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
MEETING MINUTES
July 10, 2024
Meeting Recording: https://youtu.be/YhGZf_5cTFw

***Meeting held in person at the Town Hall Annex and by teleconference (Zoom).**

MEMBERS PRESENT:	Chair Reed Parker, Vice Chair Kevin Thorley, Matt Wood, Kevin Batson, Michael Lazorchak, Maria Gingras and Eric Hillmuth.
ADMINISTRATION:	Melinda Scott, Energy and Community Development Planner
ABSENT:	
OTHERS PRESENT:	Melanie Needle, Senior Planner, Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission.

---

1. Call to Order

Chair Reed Parker called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Reed Parker welcomed newly appointed member Michael Lazorchak to the Energy Committee. Introductions were made all around.

3. Approve Draft June 26, 2024 Meeting Minutes

The Committee reviewed the draft June 26, 2024 meeting minutes. Maria Gingras made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Eric Hillmuth seconded the motion. The motion was carried with a 7-0 vote.

4. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Reed Parker asked Energy Committee members if anyone was interested in serving as Chair, and stated he would be willing to serve as Vice Chair. Kevin Thorley said he was interested in serving as the Chair. Reed Parker made a motion to appoint Kevin Thorley as the Energy Committee Chair and himself as the Vice Chair. Eric Hillmuth seconded the motion. The motion was carried with a 7-0 vote.

5. Enhanced Energy Plan – Community Energy Profile

Melanie Needle, CCRPC Senior Planner, provided an overview of the data for the Community Energy Profile. She stated that the Public Service Department contracted with Stokholm Environmental Institute to employ the Low Emissions Analysis Platform (LEAP). The LEAP model is intended to show the estimated magnitude and timing of needed changes, or targets, to meet Vermont's energy and climate goals. Many of these targets are associated with concrete implementation actions discussed in the enhanced energy plan.

DRAFT

Melanie reviewed the Transportation Sector. The base year used is 2022. Melanie clarified that the data relates to vehicles registered to households. Kevin Batson stated that the term "municipal" in the tables was confusing. Melanie stated she would change the term to "household."

Melanie reviewed the fuel usage by household. Majority of homes use natural gas. 30% of homes are using delivered fuels and there is a lot of uncertainty with that data. Kevin Batson asked about whether homes that use two sources of heat counted under multiple sources of heat, and Melanie stated the data is based on self-reported survey information.

Other data included energy savings, overall energy usage in commercial and residential sectors, existing renewable energy generation. Melanie explained that the hydro dam on the Winooski was attributed to both Williston and Essex Junction (split in half).

Kevin Thorley asked whether the solar includes rooftop solar, and Melanie said it does. Kevin asked whether there is data that breaks down rooftop solar into commercial and residential, or by net-metered and non-net-metered (grid scale). Michael Lazorchak said that data can be obtained from Green Mountain Power.

Melinda Scott noted that the number of solar sites and solar energy has increased by about one-third since the 2020 Plan was drafted. Melinda noted also that the EAN Dashboard indicates that about 25% of households have adopted heat pumps.

With respect to the projected targets, Melanie noted that the CCRPC is still working out the bugs in the municipalization tool that the PSD provided, so they have only done the residential and transportation sector, not the commercial sector. They hope to have the commercial data soon.

Reed asked about the values in Table B1, what do they represent? Melanie stated that the value is MMBtu.

Melinda asked what the value is of having a target year of 2025, given that the Plan will not be adopted until 2025. Melanie stated that it is required to meet the energy standards.

Kevin Batson questioned the 2.45% growth rate, stating he thinks it is too low and could be verified by the growth management allocation limits. Melinda stated the 80 unit per year cap is not a reliable indicator of housing growth and stated that new housing growth has been very slow over the last few years and may continue to be due to high costs and high interest rates. Melinda questioned the numbers for projected housing growth, saying that the numbers are very low for the assumed 2.45% annual growth rate.

Reed questioned the projected decline of plug-in hybrids and the continued growth of fossil fuel vehicles.

Kevin Thorley stated that it is expected that most vehicles will be electric by 2035 based on consumer trends and the commitments automakers have made, so from that lens the numbers don't make sense.

Reed stated the numbers for fossil fuel usage in 2050 do not make sense given the number of fossil fuel vehicles estimated for that year.

Maria asked for clarification related to "projected," whether it means what we expect to happen or what needs to happen, and Melanie stated that the top row in Table B3 means what we expect to happen, while the other rows represent what needs to happen, or "targets."

Eric Hillmuth said the weatherization targets seem really high given the age of the housing stock. He asked whether it is the LEAP model that determines the targets for weatherization? Because in a town like Williston it might not make sense to spend a lot of effort on weatherization. Melanie stated that it is the LEAP model, which generated a number for Chittenden County that was broken out by municipalities. It is imperfect and the language of the Plan should acknowledge that. What is most important are the Pathways.

Michael asked if there is a simpler way to convey the information to the general public, because the tables are way too complicated. Melinda stated that if the town can meet the requirements, the Tables can go into an Appendix and the key points of data could be illustrated with graphics and charts, similar to the EAN report.

Melinda explained that the Energy Plan is long and detailed, but there will also be an Energy chapter in the 2025 Comprehensive Plan that will be very condensed and will refer to the Energy Plan.

Maria said the Energy Committee has a lot of goals but then how do you do the outreach to meet those goals?

Melanie wrapped up the discussion by saying that she will provide another draft of the Data Guide and present it on July 24.

6. **Colchester Net-Metering Partnership**

The Energy Committee discussed the proposal from the town of Colchester to partner with another town to receive a portion of net-metering credits from proposed solar arrays in Colchester, so that they don't exceed the limit of 500kW capacity. Melinda stated that if the town were to partner with Colchester, it would not reduce Williston's capacity to generate solar and could be a source of funding for an internal Revolving Loan Fund.

The Energy Committee discussed this option and decided the benefits were too small to bother with, so do not recommend pursuing this option.

7. **Other Business**

- Observer - Living Green article for July – Reed will reach out to Kevin Thorley about the July article he agreed to write.
- Isham Farmers Market tabling – Reed will reach out to Kevin Thorley about this.

- Champlain Valley Fair participation – the Energy Committee discussed whether to participate in the fair this year, and decided it was not a priority as most of the people reached live outside the County or even outside Vermont.

8. Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:07 p.m.