

Town of Hinesburg
Planning Commission
July 22, 2020
Approved August 26, 2020

Members Present: Maggie Gordon, Denver Wilson, John Kiedaisch, Rolf Kielman, James Donegan, Barbara Forauer, and Dennis Place

Members Absent: Dan Myhre and Marie Gardner

Public Present: None

Also Present: Alex Weinhagen (Director of Planning & Zoning) & Laura Sau (Recording Secretary)

Maggie G. chaired the meeting, which was called to order at 7:06 PM.

- I. **Remote Meeting Connection & Procedures:** Meeting was held remotely due to the current State of Emergency in our best conformance with the Governor's executive order.
- a. Mute/ unmute at lower left of screen with microphone icon. Alex W. will mute people if there are echoes.
 - b. Identify yourself when you start to speak since not all participants are on video.
 - c. This meeting is being recorded by VCAM
 - d. If there are bandwidth issues and audio is crackling, you can try turning off the video and using only audio.
 - e. Chat has been disabled.

II. **Agenda Changes:**

- a. None

III. **Public Comments for Non-Agenda Items:**

- a. None

IV. **Energy Plan- Proposed Town Plan Revision – Chapter 8:**

--- Discussion with Energy Committee Representatives---

Proposed revision of Town Plan. Last updated in 2017. During last draft, energy planning in Vermont was taking a different direction. There was an opportunity to do more municipally and reap benefits when reviewed at the state level. Regional planning commissions statewide was provided assistance to update plans. Chittenden county planning commission reached out to town Energy Committee to work. Blend of Energy Committee of Hinesburg goals, and Chittenden County Planning Commission input to meet state level goals.

Alex displayed the proposed Energy Plan (Document can be viewed in the Meeting Materials Dropbox Folder)

- a. Alex W. – Reminded attendees that Chuck Reiss of the Energy Committee reviewed all of the goals of the Revised Energy Plan drafted by the Energy Committee. The intent of the revision is to align with State and Regional goals to in return earn 'Substantial Deference' for town development input.
- b. **Alex displayed the Energy Plan Draft**

V. **8.1 of Proposed Energy Plan**— James and Barbara were assigned.

- a. James D.- Ideal place for long term strategies and objectives. Should be fleshed out more
 - Alex W.- Agreed that they all seem to reference other sections.
 - *Concern:* John K.- If tables were included, it would be too much. Thinks that its okay that it references to later items
 - Alex W.- Pointed out the separation of action and goals. Action is to identify strategies and objectives and how that differentiates from achieving energy goals.
 - Need to do something different to meet long-term and short-term goals.
 - Barbara F.- If there was more information, it would be too much and overwhelming.
- b. James D.- Who should be tasked with these items?
 - Alex W.- Agreed with James' point. Over 200+ action items listed in town plan, chapter 10 is implementation chapter which is a table listing action items and timeline. Should address after these are finalized. Who is in charge of carrying out action items should be identified to makes sure committee or staff are aware.
- c. Rolf K.-Strategies and objectives, awareness of what being asked to do as a community. Simpler for people to know what's being asked and to respond. Pointed out the necessity for clear and concise information of action items for homeowners—more simple = more likely for progress to be made.
 - John K.- Seems Rolf is saying to expand bullets a little bit
 - Alex W. 8.1.1- Not saying what to do, but asking audience to think about it more.
 - Barbara F.- Asked Rolf of known of location in world for what could be modeled.
 - Rolf K.- Will look into examples. In VT, have residential energy standard constantly being updated. Worth talking to Energy Committee on how to keep it, with financials of homeowners in mind too.
- d. John K. – Asked what's the role of the energy Committee- should be a good discussion.
 - Maggie G.- 8.8 – It's a goal to define role of Energy Committee.
 - Alex W.- 8.1.1 should be their role.
 - Maggie G.- P.C. determines which are priority action items to relay to the Select Board

VI. 8.1.2 of Proposed Energy Plan

- a. Barbara F.- It's kind of the same as the previous
- b. Maggie G.- Agreed on liking having very specific developed programs with specific objectives to direct energy early on, as to how to make all of it happen
- c. Barbara F.- Who will develop the programs?
 - Rolf K.- Energy Committee
 - Alex W.- This one yes. 8.1.3 might be the Select Board's task
- d. James D.- 8.1.4—"Benchmarking?"
 - *Clarification:* Alex W.- Measurement of initial energy efficiencies for a given building and over time, so you can track the progress of efficiency. Benchmarking has been measured for Town Hall. However, it only works if you follow through periodically.
 - Barbara F.- And someone who will keep track of benchmarks.
 - Alex W.- Yes, especially if there is no public works department. Might be another item for the Energy Committee but there's only so much a volunteer group can do with so many action items.
- e. John K.- There are records of gas and electric use of town buildings. But someone needs to correlate

and present. Helping residences find their current benchmark data. *Proposed* volunteering to help.

- f. Alex W.- Chuck mentioned municipal meetings and a few example residences.
 - 8.1.4 seems like an action item to keep if someone follows through.

VII. 8.1.5

- a. Alex W.- Vermont Community Dashboard website—energy committee concerned that the data in website could use improvement. This action item looks to work with other agencies to improve.

VIII. 8.2- assigned to Marie G. and John K.

- a. Maggie G.- Identified a couple that felt redundant- 8.2.1 and 8.2.7
 - Alex W. agreed with redundancy
 - Maggie G.-8.2.1 referenced a table –
 - Alex W.- keep that one.
- b. Maggie G.- 8.2.2 and 8.2.10 redundancy
 - John K.- 8.2.10 specifies solar and wind but they are similar as well. Proposed adding “solar and wind” specification to earlier item.

Maggie’s phone battery is dying. She will be able to continue listen from her computer but won’t be able to respond.

- *Proposal:* Alex W.- Will work on melding both.
 - Denver W.- 8.2.2 could include wood stove in town barn so hope to capture both of those objectives.
 - c. John K.- Would like to say “this has to happen” and less of just of encouragement language. If cant do that, then it is just based on showing people why it’s a good thing and promotion to get it done.
 - Except for duplications, felt the others were calling out specific items. Doesn’t see anything that should be deleted or is missing. Thinks it’s a solid list of actions.
 - d. Maggie G. Question- 8.2.8 – could specify which maps.
 - Alex W.- They do provide examples. Alex realized that he forgot to include the maps.
 - John K.- Should use a reference just as the tables are listed.
 - Alex W.- there are about 15 maps and the energy committee has 6-7 more.
- IX. Alex W.- 8.2.6 references potential sites and 8.2.5 asks to review sites—thinks these two can be made into one action item
- X. Barbara 8.2.12 – thinks there should be a different word than consider—to promote/ advocate for. Less reliant on state. They did a good job on Pond Rd.
 - Alex and John agreed with language change.

XI. 8.3

- a. Rolf K.- 8.1,2,3 are all what’s in proposed document. Asked about the business about street trees. Question to energy committee—implication of street trees would need to be specific- “How does this relate? Are you saying that street trees should be species that shed leaves in winter to allow the sun to heat buildings in the winter?”
- b. Alex W.- This section is from the current energy plan. It is partially about deciduous trees, but in the village, it’s about the balancing act of techniques. Outside of the village area, it might be more black and white.

- c. Barbara F.- referenced Dee Physical Therapy Building – if that building didn’t have deciduous trees that place would be an oven in the summer.
- d. Rolf K.- One could argue other types of biomass for fuel. Trash for fuel is controversial but prevalent in other countries.
 - 8.3.4 Sometimes open land close to the village, with building density, that kind of proximity might not be that important, but for town to identify ideal energy locations
 - Alex W.- Ask them about proximity to village or proximity to power such as 3phase?
 - 8.3.5- Rolf K.- Burlington City Arts- question of load capacity of roof, solar panels are light but the fixtures to hold them- might not be able to hold it. Referenced modest construction techniques without considering the option of solar down the road.
 - Barbara F.- Rolf is thinking in the future and totally supports.
 - Rolf K. – language that will achieve goal 8.3.1—perhaps--→“All buildings shall e designed to maximize exposure to the sun for both active and passive solar renewable source of energy such as solar, wind or bio-fuel”
 - New buildings in VT in 2030 will be mandated Net Zero. Will need energy if it can’t be done with orientation of house. Trying to bring up question of how to accomplish.

XII. 8.4 Dennis P.- 8.4.4—VT gas systems—Natural gas?

- a. Alex W.- Yes. Natural gas efficiency
 - Dennis P- under the impression of not promoting natural gas anymore
 - Alex W.- This is promoting what that organization does in terms of more efficiency
- b. Dennis P. – Businesses hog electricity. Concerns of poor insulation and not efficient lighting. Gave examples of the company he works for with automatic lighting. Switched from 240 to 480. Change in power changed amount of energy usage.
 - Sugar Makers- Runs RO at 6%, most people run at 20%. He runs at half as much of fuel. Uses wood whereas other use fuel. Sugar makers use more energy than quite a few houses.
- c. Alex W.- When Cheese plant was still a cheese plant- electricity usage was half of towns usage. At certain times of day, lights would flicker in town hall. Agreed with business energy usage.
 - Need an action item to work with businesses or reach out?
 - Dennis P.- Efficiency VT worked with the company he works for.
 - Maggie G.8.4.2- Edit- not just homeowners but also businesses
 - Alex W.- will work on including businesses in language
- d. Alex w.- 8.4.5 – Repeat of larger goal? Upper level of 8.6 – Alex will work to not repeat.
- e. Barbara – encourage working with efficiency program but not with gas itself.
- f. Dennis P.- look into buying vehicles that aren’t gas hogs for town vehicles
 - Alex W- 4-wheel drive for steep vehicles
 - Dennis- Tahoes and such use a lot of fuel. What about Subaru?
 - Alex Will made a note of. Not sure of current town fleet-- can make it an action item
- g. John K.- Liked the idea of using transportation cost in there- use as a town.
 - Understands that the school uses a lot for the bus system, but this doesn’t address it.
 - Alex W.- Time for biofuel buses
 - Dennis P.- Maybe smaller buses

- h. Alex W.- Chuck is a green builder. Expert in passive use houses.
 - Where we should focus first is efficiency. 8.4 is about how to do that. Mentioned John's point of how many built homes in next 20 years vs how many already exist in town. Alex wished there was a proactive way to encourage shrinking energy usage with weatherization and such.
- i. Rolf K.- John K walks the talk and has been doing this for 30+ years.
 - "Make yourself a really good coat before buying accessories" - metaphor for weatherization of house.
 - Alex W.-Not hard for a house to put on a warmer hat. First recommendation tends to be to put more insulation in your attic.
 - Barbara F.- Thinks that it sounds like a doable goal.
 - Maggie G.- Shared that she did do an energy improvement of adding insulation in an attic and made a big difference in comfort.
 - Rolf K.- Weatherization by 2050 means 65 houses a year. What's the mechanism for making sure that happens? Doesn't sound as intimidating when phrased by that
 - Alex W.- Maybe that metric should be added to goal.
 - John K.- Supports of improving existing structures. Doesn't want to lose sight of potential that in 10 years- 30 houses new houses
 - Mentioned improving zoning regulations.

XIII. 8.5

- a. Denver W.- Might recommend "biodiesel" to "renewable biofuel/ renewable diesel"—more long-lasting term.
 - 8.5.4- Doesn't actually mention bike lanes. Would consider and encourage. Would think
 - Bike path is more recreational- not as geared towards commuter going up 116.
 - Alex W.- will drop word in to specifically mention bike lanes.
- b. Denver W.- Investigation of why more children won't ride school bus?
 - Alex W.- Only some idea of why—time and if parents are already driving in that direction
- c. Alex W.- 8.5.3 addresses vehicle concern –
 - Dennis P- current vehicles or future vehicles?
 - Alex W. Agreed with the point- can't really change current vehicles fuel
 - John K.- Doesn't point to fuel type. It only mentions efficiency.
 - Alex W.- Seems possible for fleet outside of Plow trucks
- d. Dennis P.- 8.5.5 – Thinks a lot of people don't ride the bus because of lack of flexibility in time. Not early enough for people in his company to get to work.
 - Alex w.- Pointed out that Hinesburg is at the outer edge of Chittenden County so it's less frequent.
 - Rolf K.- The bus available for his job is two options only between 7-8
 - Alex W.- Van Pools-- But on hold for social distancing.

XIV. 8.6

- a. Alex W.- Asked P.C. if they want to make sure new homes being built now are with as much energy

efficiency in mind to meet 2030 goal

- Stretch code is step up from state-wide minimum. Any large project through Act 250 has to meet Stretch code. Whereas state code for everything is less. Complaint from some developers to want same code across the board.
- Rolf K.- Colchester and S. Burlington have adopted stretch code. Example of needing to seek simplicity in code, one across the board.
- Alex W.- Manual / website of how to get to next step. Not sure if Energy Committee will do and Planning and Zoning office will be happy to supply information.
- Edited typo 8.6.4>8.6.3

b. Maggie G- Do we have net zero homes in Hinesburg?

- Alex W.- Thinks S. Farm Rd. homes built by Chuck may have met net zero in at least the first year.
- Pond Rd and Haystack won't be net zero.
- Rolf K- John K. is net zero. S Farm- a couple are net zero on an annual basis. Rolf gave a few more examples.
- Alex W.- If he is unaware, then most community members probably aren't.
- Rolf K.- Tambourine work. Many people comment on cost but would like to have it. May be costly upfront but pays off down the road.
- Alex W.- More examples make it seem more achievable
- Dennis P- off-grid vs net zero?
- Rolf K- John is off grid and generating his own power. His daughters house is connected to the grid, if they produce more than usage, power goes back to grid or battery in basement.
- John K.- Does have a back-up LP generator for occasional battery care in the winter. In winter on clear days, solar works best. Not Net Zero.
- Barbara F.- Does come back in the long run. Thinking about Habitat for humanity houses being installed with heat pumps which are affordable. Why is Black Rock skirting issue.

c. Rolf K- CEP?

- Alex W.- Statewide Comprehensive Energy Plan

d. John K- Net Zero Ready vs Net Zero? Items that could be added?

- Rolf K.- House built in such a way- thermal envelope- basics of projects are ready to perform, but not yet connected to renewable energy source such as solar on the roof not yet purchased.

Alex, the last two are non-controversial goals so will take any questions on them offline.

8.7 large scale power

8.8 meta- goal of self-reflection of Energy Committee

Rolf K- Commended Energy Committee of work they're doing.

XV. Minutes of July 8th Meeting

- a. Board Members will forward edit suggestions to Alex.**

XVI. Other Business and Correspondence

- a. Alex Announced that he will be Away for the next two weeks and won't be available to do much prep work before the next meeting. He will be working with Maggie in the next couple days.
- b. Maggie G- Suggested a walking tour. Rolf K- Suggestion of Net Zero homes tour in future

XVII. Agenda Items for August 12 Meeting

- a. Continuation of Reviewing Proposed Energy Plan with hopefully attendance of members from the Energy Committee

The meeting adjourned at 9:02 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Laura Sau, Recording Secretary

