MINUTES SUBJECT TO CORRECTION. CHANGES, IF ANY, WILL BE RECORDED IN THE MINUTES OF THE NEXT MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE.

TOWN OF WILLISTON
ENERGY COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING
March 23, 2022

DRAFT

***Meeting held in the Town Annex Conference room and by teleconference (Zoom).**

MEMBERS PRESENT:	Kevin Batson, Maria Gingras, Reed Parker, Dar Gibson and Matt Wood
ADMINISTRATION:	Melinda Scott, Conservation Planner/Deputy Zoning Administrator; and Erin Dickinson, HR Coordinator / Assistant to the Manager
ABSENT:	Kevin Thorley and Samantha Lash
OTHERS PRESENT:	Chapin Kaynor

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1. Call to Order

Chair Reed Parker called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

2. Public Comment

Chapin Kaynor stated that he had attended the Growth Management Development Review Board hearing last night. He stated that Growth Management incentivizes the High Efficiency Energy Standard and onsite electricity generation/storage. However, the developers present at the hearing chose not to take advantage of these incentives because they felt the standards were not financially feasible to implement. Chapin said that an important priority of the Energy Committee should be to promote a better understanding of how to realistically achieve the energy standards incentivized through Growth Management.

3. Approve Draft March 9, 2022, Meeting Minutes

Dar Gibson made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Matt Wood seconded the motion. The motion was carried with a 5-0 vote.

4. Energy Plan Tasks: Finalize Champions

The Committee went over the Energy Plan tasks spreadsheet. Matt Wood noted that he was mistakenly assigned to task 4.8 "Collaborate with local and regional partners to connect commuters" and noted that description does not match the Building Energy and Education category. Reed will revisit the description and correct it if needed.

Dar asked for clarification on purpose of the spreadsheet, and Reed stated it is a starting point to get members thinking about different task areas and how they relate to the Energy Plan goals.

5. Discuss Process for Establishing Baseline Data

Maria Gingras and Dar led the discussion. Establishing baseline data and linking each initiative back to the Energy Plan goals provides a mechanism to show how the Energy Committee is making progress and holds the Committee accountable to the plan goals.

Kevin Batson reminded the Committee that it has been tasked with demonstrating a return on investment (ROI), and the Town will not get a direct ROI from the actions that only benefit residents. Kevin stated that the tasks where the town gets an ROI (saves money) will be attributable to the Energy Planner and those also need to be tracked.

Maria stated one of the first tasks for the Energy Planner should be to take the Energy Plan's baseline data and monitor it regularly for the purposes of demonstrating ROI. The Committee needs to be grounded in that data to target initiatives appropriately, but the Committee's challenge is to come up with a way to track public outreach that is more qualitative in nature and does not result in ROI. She asked members to think about what benchmarks they want to track related to public outreach; for example, attendance, feedback on what attendees learned, referrals, and the frequency of Energy Committee initiatives written up in the Williston Observer.

Kevin Batson does not think the Energy Committee has to justify itself, rather, the Committee should keep track of the goals and whether they are being met. Reed stated even a volunteer committee needs to measure its success. Chapin stated that benefits to Williston residents should be counted and tracked as well. Maria stated a creative way to understand the Committee's visibility and public awareness about energy issues would be to survey people now and then follow up a year from now after the Committee has held outreach events.

Reed mentioned the monthly Observer column written by Chittenden County Forester Ethan Tapper, and that people now look for his column and respond back to him. Erin Dickinson mentioned other ways to track engagement, such as, if the Committee published a newsletter and/or a social media presence, they could track engagement thru number of subscribers, view counts, etc.

Maria stated the Committee should come up with a standard method of tracking engagement in public outreach, that could be used with each initiative. If the Energy Committee wanted to write a monthly column, what would it cover and what platform would be distributed on.

6. <u>Public Outreach Overview</u>

Reed stated that the Observer is very responsive to what is going on in town and is an accessible platform because it gets mailed to every Williston resident and is also published online. Reed recommended the Committee actively engage the Observer. Front Porch Forum is another form of outreach the Committee could use. Reed showed a couple of examples of Energy Committee outreach from other regions. He noted that Vital Communities puts together a summary sheet listing each member community's activities by year. This serves the purpose of tracking success and ROI.

Reed recommended the Committee complete the VECAN communications inventory sheet, perhaps during the next meeting. Erin suggested the inventory could be created with an Excel spreadsheet with a tab for each topic.

Reed talked about how to publicize events – putting signs up, mailings, setting up tables at local retail location to hand out flyers (flyer is a project in itself). Melinda suggested the Planners Corner online newsletter.

7. Discuss topics for next agenda

The next meeting is scheduled for April 13, 2022 at 6:30 p.m. Reed suggested the Committee work on the communications inventory form. He noted he will not be attending, and Sam Lash will serve as Chair.

8. Other Business

The following updates were provided by staff:

- The municipal building energy audit offered by Efficiency Vermont will look at lighting and air conditioning. Erin is coordinating this audit for Town buildings and it will likely take place in April.
- Erin met with IdleRite, a manufacturer of anti-idling devices that are aimed at reducing vehicle emissions. However, she learned that the product requires installing other components from additional manufactures. As a result, she will be coordinating meetings to understand the extra components and if the system, as a whole, could be practical to consider for police cruisers.
- The March 29, 2022 Selectboard meeting will discuss the use of municipal ARPA funding. The meeting will be one of several in discussing how to approach the allocation of these funds. Erin noted that the Selectboard will also consider how to include public feedback in the ARPA funding decision process.
- At the April 27, 2022 Energy Committee meeting, Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC) Senior Energy Project Coordinator Ann Janda will be in attendance to provide info on how CCRPC can be a resource for the committee.
- Melinda provided information about Green Up Day, which will take place on May 7, 2022. The Planning Department is delegated as the town's Green Up Day Coordinator and would like to expand participation this year to other departments and town Boards/Committees. There will be a tent and tables set up on the town green. If the Committee wants to have a presence at Green Up Day, they can let staff know. The main event will take place from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m., with staff handing out Green Up Day bags starting at 8 a.m. Reed suggested having a sign-up sheet to get a distribution list going.

9. Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:01 p.m.