

TOWN OF DURHAM
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DURHAM ENERGY COMMITTEE MINUTES
Tuesday September 5, 2023
7:00 – 8:30 PM

Attendees:

Matt Davis
Mike Klein
Jack Lannamann
Matthias Dean-Carpentier
Ti Crossman
Mike Lehrman
Nat Balch

I. Agenda Discussion

Request made and approved to add EV Charging update to the agenda.

II. Prior Minutes

Mathias had not sent August minutes out but will do so and they will be reviewed and approved at next meeting.

III. 121 Technology Drive Development Project/ Energy Checklist

Mathias reported having attended the last Planning Board meeting and had asked questions about the project, including about the building envelope and issues on the Energy checklist. The developer indicated they were willing to meet again to discuss energy issues, but have not called yet. There was discussion about possibly sending a letter to the Planning Board after meeting with the developer again. Matt and Mathias are meeting with the Town Planner next Thursday to discuss the Energy checklist as part of the Planning process in the future.

Nate mentioned that the state also has a web page with energy conservation guidelines which are well written and could be a resource for the town checklist. Nate will send the link to Matt and Mathias.

It was suggested that we should consider how the Durham checklist would work with any other multi-tenant building developments in the future. It was also suggested we might confer with the town Code Officer on how they apply codes to multi-tenant buildings.

IV. Combined Heat and Power Initiative -UNH

Matt Davis reported that UNH has been selected by the U.S Dept. of Energy as the New England Center for Combined Heat and Power Technical Assistance Partnership. Matt will serve as the Director of the Center. There may be an opportunity with this initiative to work with the town in assessing energy conservation opportunities at the Wastewater Treatment Plant. It was discussed that the Wastewater plant runs on propane currently and an analysis could look at conservation and cost reduction options. Opportunities might include natural gas or a blend of landfill gas and natural gas for power and heat. A motion was made, seconded, and passed to endorse having UNH perform an energy analysis on the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

V. EV Charging Stations Update

Jack Lannamann reported he has looked at the last 30 days use of the town charging stations. There are now 4 stations including the library. There were 8 days when all 4 stations were occupied at the same time in the last month. In August there were 70 unique users on the charging stations.

There was discussion about over-night charging and possible fees for parking after a charge is completed. It was suggested we may need to reassess the fee structure for charging and parking after charging is completed and in context of parking regulations.

It was reported the town received about \$750 in gross revenue from the stations and is probably breaking even. It was suggested the town could seek grant money for more charging stations possibly at the train station. A question was raised about the old parking lot next to the Holiday Inn and if that might be a site for another charging station lot. Todd indicated he believes the property is privately owned.

VI. Town Energy Resources Web Page Update

Mike Lehrman reported he has been looking through the approximately 80 links on the town web site. Some are very robust and it takes some time to look through them. He noted that at this point he thinks it might be helpful to include a brief summary of what each link contains to help people find information they might be looking for more easily.

VII. Power Purchase Agreements -Solar Energy

a) Todd Selig reported on the status of the towns power purchase agreements (PPAs). PPA-1 is about 120KW and covers the Churchill Rink, library and police station. PPA-2, for the Packers Falls Rd. large array, is 640 KW and is now owned by Clean Capital. The town is in year 7 of a 20-year contract with them. Town Councilor Joe Friedman is looking at the buy-out options. The original contract

estimated the town could buy-out the contract in year 7 for \$810,000. Clean Capital thinks the value is higher now at \$1,117,000.

It was noted the combined Power Purchase Agreements (PPA) effectively cover all of the municipal energy use except the wastewater plant. There was discussion of how the valuation of the PPA are calculated by the owner and contract terms. There was discussion of how to evaluate the possible buy out of the contracts including the present and future value of capital costs. It was agreed it is complicated. Todd agreed the Energy Committee could provide input on the buy-out decision process.

- b) Discussion turned to possible pursuit of a new community solar project. Mathias Dean-Carpentier reported he has looked at pursuing a grant to get money for a community solar project, it is called the Community Power Accelerator prize. The first part of the three-part application is due October 4. There is an online educational component that has to be completed before submitting the application. The minimum size for the grant project is 1 megawatt. It was noted that such a project would require about 4.5 acres of land. There was discussion of town resident's receptivity to such a large array. Todd noted that there was lengthy discussion around the solar ordinance and there are often concerns raised whenever tree cutting is discussed.

There was discussion of how pursuit of this grant fits with overall goals and objectives and should we be chasing grants without having established priorities. It was suggested that we look at objectives more closely at the next meeting. It was pointed out we also need to be prepared to submit goals for the Town Report in December. There was discussion if the application could be ready for October 4 and the next Committee meeting October 3rd.

Mathias will send the link for the pre-requisite educational course to committee members to view on-line. Todd pointed out he is open to pursuing the grant but for everyone to recognize there is no guarantee Durham will embrace a project site.

Motion was made seconded and passed for Mathias to pursue the grant application.

VIII. Community Power Update

Todd Selig provided an update on the Community Power initiative. Dover will probably launch participation this fall. Durham is still considering a launch in March or April. Steve Holmgren is on the board of Community Power representing Durham. They have hired a CEO and the Town Council will meet the CEO in the near future. Several councilors are considering when to launch but are also considering an

alternative to Community Power called Standard Power which is a company Keene is planning to use.

IX. Sustainability Fellow Update

Todd reported the Greenhouse Gas Inventory update is proceeding but Eversource has been difficult to get data from.

X. Other Update

Mathias reported Emily was seeking input on the Strafford County Complete Streets initiative relative to Madbury Road. Todd reported the town is looking at major improvements to Madbury Road. There might be options for bike or electric scooter lanes. Mathias will send an email on this.

A motion to adjourn the committee was made and approved. Committee adjourned at 8:53 pm.