

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, Jenevra Wetmore, Matt Christie, and Jim Schley

Next Meeting: April 12, 2022, 7 pm via ZOOM

Minutes

ACTION ITEMS from this meeting:

Action Item: To underscore Geoff Martin’s observations about potential savings for the Town Garage, **Jim** will send the Selectboard a memo expressing enthusiastic support for Geoff’s recommendation and underscore the importance of first air-sealing and insulating the building, prior to sizing heat pump(s) and other heating appliances.

Action Item: Susan is going to write to Doc about the WindowDressers appeal for new coordinators: We need to effectively convey that there could be co-coordinators again, and that Doc and Bob are willing to be advisors for new coordinators, and that there are very comprehensive and clear instruction from [headquarters].

Action Item: List-serve postings could remind people of the three presentations we have that can be watched anytime: David on Electric vehicles, Susan on alternatives to plastic, and Matt on heat pumps. We could do a presentation online or at the recycling center on electric yard equipment? Between us we have a number of examples. Jenevra asked if the town itself has electric equipment for string trimmers, chainsaws, etc. **Dorian** will ask Geoff Martin about town equipment.

Action Item: Homework assignment for each of us: What are our homes’ renewable energy and energy-efficiency features that we could include in the photo/video collage? Send these to Dorian by next meeting. Also list the electric (non-fueled) garden equipment: string trimmers, chainsaws, scythes, mowers. And let’s discuss at our next meeting a calendar for webinars and in-person presentations.

Action Item: David is going to do daily (or more frequent) list-serve postings with short, lively examples of workable solutions.

AGENDA

Approve minutes (attached)

Review & update re: Action items from last meeting (see below)

IREC report

Window Dressers

2022 Calendar of education events (e.g. Community Solar, Copying the model of Solarize 2022 from Cornish—see below,

Window Dressers, Electric Yard tools, advertising on list serve of existing presentations, Getting to Know the Pocket Park,

Sustainable Farming and Soil health, Forest health, etc)

1. Review and approve last meeting's minutes. Approved.

2. Action Items from previous meeting:

Action item: Dorian and Susan T will work on early stages of a town Climate Action Plan (CAP) or timeline with milestones toward carbon neutral by 2030. **Ongoing.**

Action Item: Dorian reported that she has been in touch with superintendent Jamie Kinnarney concerning the school energy assessments the supervisory union is planning to do with a consultant for all the member schools; they have postponed their planning meeting until March.

Action Item: Jim will meet with Doc to talk about possible “commercial contract” with WindowDressers to make inserts for the United Church of Strafford. **Done.**

Action Item: Susan will send to committee members information about a 350VT “Climate SOS” letter-writing campaign and also a letter from the Thetford group about the Clean Heating Standard bill that's being developed in the legislature. **Done.**

Action Item: We should keep abreast of the planning process for the town office to continue to advocate for an “all-electric” design. **Ongoing.**

Action Item: To recruit investors for the new community solar project, we need a simple one-page sheet explaining what the cost per watt will be, how the shares are organized, estimate of the “payback” (about twelve years), and a succinct summary of how the Renewable Energy Credits pricing works. **Doc** reported that **Geoff Martin** is working on this one-page explanatory document with the law school's Energy Clinic.

Action Item: Dorian and Susan T will work on early stages of a town Climate Action Plan (CAP) or timeline with milestones toward carbon neutral by 2030. **Ongoing.**

Action Item: Dorian reported that she has been in touch with superintendent Jamie Kinnarney concerning the school energy assessments the supervisory union is planning to do with a consultant for all the member schools; they have postponed their planning meeting until March. **Ongoing.**

3. Report of the Intramunicipal Regional Energy Coordinator (IREC) Geoff Martin and specifically Geoff's projection that the energy performance of the Strafford Town Garage could be substantially improved. Quoting from Geoff's February report: “Determined that installing heat pumps at the Town Garage would reduce greenhouse gas emissions by roughly 60%. Met with Jeff Solsaa to discuss doing an energy audit of the garage and a potential source of funding to implement recommendations from the audit. I also completed a comparison of energy use at IREC town garages (see Attachment 1). Strafford's Town Garage is the second highest energy user of all IREC town garages. It is the third highest in terms of energy use intensity, which is the total energy use divided by the square footage of the building.”

Discussion of best strategies followed, emphasis on importance of first weatherizing the building, which will pay for itself rapidly and allow for smaller and more efficient heating appliances. Questions were raised about whether the building is frequently open to provide access for trucks, therefore losing all its heat, which isn't a situation where heat pumps are well-suited, since they provide slow, steady, milder heat. Possibly there are smaller areas (an office or break room?) that could very effectively served by heat pump, while a propane heater may be needed to replace lost heat rapidly.

Action Item: To underscore Geoff Martin’s observations about potential savings for the Town Garage, **Jim** will send the Selectboard a memo expressing enthusiastic support for Geoff’s recommendation and underscore the importance of first air-sealing and insulating the building, prior to sizing heat pump(s) and other heating appliances.

4. Continuing discussions about a Climate Action Plan for Strafford

Acknowledging the value of the webinars we hosted this past year, which have ongoing value because people can view them anytime, **Dorian** invited the committee to think about other ideas for presentations:

- * Shannon and B. J. and/or Earl Ransom on farm **soil health** and the benefits of letting fields be fallow for a year with cover crops and re-manuring;
- * Barbara and Wally on the **Pocket Park**, as part of the hand-over to a new coordinator and a way to generate new volunteers
- * Susan H. requested that we host a presentation on **weatherizing**. Jenevra confirmed that Sustainable Woodstock has recorded presentations on weatherizing.
- * Susan T. requested a presentation on **replacing household appliances**, which are being purchased all the time, often with incomplete information about lower-impact alternatives; Matt says he has “reams of slide decks” on the advantages of all-electric options for appliances.
- * A “**myth-busters**” session on flawed assumptions about **home energy**, including a “Kill-o-watt” demonstration that shows how you can measure what any device or appliance is using, which could be a good participatory project we could do with school-age students.
- * In addition to our annual demonstration of **green yard equipment** at the July 4 festivities, this spring we could bring and show people coming to the Recycling Center on Saturday morning viable and affordable non-combustion options for string-trimmers, chainsaws, pruners, mowers, etc. (including non-electric examples: rotary mowers, scythes, etc.).
- * Dorian mentioned the recent “**Solarize**” gathering (online, and recorded) in Cornish, Plainfield, Windsor and Hartland, which was attended by well over a hundred people.

We could create a fun and informative presentation with “collage-style” video of **visits to different solar households** showing varied options. In our group: Dorian has a tracker; Susan T. is part of a community solar; Jim and Jenevra are off-grid, with PVs, and Jim now has a portable lithium-iron-phosphate backup battery that has eliminated use of a gas generator for backup; Matt and Susan H. both have fixed-mount PVs, a Tesla powerwall, and a utility intertie. (David observed that very soon electric vehicles are going to be serving as backup power for homes. Matt said the Ford F-Lightning’s battery is the equivalent of ten powerwalls.)

Action Item: Homework assignment for each of us: What are our homes’ renewable energy and energy-efficiency features that we could include in the photo/video collage. Send these to Dorian by next meeting. Also list the electric (non-fueled) garden equipment: string trimmers, chainsaws, scythes, mowers.

And let’s discuss at our next meeting a calendar for webinars and in-person presentations.

Action Item: **David** is going to do daily (or more frequent) list-serve postings of workable solutions. He quoted Winston Churchill: “Never let a good crisis go to waste.”

Next Meeting: April 12, 2022, 7 pm via ZOOM

Adjourned: 8:31 pm

Enthusiastically submitted by Jim Schley, Recording Secretary