

Draft Hartford Energy Commission minutes

December 19, 2024

Present in person: Esme Cole, Richard Otis, Lynn Bohi; guests Cathy Geiger, Eric Francis

Present virtually: Laura Simon, Jesse Pollard

Esme called the meeting to order at 5:06pm.

Public Comment: Cathy introduced herself as a former HEC member who has applied to return. She is a climate scientist, who currently works as a data manager for cancer. She is also Chair of the Mount Washington Committee.

Eric went to the Oak Ridge meeting about geothermal recently. One question was how good is the geology? Answer was it's fine, not the best. The consultants suggested 500 foot wells. He said a new building could save 75% on electricity through air sealing and insulation. Eric would like to see a department related to geothermal. He suggested the pump for downtown be at the wastewater treatment plant and it be pumped through the tunnel between the railroad station and Coolidge.

Minutes: Jesse moved and Esme Seconded that the last two meetings' minutes pass as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Coordinator's report:

- Nature Conservancy meeting was December 5. The report will be delivered in January or February. Anna Gunther asked if the whole Upper Valley should have a study.
- EV chargers: The funding is Federal and passed thru to VTrans. Norwich Technology got the contract to install the 8 level 3 chargers in the South Main Street parking lot near Northern Stage and VFW. VTrans will pay 80% and Norwich Technology 20%. Only four towns got around \$1.5 million for more than 4 chargers, another 7 communities received funding for four chargers. Where to put the conduit was discussed by Dana, Department of Public Works and contractors. DPW suggested not where they store snow. Vermont Law School has been asked to review the contract for the site agreement. There are questions about property taxes. Perhaps HEC might ask other towns with chargers or VLCT what they are doing about property taxes.

Geothermal: Oak Ridge has finished the load calculations. They think there will be a 75% fuel reduction through renovations and weatherization. The four buildings under review (Hotel Coolidge, Cartoon College, Briggs building and the old bank building) were all renovated in the 1980s. Another block may be considered; old Post Office to former Colodneys. There are houses in the mix and there was talk about upgrading the houses to Passive standards. It is not a good idea because they would be too tight regarding air flow.

Outreach to community and Town Report was tabled until next meeting.

Priorities:

- Jesse – tax stabilization for ADUs and car share program for downtown area
- Trailblazers again
- EV expo in September at Town Hall – work with LEAC, Sherry Bochart, Cathy and Laura
- Dana’s list of buildings that need work:
- Level 3 audits done on Public Safety and WABA- WABA still needs attention
- DPW needs new heating system
- WRJ Wastewater plant need new heating system
- Bugbee has had a feasibility study and needs an architectural study- working with Studio Nexis and Life Span, which specializes in senior facilities

Also need a list of where monies are currently allocated.

The meeting adjourned at 6:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn Bohi, Clerk