

# Strafford Energy and Climate Committee (SECC)

## Meeting Minutes

9/8/20

7:08 PM

Online meeting: Zoom

**Meeting called by:** Kevin Grady

**Type of meeting:** SEC meeting

**Facilitator:** Kevin Grady

**Note taker:** Jim, from Zoom session recording

**Attendees:** Kevin Grady, David Lutz, Susan Hodges, Doc Bagley, and Jim Schley

**Next Meeting:** October 13, 2020, 7 pm via ZOOM

## Minutes

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### Action Items from this meeting:

#### From #2, ACTION ITEMS:

**b. Communications: ACTION ITEM: Jim** will continue to post committee updates on the list-serve and Climate Action blog (<https://straffordclimateaction.blogspot.com/>), including energy-saving tips and opportunities from Button Up and Efficiency Vermont.

**c. Transportation: Jim** will check back with Toni Pippy to see if the board decided to support this application for the coming year; if yes, Jim will draft the application, which needs to be accompanied by support letters from the Selectboard and TRORC, our regional planning commission. Kevin, Susan, and Doc offered to read through the grant prior to submission.

**d. Building Efficiency: Doc** will continue to be the committee's liaison with Brian for now, and he'll find a way to introduce Matt into the conversation, since he's more fully versed in code issues.

**d. WindowDressers: Kevin** will follow up with Gigi Granger of the Barrett Hall board to see if they've found out more about whether that building has ever had an energy audit, including what insulation is in the roof. **Doc** will reach out to Dori to see what she knows about Barrett Hall.

**d. Button Up: Doc** will ask Becca how our committee can be involved this year (educational posters, lawn signs, etc.) ALSO, the Button-Up website provides ongoing lists of ideas for energy saving and weatherization. **Jim** will post updates on the list-serve and blog with sample ideas, rebates, contractor names, and links (see <https://buttonupvermont.org>).

**e. Regional Energy Coordinator: Doc** will send to **Kevin** the contact information for Epogee, the company that manages the billing for the community solar that supplies a number of town buildings so he can explain to Geof how this project functions. **Kevin** will attend a seven-town Steering Committee meeting with Geof on September 18.

**f. Agriculture and Forestry: Gus** will check with Barbara to see if Amy and Earl will join us for the Agriculture session.

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### Agenda Items:

1. Review of August meeting **Minutes**. Corrected spelling of name Brian Johnson and date for Agriculture-themed meeting (which will be November 10), then approved.

#### 2. Sub-committees: MONTHLY UPDATE

**a. Legislation:** Susan has been following the discussions on the Global Warming Solutions Act. The governor is continuing to say that he's not in favor; that he objects to the provision for the state being liable to lawsuits from citizens who believe that mandated goals and milestones aren't being met. One of the pro-Act arguments Susan has heard recently is that if we have a plan adopted we can get federal money to support implementation. Susan will continue to monitor the progress of the bill and will send out a call for people to contact legislators and the governor with the vote is scheduled.

- b. Communications: ACTION ITEM: Jim** will continue to post committee updates on the list-serve and Climate Action blog (<https://straffordclimateaction.blogspot.com/>), including energy-saving tips and opportunities from Button Up and Efficiency Vermont.
- c. Transportation:** David has continued to rent his electric Kia, and will be doing a posting on the list-serve soon to describe to people the benefits and advantages, including incentives. Kevin now has a teal-colored Volt. He will be installing a level-2 charger at his home (charging on house current is really slow).

Bicycle and Pedestrian Program grant: Jim explained the funding opportunity to the Selectboard at their September 8 meeting; this would be for a “scoping” or assessment study to consider ways of improving access and safety for walkers and cyclists between the two villages, which is used by many townspeople (including children). The town would need to pay 20%, and if we apply for a \$30,000 grant, that would be \$6,000. **ACTION ITEM: Jim** will check back with Toni Pippy to see if the board decided to support this application for the coming year; if yes, Jim will draft the application, which needs to be accompanied by support letters from the Selectboard and TRORC, our regional planning commission. Kevin, Susan, and Doc offered to read through the grant prior to submission.

- d. Home energy efficiency:** Matt put together a list of items that stood out for him on the new state-mandated Residential Building Code guidelines. Doc spoke with Brian Johnson, the town’s Zoning Commissioner, and explained that we’d like to have him familiar with the new code and begin enforcing it. Brian said that any changes in zoning have to be approved not only by the Selectboard but also by the town. Kevin pointed out that the Selectboard sets the fees for permits (both for new construction and renovation), and this can be used to apply incentives. **ACTION ITEM: Doc** will continue to be the committee’s liaison with Brian for now, and he’ll find a way to introduce Matt into the conversation, since he’s more fully versed in code issues.

**WindowDressers:** The program is shut down for this year for new projects, except that Thetford persuaded them to accept their town’s elementary school for a round of inserts. They’ve done the measurements and WindowDressers will cut the pieces; Thetford crew will go over and get the pieces and assemble them in the North Thetford Church. Doc has measured the windows at Barrett Hall and the gym (ground floor gymnasium, pre-school, and bathrooms). If the school agrees, the cost would be about \$625. Barrett Hall would cost about \$1,100. Doc has given these figures to both boards. If they approve the idea, Doc would like to team up with the Thetford project. We do have a grant from New England Grassroots Environmental Fund (NEGEF) that we’re supposed to use by 2021, and Doc has been told that this funder would probably allow their use for other projects, which potentially could include the school gym and Barrett Hall. **ACTION ITEM: Kevin** will follow up with Gigi Granger of the Barrett Hall board to see if they’ve found out more about whether that building has ever had an energy audit, including what insulation is in the roof. **Doc** will reach out to Dori to see what she knows about Barrett Hall.

**Button-Up:** Doc missed the webinar for this year that Becca White from Efficiency Vermont organized. Their focus is on getting towns to put up educational information and encouraging do-it-yourself projects. For this year our goal will be to keep ButtonUp’s name out there. **ACTION ITEMS: Doc** will ask Becca how our committee can be involved this year (educational posters, lawn signs, etc.) ALSO, the Button-Up website provides ongoing lists of ideas for energy saving and weatherization. **Jim** will post updates on the list-serve with sample ideas, rebates, contractor names, and links (see <https://buttonupvermont.org>).

- e. Regional Energy Coordinator:** Geof Martin has contacted Kevin to discuss priorities for the town, and he updated Kevin on his current initiatives. He is contacting Electrify America about getting a DC fast charger, possibly in Sharon; they also discussed . He has begun an audit of the town’s energy consumption, which involves the town clerk, B.J. Miller at the school, the truck fleet, Green Mountain Power, and Irving Oil in order to begin making recommendations for savings in town buildings and operations. He has suggested two potential funding sources for the renovation of the town office. Kevin told him a priority for us is more community solar projects, and Geof asked for specific information on potential sites. Kevin explained that improving the grid is important to be more viable for distributed generation, and this may be an area where we need to do the advocacy work with the legislature to incentivize these upgrades. **ACTION ITEM: Doc** will

send to **Kevin** the contact information for Epogee, the company that manages the billing for the community solar that supplies a number of town buildings so he can explain to Geof how this project functions. **Kevin** will attend a seven-town Steering Committee meeting with Geof on September 18.

**f. Agriculture and Forestry:** Gus reported previously that he's making preparations to have the November 10 meeting include our long-awaited discussion of agriculture and climate impacts and remediation potential. Gus has invited Shannon Varley and B.J. Miller from Strafford Village Farm, and Barbara was going to contact Amy Huyffer and Earl Ransom from Rock Bottom Farm. **ACTION ITEM:** **Gus** will check with Barbara to see if Amy and Earl will join us for the Agriculture session.

**g. Outreach / Action Items updates:** Susan wrote a draft for a follow-up statement o the Strafford town resolution:

At the last Town Meeting, the citizens of Strafford overwhelmingly passed the **Resolution to Declare a Climate Emergency [link?]** , which includes the following:

2 Commit to **integrating the need to act urgently on climate into all future decision-making, while incorporating transitions that are just and equitable**, and to working toward a goal of net zero greenhouse gas emissions in Strafford by 2030;

3 Direct the Strafford Select Board to ask the Strafford Energy Committee, in collaboration with other organizations and individuals, to report periodically on the Town's greenhouse gas emissions and **to present information and ideas for achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions in Strafford by 2030; . . .**

These commitments allow for many possible actions that could be taken. This is the time for us as a community to come up with ideas for how our town can move toward zero greenhouse emissions in the next 10 years. What do we want the Selectboard to do? What do we want to encourage our fellow-citizens to do? Please share any ideas you have! You can send them to the Strafford Energy and Climate Committee, [energy@straffordvt.org](mailto:energy@straffordvt.org).

Kevin asked if we could include examples of initiatives, such as:

- Improve bicycle and pedestrian travel between the villages
- Incentivize energy-efficient building design and construction with sensitized fee structure
- Plan for conversion of town vehicles from fossil-fueled to electric operation (the Green Fleet proposal that Susan circulated)

#### **Other Business:**

Kevin is retiring from Dartmouth at the end of this month so he'll lose his access to Zoom, but Susan has an account that allows for meetings longer than 40 minutes. The question was raised about whether the Selectboard has a Zoom account. In the meantime

**October 13 at 7 pm is our next meeting, location to be announced.**

**Adjourned: 8:35 pm.** / Respectfully submitted by Jim Schley