

TOWN OF DURHAM
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DURHAM ENERGY COMMITTEE MINUTES
February 6, 2024
7:00 – 8:30 PM

Committee Member Attendees:

Matthias Dean-Carpentier --Chairperson
Nat Balch
Wayne Burton
Ti Crossman
Matt Davis
Emily Friedrichs
Steve Holmgren
Mike Klein
John Lannamann
Mike Lehrman

Guest and Other Attendees

Todd Selig
Erin Dennehy- by video

I. Presentation on Feasibility of Police EV Cruisers

Prof. Andrew McPherson of UNH was present with a few students and Durham Chief of Police, Rene Kelly to present their findings on the feasibility of using EV police cruisers. Several students spoke on the research they each did and Chief Kelly added his perspective of the operational requirements. Members of the committee were very impressed with the depth of research conducted.

The presentation addressed a number of current limitations particularly around battery life in cold weather and decreased range. The down time required for charging went up significantly in cold weather. There was a detailed cost analysis including life cycle costs and necessary infrastructure costs as part of the presentation.

It was noted that very few police departments in the country have implemented electric vehicle fleets at this time. A few NH departments have one or more EVs but not a fleet. It was suggested that perhaps the department might start gaining experience with EVs in an auxiliary support role such as the parking enforcement vehicle. It was also noted that there were not competitive alternative police EVs available currently but GM may be developing one. It was also noted

that the department might consider plug in hybrids as an alternative in the near future. The committee thanked the presenters.

II. Community Power Update

Steve Holmgren updated the committee on the roll out process. Following the mass mailing to all residents Steve, representing Durham Community Power, did a presentation and Q&A session at town hall.

The next step is to do an opt up campaign to encourage residents to select a higher percentage of renewable power. He will be looking for content for the Friday Update mailings and any help on promoting this with social media. He would also consider organizing handouts at the Transfer Station. We should set a goal for opt ups. Some towns have had a 2-3% opt up rate.

III. Goals Progress Review

Goal 2- New Renewable Sources- Matthias reported he had looked at some options on town owned land and didn't think there were good options for new solar including the gravel pit or capped land fill. Perhaps the Hancock station at Depot Rd could be possible for a canopy type array.

Todd reported that the waste water plant was not an option because plant operations wants to reserve land for future expansion. He also reported he has engaged GIS to look for potential land and will do further analysis of the capped land-fill.

Goal 3- Looking for Grants- Erin D reported she is taking a class on surveys this Spring and will be looking for an opportunity to conduct a survey related to community needs. She could do a survey for Durham on energy issues but she would need the subject defined by mid-March. A few ideas were posed. Matthias asked members with ideas to email him and he would pass on to Erin.

Emily has submitted an application for the Walking Softly grant. Emily also reported that NH DES is looking for environmental related projects that are well defined and could qualify for federal grants but also have a secondary funding source. Members should email ideas and she will forward but they are needed by March 1. Todd asked Emily to write a short piece for Friday Updates on the IRA Calculator.

Goal 4- EV Ordinance- It was decided to postpone discussion until the next meeting.

Goal 5 - Outreach - Mike L updated the committee on the workgroups recommendations as summarized in the group's notes.

Earth Day- The consensus was that the weather in April for official Earth Day is too unpredictable and cool to pursue large scale activities such as the EV car display. Earth day also coincides with school vacation week and the end of the UNH session both of which may diminish potential attendees. Instead, the group recommends participating in Durham Day in June. We would provide an information table and posters located on Main Street where there is more foot

traffic than in the upper parking lot where it was situated last year with the cars. This event would also promote Community Power Opt-Up options. The Recreation Department has been contacted and they can assist with tables and logistics.

IRA Information Session- The group discussed providing an information session on the financial incentives available. (Clean Energy New Hampshire can potentially provide a speaker.) The session could be held at the library on a weekend evening. The goal would be that this and other information sessions would be video recorded for future viewing on DCAT.

Heat Pump Info Session- It was also discussed that the Middle School could be a good site for an info session on heat pumps where a short tour could demo the schools ground source heat pump system. Matt Davis can address the theory of heat pumps and speak about the potential for ground source heat pumps and additional speaker could address the practicalities of air source heat pumps.

IV. Member Round Table

EV Vehicle Ordinance- There was brief discussion about how the committee might best review and incorporate suggestions on the draft ordinance at next months meeting. Emily asked that members have as much detail as possible in any suggestions. Todd has asked the Code Enforcement Officer and Fire Chief to provide input. It was noted that the Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission model ordinance is quite well done and is worth looking at also.

NH Senate Bills pending- Emily described concerns about 2 Senate bills that would adversely impact existing Durham ordinances on building construction energy efficiency. The 2 bills are SB 373 and SB 437. Senate hearings are scheduled for February 7 and comments would need to be entered ASAP. Wayne Burton pointed out that regardless of what the Senate does with the bills there would be opportunity to speak to concerns when the House takes up the House version.

Town Council Candidates- Wayne reminded members that the candidates for Town Council will be taking questions at the candidate's forum. He noted committee members might consider submitting energy related questions.

Motion to Adjourn - A motion to adjourn was made and passed. Meeting adjourned at 9:15pm.