
**TOWN OF WILLISTON
ENERGY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
January 24, 2024**

***Meeting held by teleconference (Zoom).**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Reed Parker, Maria Gingras, Matt Wood, Eric Hillmuth, Dar Gibson and Kevin Batson.
ADMINISTRATION: Melinda Scott, Energy & Community Development Planner
ABSENT: Vice Chair Kevin Thorley
OTHERS PRESENT: Melanie Needle, Senior Planner, Chittenden 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.

3. Approve Draft January 10, 2023 Meeting Minutes

The Committee reviewed the draft January 10, 2023 meeting minutes. Matt Wood made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Maria Gingras seconded the motion. The motion was carried with a 6-0 vote.

4. Enhanced Energy Plan Update

Melanie Needle, Senior Planner, Chittenden Regional Planning Commission gave a presentation on the updated Enhanced Energy Standards. Her assistance is funded through the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant. About 60 hours of assistance can be provided, which should be sufficient. Having an Enhanced Energy Plan provides the town with Substantial Deference in PUC process. The Plan is a road map for meeting state energy goals, and an opportunity to look back at what has been done to advance the town's energy goals and what needs more work. Changes to the requirements include an equity assessment, forest blocks evaluation, language about climate resilient buildings, updated LEAP data, Greenhouse Gas Inventory integration. Melanie asked Energy Committee members to weigh in on the updates they would like to see. Reed stated that equity needs to be discussed and addressed more thoroughly in the Plan. Kevin Batson said that he received communication from Sustainable Williston about ideas for the new plan. Kevin stated that annual benchmarking should be done to assess progress on the goals, and the updated plan should consider thermal energy networks.

Melanie stated that benchmarking would require access to data from EVT, which the CCRPC posts annually. So, the Committee could look to benchmark once annually when that data is available. A goal can be added to the Plan to provide accountability.

Melanie stated that some of the target numbers/goals will change, but likely not significantly. The target dates will change to 2032, 2040 and 2050. The current plan meets the state standards for implementation actions. Melanie will work with Melinda to update the maps. Melanie will provide the LEAP data when it is available, probably in the next couple of months.

Reed asked about the goal to power 96% of heavy-duty vehicles with biodiesel, should it still be in the plan based on new technologies now available. Melanie said that this will likely change to reflect EV technology. Kevin Batson asked if there will be targets for EV charging infrastructure? Melanie said the LEAP data does not currently have targets for EV chargers, this is more of a policy decision. The Committee could come up with something. Kevin also mentioned electrification of the fleet. Should the plan have more definitive targets for electrifying the town's fleet? Melanie cautioned the Committee on being too specific in the Plan about this, and rather work with the Departments on developing a process for electrification. Or state a goal of 100% of the fleet to be electric by 2050, with some milestone years in the interim. Kevin emphasized that the town needs to prioritize that.

Melinda will share the Town Plan update schedule with Melanie. She will review the current plan and regroup with the Committee in late February/early March. The Energy Committee will in the meantime work on the implementation pathways section, looking at the policies and revising them as appropriate.

Eric Hillmuth suggested looking at progress from 2020 to 2024 to see what areas need more work. Melanie said that guidance from DPS recommends not to compare the different years LEAP data because they are like apples and oranges, and are based on two different models. Melanie said other data sources can provide measures of progress.

5. Possible Municipal Projects for Climate Pollution Reduction Grant

Melanie will be sending out a survey soon to ask for a list of shovel ready projects that reduce carbon emissions. The turnaround will be quick.

6. Other Business

- Outreach for VEEP workshop – Melinda made a flyer and has mailed it out to Energy Survey respondents and posted it around town. Melinda will post on Front Porch Forum and P&Z Facebook.
- Next Living Green article – Reed said that the next Living Green article is due on February 17 for February 22 publication. If anyone has an idea, feel free to draft an article.

7. Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.