

Draft Energy Commission Minutes

November 21, 2024

Present in person: Richard Otis, Lynn Bohi, Esme Cole (5:21): guests Erik Francis, Connor Teal (COVER), Rep. Mari Cortes, Dana Clawson; Staff

Present virtually: Laura Simon, Sarah Kelly Jesse Pollard (5:45); guests Lee Michaelides, Jen Durgin, Beth Mallow

5:18pm The meeting started with no quorum with **public comment**.

Erik passed out an article from Rutland Herald titled *Energy Policy Hypocritical*. It says the Clean Heat Standard will raise the price of heating oil by between \$1.70 and \$4.70. In Vermont 96-97% of energy is said to be renewable. It is from hydro and solar panels. However, the ISO is not a 2-way street.

Previously, Erik had emailed an article about nuclear power. It said the U.S. should have three times the current amount of power from nuclear by 2050. Recently Georgia has built two new plants. The article names many concerns and answers them. It says we need new plants and upgrades in current ones in the next 10 to 40 years to have enough power. Between 2030 and 2040 we need to be carbon free. It says today's waste is stored safely. However, the grid is not ready for all this power. Nuclear and coal plants are currently being closed. They are near the grid. In New England the only plant that is suggested to be refurbished is Vermont Yankee.

5:21 a quorum was attained.

Minutes: Richard moved and Sarah seconded that the October minutes pass as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Continued public comment:

Conner is the volunteer coordinator at COVER. They build window inserts, similar to Window Dressers inserts, with whom they have worked in the past. They build at the COVER store for four days at a time. They build 100 to 200 inserts per season. Volunteers can sign up at the COVER website. They are also making inserts with other groups: Dartmouth and Claremont Maker Space. There are spaces for four people and two shifts per day: 9-12 and 12:30 -3:30. HEC will see if we can help spread the word.

Coordinator's Report:

- A study of geothermal at the courthouse found that over 30 years of geothermal for the Courthouse would cost more than a pellet stove and chillers. Oak Ridge National Laboratory is still looking at a distributed system for the Briggs, Coolidge and Cartoon Studies buildings. There is no ground source into buildings like these. Oak Ridge should have all the information completed by December 11 to know the number of wells needed and if space is available. Dana has been talking to Dartmouth about their geothermal project. Dartmouth wants to hold community workshops about the plan. Dana has also asked about how much the geothermal will cost and how much the building upgrades will cost.

- Nature Conservancy meetings are moving along. There will be community groups meeting in December to label environmental strengths, weaknesses, and threats In Hartford. The report will be available January or February.
- EV expo- Lebanon has asked if Hartford wants to host the 2025 expo.
- Vermont Climate financing event was held by State Treasurer Mike Pieciak. Once monies are obligated, the federal government can not claw them back. Several cities and towns are reading and downloading the information on federal websites as a safety measure.
- EV chargers there is no news other than VTrans is waiting for the vendors to give them more information. Hartford will get four level 3 ports.
- New England sustainability conference – other states are in the same boat as Vermont.
- Green Mountain Power is looking for funding for heat pumps at the wastewater treatment plant.
- \$75,000 grant from the energy efficiency block grant for heat pumps at the Public Safety building is not happening because it will be over \$100,000 more to remove the current oil equipment. The funds will be used to improve WABA efficiency and make it a cooling center.
- CAST is interested in HEC's outreach project. Dana has some finishing touches to do on the information. It was decided that CAST members will be added to the project. Dana wants a strong resources section.

Elections: Laura moved and Lynn seconded that Jesse be Chair. Jesse moved and Laura seconded that Esme be Vice- Chair. Jesse moved and Esme seconded that Lynn be Clerk. All motions passed unanimously.

Dartmouth culvert mapping project: CAST members went with the Dartmouth students to West Hartford's Wildlife and Podunk Roads to survey culverts. The project will be finished in the spring. A \$7500 grant has been applied for that can be used for Clifford Park to help replant. They will try to get more volunteers.

Climate Action Plan: this was postponed until December. Lynn asked that members choose the items they think HEC should pursue and send to her by December 17. There are funds available in the Climate Action Fund. However, some of the \$54,000 has been committed.

Facilities Manager: Town Manager Haverstack suggested, during budget talks that the Town hire a facilities manager.

The meeting adjourned at 6:26pm.

Respectfully submitted, Lynn Bohi, Clerk