

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: February 8, 2022, 7 pm via ZOOM

Meeting:

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 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 December meeting. Approved for posting.

Approve minutes (attached)

2.

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

— Action Item from last meeting, Mission statement revision:

In March 2020 at Town Meeting, the voters of Strafford resolved to work together to reach net-zero in greenhouse-gas emissions for the whole town by 2030. To achieve this commitment, the Strafford Energy and Climate Committee (SECC) serves as an advisor for the citizens and the municipality of Strafford. We will advocate for innovative, workable, and cost-effective options for energy conservation and reduction of our carbon emissions in heating or cooling buildings, powering vehicles, and generating electricity. We will support effective planning for resiliency, sustainability, and

ecological wellbeing, and improved carbon sequestration through careful stewardship of soil, plants, and forests.

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

- * Advise the Selectboard and members of Strafford's other 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

In addition to this statement, we need to create a way of stating specific goals and showing progress, some form of dashboard we can use to indicate (for instance) how many car registrations we have in Strafford and how many of these are hybrid or electric.

— Action Item from last meeting, statistics on Strafford vehicle registrations. David reported on the information he received from DriveElectric VT:

As of 2020, of 980 vehicles registered in Strafford, 23 were EVs, of which 14 were all-electric models and 9 were plug-in hybrids. We hope to have updated information reflecting the end of 2021 available by mid-2022.

Strafford	Vehicle Type	2018	2019	2020
	All Electric	6	10	14
	Plug In Hybrid	6	8	9
	Total	12	18	23

David has been thinking about how people get motivated to make positive changes. He saw a TED Talk about people making decisions to keep up with their peers.

Matt emphasized that the car/truck landscape is going to change enormously in the next two or three years. Now it's still a niche product, with limited offering, but GM will be offering thirty models by 2025. For now, the best role for us is to keep reminding people that if they're purchasing a new car, they should get an electric: the most cost-effective, lowest maintenance option.

Dorian asked if David could post some basic information about price and range and ownership expense for some EVs now available. There's still a perception that electric cars are very costly Teslas.

For Sustainable Woodstock, Jenevra is hosting Green Mountain Power and Drive Electric on April 21st for an online EV webinar followed by Q&A (registration information forthcoming).

New EVs allow for whole-home backups.

— Action Item from last meeting: 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. **MOVED to Action Item for this meeting.**

3.

Long range discussions including:

Discussion of work on a timeline/map: Eight years until 2030, could we show milestones for progress in the important areas: non-Internal Combustion (IC) vehicles; renewable energy-powered homes; etc. etc.

Susan T. offered to work with Dorian on this. One of the challenges is deciding what is meant by progress, in each area. Car registrations are easy to measure, but home heating loads, new construction

standards, efficient appliances and heat pumps, incandescent vs. compact fluorescent or LED lamps, etc. But we can identify for people in town that these are all options for saving money, reducing waste, and reducing negative impacts.

“Reduce your use and waste, and electrify”: those are our two main messages.

4. Subcommittee reports (not already covered above):

— **Weatherization / home heating / construction:** Matt reported that heat pumps are completely blocked up by supply-chain challenges: products aren't getting to market, and contractors (ARC being the best in our area, with Building Energy moving into it) have a year waiting list. We've done a great job selling the idea of heat pumps, but people are choosing propane because they can get them installed right away. It takes a lot of persistence and flexibility to see through the design and sizing of a heat pump.

— **Community Solar/renewables:** Doc posted the following invitation/update on the list-serve:

Hi Folks,

I am reaching out to you as you have shown interest in the upcoming Strafford Community Solar project on Alger Brook Road.

We are very grateful to be working with the Vermont Law School's Energy Clinic (VLS) on this project to bring community solar to Strafford.

The Clinic's involvement has been key in working through the permitting process and applying for the Certificate of Public Good with the State, plus help keep the cost per share below average for a community solar installation. Their experience and knowledge has been key, and working with the law students has provided an opportunity for them to understand how the process works here in Vermont. They can take their knowledge with them to help promote more projects like this throughout VT and beyond.

We are also very grateful for the Strafford Select Board and Planning Commission approval of the site as a "Preferred Site". This allows for incentives that help offset costs for those who will be signing on as members of the LLC and further the Town's goal of zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2030! Thanks also to David Lutz of Strafford and Geoff Martin (our Intermunicipal Regional Energy Coordinator) for their involvement with the VLS and promotion of this endeavor.

Currently, Catamount Solar, the chosen installation partner, is working with Green Mountain Power to finalize some equipment requirements for site interconnection. We hope to have final pricing later this month and will plan on scheduling another Zoom meeting to present some sign up information and final cost per share to become an owner and member of the LLC.

The plan is to install this project and bring it online by the fall of 2022.

We appreciate your patience as we work through the process and look forward to reconnecting soon to present more detailed information regarding the Strafford Community Solar, LLC offering.

Happy New Year,
Doc Bagley
Strafford Community Solar, LLC & Strafford Energy and Climate Committee

GMP has come back with a requirement to upgrade the infrastructure, which will add \$55,000 to the \$450,000 cost of the project; Catamount Solar is trying to negotiate this to share that expense.

— **State Legislature:** Susan H. reported _____ <>see email 1/10>> Ongoing meetings with Representative Tim Briglin, hosted by Thetford group, which Susan has been participating in. Three areas of focus: Clean Heat Standard, Renewable Energy, and Community Solar. ACTION ITEM: David will talk with Susan H. about the Community Solar issue, since she'll be hosting the session on that topic.

Update on Global Foundry, which is trying to create their own utility, which would be exempt from climate regulations. The governor seems very in favor of this. Might take legislative action to prohibit this.

— **Agriculture, forestry:** Jim reported on an exchange with Tii concerning potential changes in the UVA (Current Use) categories to allow for wildlands (Till referred to this as “Old Forest”) and “reserve forests” in order to allow for tax benefits if someone chooses not to harvest, instead of only if a landowner harvests timber.

Jenevra reported that the Forest Carbon Action group (which Dorian and Tii have also been part of) will be hosting trainings in the coming year.

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Adjourned: 8:55 pm

Enthusiastically submitted by Jim Schley, Recording Secretary