee members are asked to send comments on the draft committee Mission statement (see below), including no comment, if this looks satisfactory, and we'll we'll try to finalize this at our next meeting.

Action Item: David said that you can look up car registrations with addresses and can see how many cars are registered in Strafford and in what categories: gas, diesel, electric, hybrid. He'll bring this count to the next meeting. We can then make our goals explicit.

Action Item: Dorian will follow up on the school energy assessment with Jeff Solsaa, to see if the report previously done has been found or if there are plans for a new one.

AGENDA

1.

Review/Approve minutes from November meeting. Approved for posting.

2.

Review and update Action Items from last meeting (see above).

Action Item: Doc proposed that he and David create a simple one-page sheet explaining what the cost per watt will be for the community solar, how the shares are organized, estimate of the "payback" (about twelve years), and a succinct summary of how the Renewable Energy Credits pricing work (this project will allow participants to be truly renewable, since the credits can't be sold), etc.; they could do this in conjunction with Catamount. What's needed is an explanation page then a contract page. **David reported that they're aiming to have this for our next meeting, then we can begin to help promote the opportunity.**

3.

Mission statement in process: drafted by Jim based on comments from committee members.

In March 2020 at Town Meeting, the voters of Strafford resolved to work together to reach net-zero

in greenhouse-gas emissions by 2030. The Strafford Energy and Climate Committee (SECC) serves as an advocate for reaching this goal using innovative, workable, and cost-effective options for energy conservation and reduction of our greenhouse gas and carbon emissions in heating or cooling buildings, powering vehicles, generating electricity, planning for sustainability and resilience, and improving carbon sequestration and ecological wellbeing through careful stewardship of soil, plants, and forests.

The Energy and Climate Committee will provide ongoing assessment of the town's progress in adoption of renewable and restorative policies and practices, and will:

- * Advise the Selectboard and members of other town committees and commissions
- * Provide information to the residents of Strafford, and local farms, businesses, schools, and forest managers
- * Work closely with the Intermunicipal Regional Energy Coordinator and energy and climate committees in neighboring communities

Action item: Committee members are asked to send comments on this draft (including no comment, if this is satisfactory), and we'll try and finalize this at our next meeting.

4.

Selectboard's request for advice on Town Garage lighting (fairly urgent):

- * David said that we need to know what specific need they're trying to meet: light the doorway or light the whole parking lot? Who is the person asking the Selectboard for action on this?
- * LEDs at the right lumen output are exactly right for cold temperatures. Many options are commercially available, and maybe a neighboring town has had successful experience with a specific brand?

As we were meeting, Dorian wrote to Geoff Martin and asked if he knows about energy-efficient lighting for municipal-building applications currently in use in Thetford or other IREC towns?

Matt confirmed that Vermont Dept. of Transportation has an incentive program for controls and equipment options.

5.

The **Vermont Climate Council Action Plan** has been released: See executive summary and full report (273 pages) at link: <https://climatechange.vermont.gov/wherearewegoing>

Committee member comments included: "Disappointing!" "It's so enemic!" "And with so many weasel words!" Notably, solar isn't being seriously supported. Burning trash is considered "renewable," and they're leaning heavily on Canadian hydro as "green."

Action Item: Committee members are urged to look at the **Climate Action Plan** and individually file a comment by December 20. Even if the comment is that the plan is tepid and uninspiring and vague, with too much reliance upon energy sources and activities that don't substantially reduce carbon impacts.

6.

Update on Community Solar project on Alger Brook Road. David reported:

- * The Orgains have signed off on their lease; contract with Catamount Solar is still being negotiated.

- * Law School Energy Clinic's informational materials are somewhat confusing, as they refer to DC pricing; everyone pays the utility for a price per AC watt, so figures should be given that way.
- * David and Doc met with the Historical Society about buying into the new solar array, and they were receptive. They are going to have a heat pump for the building, and Matt met with several members a couple of weeks ago.

In David's estimation this is a good value, for homeowner or business: Paying up front, with no possibility of an increase: prepaying 12 cents per kilowatt hour (or 9 cents a kilowatt hour if you can use the federal rebate) over a 25 year period; cheaper than 17.65 cents per kilowatt hour (which is really 21 cents per kilowatt hour, with fees) for current electric bill from Green Mountain Power.

Minimum of five people keenly interested; David and Doc are contacts, for now. Email to them at: docbagley@gmail.com and jdlutz1965@gmail.com

7.

Susan Hodges reported:

- * Members of the Thetford community felt that the online forum with Tim Briglin that we hosted was too much a speech by Tim, with not enough back and forth, so they organized another session where he was asked to do more listening. Participants made it clear they are really serious about carbon impacts and climate change and will hold legislators responsible.
- * People from Thetford want to have a similar meeting our senator, Mark MacDonald, which Susan H. and some members of the Climate Action Group will work on, too.
- * 350Vermont is working on the problem of accurately measuring greenhouse gas emissions and reductions in relation to Vermont's statutory goals.
- * Global Foundries (GF) is proposing to become their own utility. Thetford activist Stuart Blood provided this information about the company and their scheme:
 - GF accounts for [approximately 8% of Vermont's electricity load](#) and uses more power than the entire city of Burlington.
 - If the the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) approves the petition, then GF would source power from Green Mountain Power (GMP) for four years, after which GF **would no longer be subject to Vermont's Renewable Energy Standard**. Petition paragraph 30, page 8.
 - Two members of the Vermont Climate Council, Peter Walke of the Agency of Natural Resources and June Tierney of the Department of Public Service, signed a letter of intent with GF in October that could exempt the company from rules set in accordance with the Global Warming Solutions Act.
 - The certificate of public good granting permission to operate a Self-Managed Utility would be **transferred to any future owners**.

And here is some background on Global Foundries' business:

- GF employs 2,189 workers in Vermont.
- GF has threatened to leave Vermont if it doesn't get the deal.
- GF is [89% owned by Mubadala Investment](#), United Arab Emirates (UAE) [sovereign wealth fund, with current assets of \\$243 billion](#).
- In April GF announced that it will be [relocating its headquarters to Malta, NY](#).
- Earlier this week [GF announced an Initial Public Offering](#) in the U.S., seeking to raise about \$25 billion. The UAE sovereign wealth fund will retain an 89.4% stake in GF.
- * Allowing GF to evade responsibility for reducing emissions will shift an even greater burden for meeting the Global Warming Solution Act's requirements onto Vermonters. Is the state acting in the best interest of its

citizens, giving GF an exemption from emissions requirements, thus increasing the value of an asset the company intends to unload anyway?

8.

Dorian also provided links to these recent reports:

1. UVM VT Climate assessment- summary attached (full report 519 pages);
<https://site.uvm.edu/vtclimateassessment/downloads-links/>
2. DRAFT: Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan summary:
<https://publicservice.vermont.gov/content/release-draft-2022-comprehensive-energy-plan>. NOTE: PUBLIC COMMENTS are due by 12/20

And Dorian reported on Geoff Martin's response to her question about how we can make our steps to reduce greenhouse gases and waste more visible and measurable in order to measure and report on progress. Geoff shared a proposal that each of the IREC member towns create a Climate Action Plan, with the following questions to be considered and resolved:

- * How/if to formally adopt the Climate Action Plan. Could simply be a guidance document created for the IREC towns, or it could be adopted by the towns.
- * If adopted by the towns, would it be by consensus (i.e., all towns have to agree to the entire document)?
- * Could towns strike out sections that do not apply to them, or "sign on" to the sections they commit to?
- * Timeline for creating the plan.
- * Public outreach: as part of CAP development, or after creation?

To be effective, these town Climate Action Plans would be very specific, addressing different areas of impact. For instance (this is an example from Hartford): *Increase battery electric vehicle (BEV) utilization to 21.5% of community wide rolling stock by 2030 (from approximately 18 vehicles in 2019 to 825 vehicles in 2030 community-wide).*

Geoff's memo included examples of specific goals in many areas of town operation, including Transportation, Buildings, Electricity, Waste, and Forestry and Agriculture.

This raised the issue of how we can know (for instance) what our present reliance upon vehicles is, here in Strafford.

Action Item: David said that we can look up car registrations with addresses and can see how many cars are registered in Strafford and in what categories: gas, diesel, electric, hybrid. He'll bring this count to the next meeting. We can then working on making our goals explicit and measurable.

In addition to transportation impacts (Vermonters have the highest per capita miles traveled?), Vermont's thermal-heat impacts are second highest in New England: old building stock, poorly insulated.

Action Item: Dorian will follow up on the school energy assessment with Jeff Solsaa, to see if the report previously done has been found or if there are plans for a new one.

Action Item: Homework for next meeting: Think about the Mission statement draft and send Jim additional comments; to be discussed at next meeting.

Next Meeting: January 11, 2021, 7 pm via ZOOM

Adjourned: 8:04 pm

Enthusiastically submitted by Jim Schley, Recording Secretary