



**TOWN OF DURHAM**  
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**DURHAM ENERGY COMMITTEE**  
**MONDAY, MAY 4, 2009**  
**TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS, DURHAM TOWN HALL**  
**4:30 P.M.**  
**MINUTES**

**Members Present:** Mike Hoffman, Fil Glanz, Kevin Gardner, Don Brautigam, Robin Mower, Nat Balch

**Members Absent:** Dave Cedarholm, Vaso Partinoudi

**Guest Participants:** Jack Farrell; Paul Kerrigan (Chinburg Builders)

**I. Discussion with local developers Jack Farrell and Paul Kerrigan.**

Several issues were discussed (many from a list that Jack had prepared).

- A. It would be useful if the town Director of Zoning, Building Codes & Health (Tom Johnson) had more discretionary power to accept proven innovative energy-efficient construction design, methods and/or devices even though they might not follow NH state code. (One example used was lightweight framing.) Perhaps this could be addressed by a change of language in town building code.
- B. Exceeding building standards for energy efficiency does not present a legal problem. The problem is in convincing clients it's in their best interest to go with the higher standards. Town abatements (tax incentives, etc., as well as federal and state) on solar and geothermal, energy efficient design, etc, would be helpful.
- C. The advantages of using gray water and the NH state prohibition on doing so.
- D. Jack raised an interesting issue encountered by a homeowner in Kingston who designed a "heating" system that includes a 10,000 gal cistern of water heated by evacuated tube solar panels. Although the "passive" system keeps his 3000 sq ft home warm year-round, he initially met resistance from the mortgagor because there was no combustion-based central heating. The bank was eventually convinced after a winter tour of the house. The homeowner also received a discount on home insurance because of the absence of any combustible system.
- E. One possibility is for Durham to require that new buildings be built to Energy Star specifications. Energy Star exceeds standard code (~15% more energy efficient than "standard" construction). The building must be inspected by registered Energy Star rater. It is currently an attractive program because Public Service supports the Energy Star program.
- F. The current restrictions on building "accessory apartments" are restrictive, sometimes leading to a larger home than desired. The current code states that the "accessory apartment" must be less than 25% of the square footage of the main house and it must also be at least 500 sq ft – the net result being that the main house must be at least 2500 sq ft. The suggestion was made to change the code to allow for a smaller size home with apt.

- G. The suggestion was made that if a development were designed with houses that exceeded current energy efficiency standards, or if the house size were smaller than some threshold, the developer could receive a bonus density as an incentive.
  - H. The suggestion was made to change zoning to permit a greater number of duplexes, which are inherently more energy efficient than single-family dwellings.
  - I. Ensure that new homeowner association covenants are tolerant of energy efficient or “green practices” such as: clothesline usage, minimum house size; solar panels; etc
- II. **EDC debrief:** At the request of Jim Campbell, DEC members Don Brautigam and Robin Mower (Town Council Rep) attended the Economic Development Committee on Friday, April 24. A summary of what the DEC has been pursuing was presented, with particular attention given to aspects of the DEC draft Master Plan Energy Chapter that would be of interest to the EDC (i.e., Transportation, Energy efficient building). During today’s “debrief,” the topic of how to develop the core downtown was emphasized, raising such issues as workforce and mixed-use housing downtown.
- III. **American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Stimulus Money:** There was a discussion of the ARRA, including its funding through (1) Federal Low-Income Weatherization Program, (2) Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grants, and (3) State Energy Program. It is not clear if the Town has begun moving on any of this yet, and if there was something that the DEC could help with here – a letter of inquiry was sent to Todd Selig.
- IV. **ReVision Energy:** Kevin has spoken to someone from ReVision Energy in regards to solar panel installation, etc. As a follow-on to this, Nat, who has been talking to Dale Valena and Chuck Baldwin about initiating a summer lecture series at the Durham Public Library, will contact ReVision energy about presenting the first of series of energy related topics. Possible dates of Wed May 20 or 27, at 7:00 PM at DPL were suggested.
- V. **Solar Raising** – Kevin circulated some promotional literature for Plymouth Area Renewable Energy Initiative (PAREI) which is modeled after the old-fashioned “barn raising” where local groups volunteer their labor to assist in the installation of solar panels. For more information on this, see: [www.plymouthenergy.org](http://www.plymouthenergy.org)
- VI. **Planning Board public hearing on Jenkins Court building project May 13:** Robin raised the question of whether the DEC wanted to make a statement encouraging the use of “Green Building Practices” for this project, which will be the first building to be redeveloped in the downtown area.
- VII. **Robin quickly raised a few items and said she would email members more information about them:**
- a. The Traffic & Safety Committee this week discussed the Safe Routes to School program, which facilitates pedestrian and bicycle routes to public schools. Director of DPW Mike Lynch will be applying for this grant, and a subcommittee is being formed.
  - b. The NHOEP [planning] conference held this past Saturday, May 2, included agenda items that might be of interest to the DEC.
  - c. The Town of Newmarket includes a “Pedestrian, Bicycle and Transit Amenities” subsection in its Site Plan regulations.
- VIII. **The meeting was adjourned at 6:05pm.**
- IX. **The next meeting will be held on May 18, 2009.**