

TOWN OF BEDFORD
June 24, 2021
ENERGY COMMISSION MINUTES

A meeting of the Bedford Energy Commission was held on Thursday, June 24, 2021 in the Town Meeting Room, 10 Meetinghouse Road.

I. Call to Order: Vice Chair John Russell opened the meeting at 7:00 PM

Present: John Russell (Vice Chair), Bill Foote (School Board Liaison Alternate), Tom Elwood, Andrew Gillis, Sue Thomas (Town Council Liaison), Chris Bandazian, Bing Lu

Absent: Bart Fromuth, Lori Radke (Town Council Alternate), John Schneller (School Board Liaison).

II. Approval of Minutes

– **April 22, 2021**

MOTION by Ms. Thomas to approve the April 22, 2021 minutes. Seconded by Mr. Bandazian. Vote taken – Motion Approved – All in favor.

– **May 27, 2021**

MOTION by Mr. Bandazian to approve the May 27, 2021 minutes. Seconded by Mr. Gillis. Vote taken – Motion Approved – 6-0-1 (Thomas abstained as she was absent for that meeting).

III. Reports of Members and Committees

a. Legislative update

Mr. Bandazian mentioned HB315, which is the municipal aggregation bill. The Senate added the municipal host part to that bill. The House disagreed, but they had a committee of conference and agreed and passed the amended HB315. If they get the grant to develop the landfill, they can now go up to 5 megawatts, so they are in good shape. Mr. Gillis stated that there's room for almost 2 megawatts at the dump never mind the other facilities, so it's going to work out very well. Mr. Bandazian thought the Governor was probably going to sign it. He also mentioned that the Legislature approved the building code committee's adoption of a new building code provision, which includes building envelopes, windows and doors. Mr. Gillis wanted to know if the building they approved was 2021 or previous year. Mr. Bandazian stated that there was some new stuff, but it depended on what section they were talking about, but it covered mechanicals, insulation, fenestrations, and building envelopes. Mr. Foote wanted to know if they adopted the latest National building code. Mr. Bandazian stated that they didn't; they go through two steps in NH. The administrative people who actually know what they are doing and then the Legislature has to say yes. Mr. Gillis stated that they have always been about 10 years behind and there's a lot of people who complain, because there are a lot of safety things in there too that they just don't have, because they won't approve it. Hopefully they approve the latest one, but usually they approve a couple of

years back instead. Mr. Bandazian stated that it's the individuals who buy properties and don't really know building codes who benefit from that; that things get done the right way. The commercial developers know what they're doing and things do get done the right way for them.

b. School projects

Mr. Foote stated that last month they signed an agreement to go offline if the power company wants them to, which is about \$20k over the course of a year, so it reduces their bill. Summer time projects are in full swing. The revamping of Memorial School will be complete this summer to LED's, so their power consumption should be dropping light wise. Other small projects will get absorbed into the maintenance budget.

Mr. Gillis wanted to know how it worked when they shut the power off and Mr. Foote stated that they give three hours' notice. Mr. Gillis stated that he was looking at using batteries as a backup source, but the power company offered to buy the capacity and use it for \$1,200 a summer. They could take it over whenever they wanted and draw from it. The PUC didn't approve it. Eversource sent emails to every single person in NH offering this program, but the PUC didn't approve it and he's not sure why. Mr. Bandazian stated that there was some legislation on batteries, on storage facilities, but it was like 30 megawatts, not this scale. Mr. Russell wanted to know if anybody knew why the PUC said no. Mr. Gillis responded no, but he's going to research it.

Mr. Bandazian wanted to know from Mr. Foote if the School would ever consider putting their data in Portfolio Manager. It's so easy. Mr. Foote stated that he remembers the Town side struggling for several years before they could get that up and running. Mr. Gillis stated that it was Eversource's fault. Now that they've agreed to link their data in, you just have to tell Eversource to do it. Mr. Bandazian stated that you tell them the building, when it was built, how many square feet, so they know how to deal with benchmarking, and it automatically uploads the data monthly. Mr. Foote stated that he would ask. He will also contact Peter Barbuto for information.

IV. Old Business

a. Solsmart

Mr. Russell stated that last month they had a good discussion about whether or not they were going to go to Planning and run the proposed zoning changes by them. He didn't know if that happened. Mr. Bandazian thought they were going to review it and talk about it some more.

Mr. Gillis stated that the building code didn't mention solar one way or the other. When nothing is in any Town documents, it's just up to anybody to interpret it however they want. Solsmart suggested that they say things like 'this is the definition of solar', 'this is how it applies to any type of Town zoning'. He thought that's what Solmart was looking for. Even if the Town just defined it, so that if you were ever talking about it in terms of zoning. Right now there is nothing that mentions it anywhere in the Town's zoning. Mr. Russell wanted to know if it was something that they bring to Planning. Mr. Gillis responded potentially. The more stuff you have in the zoning, the bigger government gets. There are reasons to have it in there and reasons not to have it in there. Mr. Bandazian stated that they could increase the word count, but right now they don't regulate it in any kind of way to limit. You open the door to limitations if you start regulating something. Mr. Gillis stated that they could wait until someone tries to propose a regulation and then have this discussion. Mr. Russell wanted to know why it has to be regulation. Why couldn't they just say

they encourage solar. Mr. Gillis stated that that's not something that's in zoning. Solsmart just wanted it to be clear. The whole point of Solsmart is to make it easier to do solar. If it's clearer in Town documents then people will see it and know how it all works. Ms. Thomas stated that if there's nothing in the zoning regulations now, and someone wants to put solar on their rooftop if that would be an issue. Mr. Bandazian stated that it's just an ordinary Building application. Mr. Gillis stated that it falls down into other things and explained those. Just to add the definition of solar or to say you can definitely do it, but once you have that in the Building code then someone can put up a vote and say maybe they shouldn't have it. Ms. Thomas stated that if they have that in there then it gets into more. Mr. Gillis added can you have it in certain parts of Town. The only restriction they have now is some of the covenants like Greenfield Farms has, but that's private. Mr. Bandazian stated that they allow it everywhere; anywhere a structure is allowed, they allow it as roofing material, so he's hesitant to even increase the word count. Mr. Gillis stated that Solsmart talked about making the permitting process easier, but it's like anything you do to your house. You just need a simple Building permit and an electrical permit and you're done. Mr. Bandazian stated that Solsmart also said that as part of this the Town could explain why they aren't doing it. Mr. Lu suggested maybe a FAQ page on the permit to say if you want to do solar, this is what you need to do. Then you wouldn't have to interfere with the code. Mr. Gillis stated that Lori was looking at coming up with the words for that.

Mr. Russell quoted from the report last meeting, 'If Bedford does not want to update the zoning code to clearly address solar energy, the community can achieve silver designation by writing and posting an advisory determination/zoning determination that explains how solar energy is addressed by the current zoning ordinances and processes.' Mr. Gillis thought that would be easy.

b. Electricity usage

1. EV charging stations

Mr. Gillis stated that they were emailing back and forth with other towns and wanted to know if they ever got any information. Mr. Russell stated that Tim was going to have a conversation with someone from the Derry Town Council. Mr. Bandazian stated that it turns out that their DPW Director lives in Bedford and knows more about it. Mr. Russell stated that Tim was also reaching out to Todd Selig in Durham. Mr. Bandazian stated it's the same town. Their DPW director is as good or better. Mr. Gillis stated that their DPW director ran the project. Mr. Russell stated that his name was Richard Reine. Mr. Russell mentioned they should look over the April meeting minutes, because they had a good discussion about EV charging stations.

c. Solar Farm at the Transfer Station

Mr. Russell thought the big news was the approval of HB315. Mr. Bandazian stated that the bigger news would have been if they got \$2.8 million from the Federal government. He didn't know when they would hear. Mr. Gillis wanted to know if it was a loan or what is it. Mr. Bandazian stated that it would be a grant. Not formerly a grant; it's Congressional direct spending, formerly called earmarks. Mr. Gillis thought that would be enough to cover most of it. Mr. Bandazian stated that there was a lot of competition for that money, but it would be a wonderful thing if it happened.

d. Town Pool PV Shade/Shelter

Mr. Bandazian stated that he did his RFP drafting and sent it over to Jeff Foote a week and a half

ago. He didn't know what the deal was at that end, if they agree with it. He didn't know if the Town Council would want to do anything at this stage. Basically there are no decisions to make. They are casting a wide net and seeing what turns up. What he put in the RFP for potential sites were the pool building, the Safety Complex, and the DPW Highway garage. Also, whether there is interest in vehicle ports to shelter the Police command vehicle, the vacuum truck at the Highway garage, and shelters in the pool area. Also to propose financing proposals. The goal is to get the Council as many choices as possible. Some will cost money. They discussed the roof on the shelter at the Town pool.

e. Municipal Aggregation Cost Analysis and Presentation - no new developments.

Mr. Russell stated that they plan to have Ryan Polson come in next month. He's with Standard Power. Mr. Foote stated that Mr. Polson contact him and wanted to know what was going on with the Energy Commission and he put him back to Tim, so he's thinking that Mr. Polson was trying to get his presentation before the Energy Commission.

Mr. Russell wanted to know if Jeff Baxter was coming in next month as well. Mr. Foote thought he was coming tonight. Mr. Russell stated that he was supposed to, but couldn't make it. Ms. Thomas stated that he got pushed to July. Mr. Foote wanted to know if they would be considered competitors. Mr. Russell was asking, because he wanted to be respectful to the gentlemen coming in. Mr. Foote didn't know the answer to that, so Mr. Russell stated that they would take it offline and try to avoid something embarrassing.

V. New Business – None.

VI. The next meeting July 22, 2021.

VII. Adjournment

MOTION to adjourn by Ms. Thomas at 7:27 pm. Seconded by Mr. Foote. Vote taken – Motion Passed – All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by,

Dawn Boufford