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DURHAM ENERGY COMMITTEE
Tuesday, February 7, 2023
7:00 – 8:30 PM
—Final Minutes—

Attendance:

Present: Jim Lawson, Nat Balch, Matt Davis; Ti Crossman, Emily Friedrichs

Present virtually: Steve Holmgren (later in the meeting)

Absent: Bianca Leonard, Townsend Zwart, Jack Lannamann

Others Present: Todd Selig (at the beginning of the meeting only)

Jim Lawson moved an amended agenda with items added for Emily Friedrichs to discuss a tool ze was developing allowing people to evaluate the benefits of the Inflation Reduction Act and for Matt Davis to discuss House Bill 558-N. Ti Crossman seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

IRA Decision Making Tool Demonstration and Discussion

Emily Friedrichs showed a web-based tool ze was developing at Elevate. Elevate provides marketing for non-profits. The tool is a free content resource intended to help users evaluate energy improvement benefits available through the Inflation Reduction Act. The tool will provide information on both credits and rebates, and will notifier users when rebates become available in the future.

Ze demonstrated the various inputs necessary for Homeowners, Renters, Apartment owners and commercial building owners, and showed examples of the information provided.

There were questions and a lengthy discussion throughout the presentation about the tool.

Discussion about House Bill 558-N

Matt Davis briefed the committee on House Bill 558-N which was sent to him and a few others at UNH the previous day. He said it was difficult to determine the purpose of the bill, and the House hearing for next Monday had been cancelled. He explained that he had been involved with UNH and Eversource on the planning for a microgrid using the UNH generation assets, and how the micro-grid involved parts of Durham. He said the group submitted a concept paper to DOE, but a full submission was not made.

He reviewed the advantages of a microgrid both locally and for the grid. He explained the importance of the Demand-Response concept to reduce peak loads by shifting loads. He then reviewed confusing points about the bill, and how it could make the Demand-Response concept difficult to implement and would require more and unnecessary generating capacity.

Earth Day Planning

Jim Lawson reviewed some of the planning that had taken place. He said people seemed excited about including other groups like the IWMAC and the Conservation Commission. He talked about the Town's 66 Main Street location for the event. He asked what the Energy Committee should focus on.

Nat Balch said in addition to the EV display, he said having the essential parts of an EV home charging station would be helpful.

Matt Davis said a large Earth Day balloon is needed to make the event visible. There was discussion how the event may also use the sidewalk and parking spaces in front of the site.

Mike Klein asked if there was going to be a statement about the Town's carbon reductions. Jim Lawson said that it was important to have an information rich display about the benefits of the Inflation Reduction Act. He also said that next year's UNH Sustainability Fellow would be doing a new carbon inventory for the town.

Emily Friedrich talked about Window Dressers that do community builds, and that people can sign up. Ze said Earth Day might be too soon, but that it would be great if the community could build storm windows for Durham Day.

Jim Lawson said he would like to reach out to the Oyster River School District, but he didn't know who to reach-out to at UNH. Later in the meeting, Mike Klein said he had ORCSD people he could reach out to. Matt Davis said he might have people to reach-out to at UNH, but cautioned that it was a very busy time at the university. He said the UNH sustainability Institute was going to publish a web page with Earth Day activities. He talked about some of the Capstone projects that might be able to participate. He also recommended contacting Bensonwood about a display of their building technology.

Nat Balch asked if Revision Energy could come back this year. Jim Lawson said we didn't have anybody there last year with a display, and that it should be high on the list. It could be more than one. He was going to ask Jack Lannamann for assistance.

Mike Klein said he has a solar shed, and that he could dismantle the solar system and bring all the essential elements. There was discussion about how it could power some of the equipment at the event.

Ti Crossman said Fore Energy was coming online with the product which is an iron-based battery for storage. He was wondering if they may want to have a presence.

Emily Friedrich suggested reaching out to Key Heating and Air Conditioning to see if they could provide information about heat pumps.

There was discussion about a display table for CPCNH and Community Power. There was discussion about the roll-out of community power, and the opportunity that may exist before Wave 2. Nat Balch said this was called Wave 1.5, and there was continued discussion.

Mike Klein asked about messaging regarding Community Power not rolling out this spring. There was discussion about competitive energy suppliers, and whether the Energy Committee should raise awareness about options. Emily provided an example of a supplier providing energy at 12 cents per KWH with no cancellation fee. Mike Klein said he was interested in investigating options for competitive suppliers that could be made available to the community.

Steve Holmgren talked about this experience with Direct Energy.

General Updates

Jim Lawson talked about the Solar Ordinance passed at the previous Town Council meeting. He said that Jack Lannamann advised that the EV charging stations were on-line.

Emily Friedrichs said that given we have only two EV charging stations, the benefits of allowing overnight charging outweigh the downside of allowing overnight parking. There was discussion about this.

Minutes

The approval of the minutes from January 3, 2023 was moved by Nat Balch, seconded by Jim Lawson and unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:51.