

Town of Durham, NH
Minutes of the Energy Committee
January 11, 2010

Members present: Don Brautigan, Dave Cedarholm (Town Engineer), Filson Glanz, Mike Hoffman, Robin Mower (Town Council Rep.)

Members absent: Kevin Gardner

Guests: Tom Johnson (Durham Code Enforcement Officer) and Peter Ejarque

The meeting was called to order at 4:05 PM.

I. Review, edit, and discuss statements for the NH House Bills HB 1486 and HB 1911.

Mike discussed his reasons for and against the bills: Against: HB 1486 could set a precedent which would not allow energy committees to recommend higher requirements than the State, e.g. setting higher insulation values in new construction, or requiring insulation according to Zone 6 [colder, shared by Vermont and Maine] instead of Zone 5. For: Proponents of the bill will point to consistency in regulation will lead to more cost-effective building construction. Good regulations should not be limited to relatively small political boundaries and should be promulgated on a statewide basis.

Don questioned the relevance of HB 1486 to our committee, but Tom responded about the potential loss of local rule. He argued that these bills might set a precedent that might prohibit the Town from requiring stronger insulation values in new residences.

Mike said that he felt caught between the two sides: He acknowledges the home-rule concern; however would like to see political officials and organizations lobby for statewide regulation where fiscal impacts to the public are under greater scrutiny. Consistency in regulation often reduces the cost of construction.

Fil supports letter to object to the Bill.

Robin moved to send a letter objecting to the bill, Fil seconded the motion. All approved.

II. Other state-level energy-related initiatives

Invite Rep. Amanda Merrill to a joint meeting with the Lee Energy Committee: There was discussion about whether she might be too busy to do this right now, and whether we should learn more first. Mike will ask Amanda, and perhaps other representatives to meet with us to discuss what is on the energy-efficiency horizon at the State government level.

Discuss whether and how to support HB 1554, which would allow municipalities to establish energy efficiency and clean districts. The hearing in Concord is scheduled for 01/21/2010 at 2:00 PM.

Discussion made clear that we support this bill to encourage homeowners to make their houses more energy efficient.

Tom Johnson spoke to support the bill.

Don will draft a letter. We agreed to send it off quickly or pass it to someone going to the hearing to read/submit it.

Determine other ways to stay up to date: Discussion about how this might dovetail with a meeting with our Legislative reps.

III. New Hampshire Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Program.

Dave said that the Town (via the Department of Public Works) already has submitted a grant proposal to replace existing street lighting with LED lighting. We agreed that better communication could reduce time spent on duplicating each others' work. We have therefore dropped the idea of applying for the Block Grant.

IV. Other Business

Peter Ejarque attended to meeting to learn more about the DEC. He will be applying for a Certificate of Occupancy within a few weeks so the question of residency will be moot. He has been a member of the Rochester Energy Committee and raised questions based on his experience.

There was a brief discussion as to the most appropriate day and time to hold our meetings. It was suggested that we may want to revisit the issue to possibly encourage greater participation. This would mean checking with Jennie as to when the chambers were available.

Next Agenda - We need to evaluate where we are and what we need to talk about.

V. NEXT MEETING WILL BE FEBRUARY 1, 2010 AT 4:30 PM.