
**TOWN OF WILLISTON
ENERGY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
April 26, 2023**

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

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Reed Parker, Vice Chair Kevin Thorley, Matt Wood, Kevin Batson, Dar Gibson, and Maria Gingras.

ADMINISTRATION: Melinda Scott, Energy & Community Development Planner

ABSENT: Eric Hillmuth

OTHERS PRESENT:

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 April 12, 2023 Meeting Minutes

The Committee reviewed the draft April 12, 2023 meeting minutes. Dar Gibson made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Kevin Batson seconded the motion. The motion was carried with a 4-0 vote.

4. Event Planning

The Committee discussed upcoming events including Town Fair Green Up Day and the Champlain Valley Fair Energy Booth that the Essex Energy Committee would like to pilot this summer. The Energy Committee will have a table at Green Up Day Town Fair, which will be staffed by Committee members. Melinda stated there are written materials – information sheets and brochures, as well as give-aways (pens, coloring books, stickers, etc.) Reed asked about more energy kits, and Melinda said she had reached out to Efficiency Vermont to see if they would donate some kits. While they cannot donate kits, they will send a pile of cards for people to use to get the free kits from EVT. Reed stated he would reach out to Tim Perrin at VGS to see if they can donate more kits. Melinda said she will also print out more Home Energy Surveys and sign-up sheets for the EV Ambassador program.

The Committee discussed the proposal by Essex to have an Energy Awareness/Button Up booth at the Champlain Valley Fair. The booth would need to be staffed for the entire 10-day duration of the Fair. Each shift is 4 hours long, 3 shifts per day for a total of 30 shifts that need to be staffed. Some questions were raised about the proposed event: Has the

Champlain Fair confirmed where the booth would be placed (at least in which building)? Have any other energy committees committed to the project? How will it be advertised (Front Porch Forum, local papers etc.)? Some Committee members said they could volunteer to take a shift but aren't sure how many 4-hour shifts they could commit to. Days and early evening seemed reasonable, but members were not thrilled about staying until the fair closes at 10 PM. Reed stated he would reach out to Dan Parkins for more information.

The Committee discussed hosting a repeat EV Fest in the fall. Kevin Thorley stated he supports that. The Committee decided that having the event during Drive Electric Week (last week in September) makes sense. Reed stated there is plenty of time to solicit participation from EV owners and vendors. Melinda asked whether she should reach out to Local Motion about doing an EV demo, and the Committee members supported that idea.

5. Window Dressers next steps/final decision?

Reed stated he has reached out to other energy committees and thus far has gotten no commitments to partner with the Williston Energy Committee on Window Dressers. He expressed some concerns about moving forward without firm commitments from other partners and without someone stepping up to serve as the Local Coordinator. Kevin Thorley said he would bring up Window Dressers at the next Sustainable Williston meeting to see if anyone wants to assume leadership of this effort.

6. CVSD Outreach

The Committee discussed the outreach to the CVSD school district regarding electric school buses. Kevin Thorley stated he had reached out to the Hinesburg Energy Committee, but no one had responded. Kevin Batson raised the question about the bond vote that authorized the purchase of the school buses and whether the vote committed the CVSD to the purchase of buses, rather than the alternative of leasing electric school buses. Matt Wood noted that former Williston Energy Committee member Sam Lash was now joining the Hinesburg Energy Committee, so Kevin Thorley said he would reach out to her.

7. EECBG Grant

Melinda provided an update on the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) grant. The process for rolling out applications has been slow, and the grant is more restrictive than what was anticipated. The town is opting to apply for a voucher for equipment and/or technical assistance, rather than a grant. The voucher program is supposedly more streamlined than a grant, but Melinda doesn't think a voucher or grant will be awarded until late in the year, at the earliest. When she has more information about the application process and criteria, she will bring a list of possible projects back to the Energy Committee to review.

8. Other Business

Living Green Articles – Reed stated that the No Mow May article would be published in this week’s Observer. The Committee discussed writing an article on Sustainable Transportation for the May article, focusing on alternatives to single-occupancy vehicle commuting and referencing the GoVermont website. Melinda offered to draft the article and send it around.

Home Energy Survey – Melinda said she has received about 80 completed surveys thus far. She will keep the Committee apprised of survey results once analyzed.

Regional Energy Committee Roundtable – Reed provided a summary of the meeting. CCRPC spoke about the Regional Energy Plan update and a new tool to measure carbon sequestration of forests, and Dan Parkins made an announcement about the Essex Energy Committee’s proposal for a booth at the Champlain Valley Fair.

9. Adjournment

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