

Town of Londonderry Energy Committee Minutes - May 31, 2017

Attending:

Committee Members: Will Reed, Bob Borella, Lawrence Gubb, Ian Jensen, Bruce Frauman

Collaborators: Emily Davis (WRC), Sharon Crossman (Planning **Commission**)

1. Will Reed called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm.
2. Bruce Frauman moved, Larry Gubb seconded: To approve the verbal minutes of the May 10 meeting with written notes to come. Passed Unanimously. The bulk of the meeting was a presentation of battery storage systems for solar systems by Bill Laberge. Will Reed was elected Chair and Bob Borella vice-chair.
3. Bob Borella moved, Larry Gubb Seconded to appoint Bruce Frauman as clerk. Passed unanimously. Bruce accepted the post.
4. Sharon Crossman wanted it on the record that the Energy Committee had reviewed the Yrsha solar project, and then approved, before she signs off on the project as Zoning Administrator. Given the full agenda and wanting time to carefully review the project documents, Bob Borella asked for, and received, the documents to be reviewed at the next meeting. Others agreed.
5. Bruce gave Emily Davis an overview of the Solar project now managed by Bruce Genereaux and the effect of the project on Jennifer Grycell who lives in the house below the project. We all agreed that while we are sympathetic with her position, we have no authority on the project, which was approved by the Public Service Board.
6. Emily Davis introduced herself as a facilitator as the committee works on energy policies as part of the town energy plan section of the town plan.

Davis said Act 174 puts into statute the State Comprehensive Energy Plan, first set forth in 2011 and updated in 2016. The current attempts to implement the plan will be considered when the plan is updated again in 2021. If town plans are aligned with the language of the Act, renewable energy projects proposed in the town will get deference from the Public Service Board.

Londonderry, Vernon and Westminster are pilot projects of the WRC to help guide the enhanced energy planning through the towns' approval process. Three meetings have taken place as part of this process. The first was an overview of the whole process with a focus on the standards that will apply. Towns' existing energy consumption in transportation, heating and electricity were also discussed. The second meeting focused on mapping of energy resources, which coupled with constraints leads to potential energy production sites. The third meeting focused on developing energy related policies that will give towns weight and teeth to get deference.

The committee then went through each of the four goals using a handout that quoted the Act 174 language along with applicable sections of the proposed town plan energy section. The four goals are Conservation and Efficiency, Transportation, Land Use Patterns and Density, and Development and Siting of Renewable Energy Generators. Emily noted that on May 30, the regional targets were decreased by 60%, but the impact on each town plan was not yet confirmed.

For Goal 1 (Standard 6) : regarding conservation and efficiency:

- Will suggested adding “having an energy committee table at public events” to Section 1.8 of actions to be taken under “existing” town plan policies (actually proposed policies).
- It was also agreed to add “generation” in policy 1.4 between “energy” and “facilities”. With that it was determined that sub-standards 6A and 6B (encouraging conservation and promoting efficient buildings) were done. For 6C (decreased use of fossil fuels for heating). Bob asked if the town wants to take a position regarding increased use of wood for heating. Will said yes because use of wood is sustainable and locally supplied. Bruce noted the difference between encouraging and mandating. Ian asked how do we encourage use of wood? Bob said by telling residents about rebates.

For 6C: actions:

- Add encouragement of wood use through education about rebates and other incentives.
- Develop a fire wood supply marketplace data base (Will)
- Have the committee offer assistance in filling out rebate forms (Ian)
- Educate people about point of sale rebate with respect to cold climate heat pumps (Will)
- Imbed the first bullet in 6C into Policy 1.7 (Emily)
- Educate the general public on energy efficiency

Bruce asked if the plan can be revised as part of the hearing process. After some discussion, Sharon said substantive changes would require another round of hearings, but minor changes could be incorporated into the plan. The goal is to have the version sent to the select board be as close to final as possible.

It was determined that no changes were needed to comply with 6D (leadership by example).

Efficiency Targets were reviewed.

It was at first determined that no changes were needed to comply with Goal 2: Transportation (Standard 7). Sharon noted that some policies appear in multiple places in the town plan. Emily will ask if these need to be repeated in the energy section. It was noted that fuel switching targets promote use of electric vehicles.

- The committee did decide to add section 2.3 under actions: “Consider current and future advancement in fuel efficiency in town vehicles.”

Regarding Goal 3, patterns and densities of land use, (Standard 8), Emily noted that the town plan already encourages compact, mixed use centers. There was a discussion about what constitutes small projects vs large scale projects. The town plan encourages small scale renewable development which loosely defined means a project developed by a person, then shared with a few neighbors. The Green Mountain Solar project would constitute a large scale project. No changes were made regarding Goal 3. Emily determined that policies 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.10, and 1.12 all meet the standards.

There was a long discussion on Goal 4, “the development and siting of renewable energy resources”, Standard 9. The DPS left writing of policies and actions to municipalities and the policy will apply to all development, not just solar and wind. Emily noted that Londonderry has the highest prime solar resource in the region. Though specifics are preferred, the committee decided not to specify preferences down to the parcel level. Sharon asked how the preferences reflect the town values of our rural nature and our historic and cultural background. Emily said the PSB does not require generated power to be consumed in Londonderry. Will suggested that future energy projects follow a collaborative and deliberative siting process. Ian suggested setting some kind of threshold to avoid having small, individual solar installations from undergoing the same scrutiny as large, industrial-scale developments. This could be based on a ratio of kw/per square feet of residential living area .

Emily distributed a set of maps dated March 2017, created by the Windham Regional Commission designating Londonderry’s Solar Energy Resource and Potential, Wind Resource and Potential, Known and Possible Constraints for Energy Generation, and Prospective Land Use. Bob noted the boxes designating 5 and 10 acres are relatively small compared with the overall map, and so it may be possible to meet the targets with minimal impact on the town.

The basic breakdown is preferred, potential and unsuitable sites.

Preferred:

- All town buildings
- Large commercial buildings
- Old lumber mills
- Old gravel pits
- Individual/private installations on rooftop
- Gas station canopies
- Town parks - small scale
- Flood Brook School

Potential:

We need to write a general policy that may be derived from some boilerplate policies.

We should include concepts such as vegetative screening from roadways, benefits for wildlife and maintenance of the understory with native grasses. We should

provide a public good and avoid adverse visual effects. Sharon also noted a lack of 3-phase power in town, so energy development should be able to provide 3-phase power, if possible.

Unsuitable:

- Wild Habitat
- Wetlands
- Riparian Buffer
- Steep slopes and ridge lines
- Agricultural land
- Green Mountain Forest

Bob noted that 60% of 39 acres sited in data targets for energy production amounts to about 23.4 acres which will not provide the 2050 goal of 6,359 MWh. Emily said MWh are calculated differently than MW. The 6,359 MWh figure is based on Londonderry's share of the regional population and Londonderry's available solar potential and so is a percent of our regional generation target. The PSB uses a number of 8 acres per MW in installed solar. The DPS assigns solar a capacity factor of 1300. So $6300/1300 = 4.85 = \text{MW capacity per acre} \times 8 \text{ acres} = 39 \text{ acres}$.

Will asked to keep all possible paths for approval of an Enhanced Energy Plan by Londonderry on the table. Larry said another set of hearings would be required for an enhanced energy plan, but there is an advantage to streamline the process and avoid a second set of hearings.

The next Planning Commission meeting is scheduled for June 12. The Planning Commission hearing for the new town plan is scheduled for June 26.

The next Energy Committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 7 at 6:00 pm. The plan is to write up the policies and actions as outlined tonight. Emily asked for enough detail so she can write the final version. It may be possible for the Planning Commission to approve the enhanced energy section in time to present it at the town plan hearing on June 26.

Submitted by Bruce Frauman, Clerk
June 8, 2017