



**DURHAM ENERGY COMMITTEE**  
**SEPTEMBER 13, 2011**  
**DURHAM POLICE STATION, 86 DOVER ROAD**  
**7:00PM**

- I. Call to Order and acknowledge absent members
  - a. Meeting was called to order at 7:15PM
  - b. Present:
    - i. Kevin Gardner
    - ii. Peter Ejarque
    - iii. Charles Forcey
    - iv. Brian Goetz
    - v. Peter Wolfe
    - vi. Dork Sahagian
    - vii. Chris Skoglund
  - c. Absent
    - i. Robin Mower
    - ii. David Cederholm
  - d. Presenter: Jim Campbell and Elizabeth Della Valle, AICP
- II. Approval of Agenda—unanimous
- III. Approval of Minutes
  - a. Postponed to next meeting
- IV. Master Plan Update and Survey Results—James Campbell, Durham Town Planner; and Elizabeth A. Della Valle, AICP Land use consultant.

Mr. Campbell introduced us to the Master Plan update process. The Energy Committee is his and consultant Ms. Della Valle's first stop in a series of meetings with the groups in charge of drafting the new elements. Once we have submitted a draft to Mr. Campbell and Ms. Della Valle, they will take it to the planning board for comments. Once it is approved (or revised), it will be presented through a series of public meetings. The outcome of those fall and winter meetings will determine if more revision is necessary or if a final draft can be prepared.

Mr. Gardner provided a background of the Energy Committee process, which started in 2008 with a public notice and a public meeting advertised through a printed invitation and electronic postings. The Planning Board requested that the Energy Committee develop a chapter. September 23, 2008 was our first public hearing. Attendance was good, filling the Durham Town Council Chambers; the hearing was facilitated by local architect Bill Schoonmaker and another individual. The Committee took this public input and shaped it into three pillars: transportation, architecture and land use, and alternative energy sources. A second public meeting was held to share the draft ideas and receive feedback from the public, highlights of which included a passionate discussion of the importance of local foods and farms. The group decided that topic could be covered adequately under the land use section.

The draft has remained in an unfinished state while the overall revision process for the Master Plan has been fine-tuned and, this spring, put in motion.

Ms. Della Valle asked what kind of data we collected. A greenhouse gas emissions audit was done to quantify emissions and included not just the Town offices and other municipal buildings, but also averaged houses and transportation. Mr. Gardner agreed to email that data to the Town Planner and the consultant. Mr. Forcey also reported that a municipal energy audit completed last winter and another due to finish this fall, while narrower in scope, might be helpful for setting specific municipal policy goals in the master plan as a part of the overall energy profile of Durham.

Mr. Sahagian asked if the Master Plan Survey results would be useful for our write up. There was a discussion of the small sample size, the obvious skew in demographics, and Ms. Della Valle concluded that such small scale surveys were powerful educational outreach tools but should not be relied upon as statistically valid polling. She also suggested that far from avoiding areas of conflict, the Energy Committee and its Master Plan chapter should try hard to locate areas of conflict, contradiction, and passion and engage the community about how it might go about balancing those issues.

Ms. Della Valle also strongly suggested that we set up measurements of opinion and concrete energy or emissions goals and track those things over time. She encourages communities to conclude their master plan with several things that are the most important indicators of success and then try to track changes over time in those areas. This, she argues, helps keep committees focused on goals and continues to educate and inform the community. Ideally, the results are made easily accessible, such as somewhere people normally go each year.

The consultant made several other points about the chapter:

- Our current draft focuses on individual buildings instead of neighborhood patterns, but the current emphasis for LEED and other national energy standard certifications is to encourage density of settlement. Good discussion of the relevance of New Urbanism and other density concepts for downtown Durham.
- A lot of discussion about “conservation subdivisions.” Another approach closer to downtown to create densely packed neighborhood design and access and nature. Liked focus on in-fill. Mr. Campbell and Ms. Della Valle both commented on the difficulty of getting the right mix of workforce housing, downtown development, and suburban conservation developments, all under state and federal regulations which are often out of step with current best practices.

Mr. Skoglund commented on the importance of focusing the chapter on outcomes and not spending too much time mandating this or that planning or environmental technique.

Ms. Della Valle encouraged us to email her the draft at [bethdellavalle@hotmail.com](mailto:bethdellavalle@hotmail.com) and to feel free to request assistance during this process.

A schedule was established for completing this draft:

- September 13
- September 19
- September 26
- October 5 -- draft distributed
- October 11 – Next Energy Committee Meeting

## V. Reports on current projects

- a. Bike route Madbury Road, traffic changes | Traffic & Safety Committee discussion
  - i. Mr. Wolfe and Mr. Sahagian expressed concern about the new street pattern for its narrowness, the energy impact of a new stop sign, and the difficulties of merging left on a bike. Mr. Forcey and Mr. Gardner asked for more information or a model to understand if the energy impact of a stop sign in a slow turning situation was significant, while acknowledging that faster moving traffic zones with new stop signs would probably show an environmental effect. The DEC was divided on whether the new street pattern was an improvement and so decided to continue discussing it in future meetings, aware that downtown streets are a balancing act between safety, commerce, commuting, and aesthetics and that more work clearly needs to be done.
- b. Revolution Energy municipal project
  - i. Mr. Skoglund discussed his personal conversations with Revolution Energy. He conveyed its appreciation of the Energy Committee and the Town's enthusiasm for the project and of our willingness to take on the task of fielding public comment (with Revolution's consultations to the committee as needed) and concerns. Mr. Skoglund highlighted a few areas that came up in the ORCSD discussion that we might be prepared to speak to as the municipal project moves forward:
    - 1. bankrupt solar companies -- Evergreen Solar
    - 2. warranties become invalid if companies fail
    - 3. rebates and incentives go to Revolution Energy
    - 4. speed of proposals and contract signing -- October 31.
    - 5. Sale of Renewable Energy Credits (RECs)
    - 6. Town owns equipment at the end of the contract
  - ii. The committee confirmed its enthusiasm for the project. Mr. Wolfe has agreed to review the contract for essential survivorship and to dispute resolution clauses when the agreement is ready.
- c. Brief discussions
  - i. Durham Day— Mr. Ejarque will be present with literature. Mr. Forcey agreed to try to prepare an Energy Committee Brochure. Mr. Skoglund agreed to produce an energy checklist with links to MyEnergyPlan.net
  - ii. No-idling signs for Middle School – Mr. Skoglund will drop those signs off for Mr. Gardner or Mr. Forcey to take to the SAU office during business hours.
  - iii. PSNH community outreach—Mr. Ejarque reported a press opportunity with the light box, good attention to that device in the library.
  - iv. Next meeting date: October 11, 2011, location TBD
- d. Meeting Adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

*Minutes taker: Charles Forcey*