

Town of Londonderry Energy Committee Minutes - April 5, 2017

Attending:

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

Collaborators: Paul Gordon (Select Board), Mark B. Wright and Helen Hamman (Conservation Commission)

1. Will Reed called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm
2. No additions to the agenda
3. Bob Borella summarized the intent of the Windham Regional Commission's plans to implement Act 174, The Energy Development Improvement Act. The state's goal for the act is for 50% of the energy consumed in the state be produced from renewable energy sources by 2050, including transportation and heat. Londonderry, Westminster and Vernon are the three towns in the WRC district that have chosen to participate in a fast track process to include enhanced planning for energy planning and siting in the town plan. Concrete actions are expected. Everything is to be submitted to the WRC by July 1.

Three components are to be reflected in the town plan. 1. Detailed comments and structures are to be part of the town plan, including analysis and targets with respect to efficiencies as well as town buildings and transportation, including support of public transportation. 2. Integrate the town plan with site planning and energy planning. 3. Encourage building in the town's center core, allowing a green space to surround the town center.

Bob wanted to insure that vital groups in the town government, especially the Select Board and the Planning Commission want all this as part of the town plan. The goal is to put on paper what we would like to do with respect to energy and site planning, but we do not have to actually do it. Paul Gordon could not predict whether the Select Board would support this or not, especially with out more detailed information on what is involved and promised.

There is a real possibility we would withdraw from this program and the energy committee would work from the new town plan which has recently been completed with the help of the WRC. Larry Gubb, a member of the Planning Commission will talk with the Chair, Sharon Crossman about the procedures for adaption which are just getting underway. The question is: can the work the Energy Committee does toward enhanced planning as part of this program be included in the new town plan as it is gets adopted in the next few months or added later, either as an amendment to the energy portion or through a repeat of the whole process of adaption for the entire town plan?

The advantage to Londonderry if we do adopt this fast track enhanced energy planning

process is that the State Public Service Board will give the town substantial deference “with respect to both land conservation measures and specific policies infused in their plans” according to the Introduction to Act 174. This means that should the town propose a project, the PSB will be more likely to give approval with less “due consideration” than if we don’t.

Paul Gordon talked about Senate Bill 51 which would make these guidelines state law.

Tom Buchanan, a former Windham Regional Commissioner from Londonderry was sited as an expert on energy planning. We may reach out to him for advice.

Helen Hammon asked about storage resources for renewable energy production. We will ask Bill Laberge, owner of Grassroots Solar, to update the committee (and those who attend) an overview of the current state of battery storage, and possibly other storage technologies. Bruce Frauman will take responsibility for notifying residents of Leverage’s presentation at our next meeting via social media and other outlets.

The WRC will hold only two meetings on this fast track process, and then will be looking for results. The first meeting was held March 27 which Bob Borella attended. The second will be Monday, April 10 at 10 am in Brattleboro and will focus on mapping. Bob Borella, Will Reed and possibly Bruce Frauman will attend this meeting. The next Planning Commission meeting is the evening of April 10 and the WRC proposal will be part of the agenda.

Bob clarified for Will that the town is not applying for a grant. The state grant went to the Regional Commissions to encourage towns to adopt the enhanced energy planning guidelines.

The next Energy Committee meeting will be held May 10 at 6:00 pm. We will ask Bill Laberge to give his presentation starting at 7:00 pm.

4. Meeting adjourned at 7:20 pm.