

Hartford Energy Commission minutes
November 16, 2023

Present in person: Sarah Kelly, Lynn Bohi, Esme Cole, Jesse Pollard: guests Richrd Otis, Erik Francis, Ben Cannelys; Dana Clawson, staff

Present virtually: Laura Simon; Molly S Dunn, guest

Jesse called the meeting to order at 5:05pm.

Minutes: Esme moved and Sarah seconded that the October minutes pass as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

Agenda: no changes

Public Comment: none

Coordinator's Report:

- Town Hall HVAC continued to be worked on and there is now more control. This is part of the flex load project from two years ago. It is not yet completed.
- EV chargers: The grant from the state means that Green Mountain Power will pay to install chargers at DPW. There is a state grant also for the downtown parking lot near the VFW. There were two there prior to lot expansion which will return and there will be five more added which each have two ports. The wish/hope/desire is to have one fast charger, but it may or may not happen.
- Heat pumps: AS one of the largest municipalities in Vermont, Hartford got a grant to put heat pumps in the public safety building.
- Bradley solar: Prior to going to the PUC, solar projects must get approval from the Planning Commission, the Selectboard and the Regional Planning Commission. Two Rivers Ottuauquechee Planning Commission just granted approval.
- EV safety training: One mechanic has completed the safety training. There are three more classes for him to be certified to work on EV's & hybrids.
- MERP: The audits have not yet begun on the DPW and WABA.
- Battery power walls from GMP: pictures were sent to the grantor. Bugbee has been approved as a site, because it is planned to be a warming and cooling center. An application for the West Hartford Library is in the works with the idea that it will also be a warning/cooling center. The program requires a \$5500 lease with GMP providing the maintenance.
- RBES: The three hour training was attended by seven builders.
- GMP plans to help towns develop resilience plans.
- CAST: is working on resilience building needed because of climate change. The hazard mitigation plan must be renewed every five years. The last time was 2021. This is needed to receive FEMA funds. As ideas were discussed, the most important one seemed to be the need for towns and groups to work together and share ideas, rather than re-inventing each project.

Climate Action Plan funds: Parks and Rec. would like to electrify as many tools as reasonable. They found string trimmers and leaf blowers. The CAP has \$60,000 set aside. To spend these funds, HEC

needs to approve the expenditures. The cost for two of each item is close to \$4900. Esme moved and Sarah seconded that up to \$5000 may be spent from the CAP funds for the items for Parks & Rec. The vote was unanimous.

Elections: Offices are Chair, Vice Chair, and Clerk. For Clerk, Laura nominated Lynn and Esme seconded. For Vice Chair, Sarah nominated Esme and Laura seconded. For Chair, Lynn nominated Jesse and Laura seconded. Sarah moved and Laura seconded that the proposed slate be approved. The vote was unanimous.

Energy Fair: Laura and Sarah met with a VEEP person. VEEP used to work only with students. They now have funding to work with adults. There are two possible workshops: Electrify your home, and thermal insulation. Classes tend to 1.5 to 2 hours for 20 people. Electrify your home would cover topics such as solar and heat pumps. The thermal could be taught by COVER. The workshops should be in two locations. Childcare needs to be provided. Vital Communities has funds for childcare. They would like to start with training folks to train their neighbors. There would be an energy cafe meeting once a month for three months. A possible date is Saturday, April 6. Several questions arose: could Geoff do the solar training, do we want to extend HEC meetings for 30 minutes for the café, and are people more available on weekends than during HEC meetings. They also met with Vital Communities which holds an energy burden meeting quarterly. Several more ideas came up. There is an UV lending library for bikes. VC runs renter meetings: how to negotiate with a landlord, access to EV charging as a renter, reducing an energy burden and bill paying support. HEC can use MERP funds to advertise all this. It should be recorded and put on the website. There are two possible kinds of audience: interested in energy and attend and interested, but have no time for workshops. Perhaps an information sheet about ways to save money would be a good idea.

Route 5 bike lane: Towns were asked to fill out a survey. The Planning Commission and the Selectboard both filled it out. HEC wonders if the town is expected to provide funds.

Energy Justice Clinic: is it possible for them to do a utility building analysis.

District geothermal: A community engagement meeting is necessary before proceeding. Some topics would be: will it save money, what is the effect on renters, who will pay for installation. There would have to be a bidding process. Should HEC ask VLGS about criteria to produce an RFP.

Esme looked at the RES committee. She would like to see more people on the study committee. She is also working on having the PUC change the cap on net metering.

Battery storage: perhaps a good building to investigate is the former telephone building. It is very solid and has very high ceilings in the basement. The VA could also be investigated.

The meeting adjourned at 6:19pm.

Respectfully submitted Lynn Bohi, Clerk

Jesse Pollard, 2024 Chair

Laura Simon 2025

Lynn Bohi 2024, Clerk

Esme Cole 2025 Vice Chair

Sarah Kelly 2026