

Hartford Energy Commission minutes
December 21, 2023

Present in person: Esme Cole, Lynn Bohi; guests Tad Montgomery, Sen. Becca White, Erik Francis, Richard Otis

Present virtually: Jesse Pollard, Laura Simon, Sarah Kelly; guests Jen Durgin CAST, Nadim Kassier, CAST, Chuck Fenton

Jesse called the meeting to order at 5:08pm

Minutes: Laura moved and Esme seconded that the November minutes be accepted as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Changes to the agenda: None

Senator White: She is a member of the Senate Natural Resources and Energy Committee and co-chair of the Climate Solutions caucus. She was invited to visit Denmark to hear about geothermal, methane, and biofuels that Denmark uses instead of fossil fuels. Denmark is far ahead of the U.S. but Vermont is ahead of the other states that had legislators there. Vermont was invited because Vermont Gas System was bought by a Denmark company, which was bought by Shell.

Copenhagen uses district heat. The towns have clustered housing and retail districts. They use trash as fuel, burn compost, and are subsidized by government funding. This will be hard in Vermont because state grants would not cover all the costs. Private funding will need to be investigated. There are many steps for Vermont to use district heat. It will probably take about fifteen years if state funding were used. Also important is storage. There are many ways to store heat as well as many industries that produce heat or energy. Another energy source in Vermont is the 1500 dams.

HEC has been looking at wastewater as a heat source. The White River treatment plant needs a new heat pump. Downtown, the Briggs block and the Center for Cartoon Studies are looking at new heat sources. The District Courthouse is looking into geothermal. This brings up how much would this cost, whom will it serve, and how to bill each entity. Using the treatment plant, it could be on the sewer bill. The Federal government has a "direct pay" incentive program for energy projects. Senator White had another appointment and left at this point.

Public comment: How much trash would be needed to produce geothermal and how many would it serve? Reminder that Hartford sends its trash elsewhere. Jen came to hear about geothermal.

Wilder Dam: Some people took a tour of the dam. It does not function at full capacity at all times. In the past, it has been used for peak power. After the relicensing, it will be "run of river". Is it possible to somehow store the thermal energy not being used?

Coordinator's report:

- MERP: Hartford is waiting for the two buildings to be audited. It was due at the end of 2023.
- EV chargers: In the municipal lot near VFW, there are nine bases for chargers hard wired. Each holds two chargers. There are fourteen spaces for cars.

- 10 largest municipality grant: The ten towns will meet in January to meet some grant requirements. It will be used for the Public Safety building heat pumps.
- Burlington geothermal: Dana toured a facility with heat pumps using an aquifer water based heat exchange system.
- Batteries: The West Hartford library should be getting a tesla battery wall so that it can be an emergency shelter.
- Vermont Adult Learning: They had sponsored the heat pump installer program and are proposing another training in April , perhaps during HACTC April break. They also hope to hold weatherization training. They need a building. They also need to store some large equipment.
- Bylaws: CAST needs bylaws. One thought is to require people to attend one meeting before they apply to become a member. Should HEC do the same? Members thought it was OK.
- Climate Action Plan: Dana will go before the Selectboard on January 9 for an update. HEC members may attend.
- Funding: The Selectboard decided that CAST will not have funding added for next budget. HEC needs \$80,000 for the geothermal feasibility study.

Energize UV: They are currently looking for experts to talk about weatherization and electrifying energy use. They need to work on flow for the day, which is April 6. They will research getting help from Dartmouth students. They may have a convert a regular bike into an electric one session.

Geothermal in Hartford: Several people have met with the Town Manager about geothermal. Dave Briggs wants to re-develop the Briggs Block. He may add geothermal heat. Should there be a new utility to support geothermal in the downtown? HEC needs to talk more with Becca White about grants.. Perhaps Richard can help with a grant from Novo Nordisk. How big is the Shark unit so we can think about where to place it. What do we want from the feasibility study? The courthouse is drilling 500 foot test wells about 50 feet apart to judge the heat make up of the land.

Future: DPW will start looking at replacing the heat pump at the waste water plant in White River Junction in January. Dana is talking to departments about their heating systems and asking each one to make a list of possible replacements. The money for this ends in 2025.

Grants :Two Rivers Ottauquechee Regional Commission hopes to hire a grant writer. There is a person on CAST who writes grants. Hartford Development Corporation has a grant writer who works for GMEDC.

This will be Esme's last in person meeting. WE wished her well in the legislative session.

Esme left and the meeting adjourned at 6:15pm.

The Wilder Dam people are open to having their land used for energy projects: EV chargers, solar or more. Since that is where the grid starts, it deserves thought, since they have workers there 24/7.

Respectfully submitted
Lynn Bohi, Clerk

Jesse Pollard, Chair 2024

Lynn Bohi, Clerk 2024

Esme Cole 2025

Laura Simon 2025

Sarah Kelly 2026

