

TOWN OF BEDFORD
February 28, 2019
ENERGY COMMISSION MINUTES

A meeting of the Bedford Energy Commission was held on Thursday, February 28, 2019 at the Bedford Meeting Room, 10 Meetinghouse Road, Bedford, NH.

Present: Andrew Gillis (Vice Chair), Chris Bandazian (Town Council Liaison), Bill Foote (School Board Liaison), Bing Lu

Absent: Jeff Kerr (Chair), Shana Potvin (Past Chair), Catherine Rombeau (Town Council Liaison Alternate), Bill Coder, John Russell, Alexander Joy

I. Call to Order

In Chairman Kerr's absence Vice Chair Gillis opened the meeting at 7:04 PM.

II. Quorum Count: 5

A Quorum was not present.

III. Approval of Minutes

- a. 7/2018, 8/2018, 9/2018, 10/2018, 1/2019

A quorum was not present; therefore, minutes could not be approved and will be tabled for approval at the next meeting.

IV. Reports of Members and Committees

- a. Legislative update

Mr. Bandazian reported that there is a lot still in committee. There is an ought to pass recommendation for the establishment of State Department of Energy which seems like a sensible thing to do. Net metering is still alive, and they are working to increasing the cap from 1 megawatt to 5 megawatts. Mr. Foote asked if this bill would free-standing or loaded with other things such as biomass which would make it much more contentious. Mr. Bandazian stated there are other bills that would look to repeal the energy tax.

The study committee to investigate cost effective renewable energy has an ought to pass recommendation. There is a tax credit on gas guzzlers that is retained in committee. There was to be an increase in the registration fee of \$111 for any vehicle getting less than 20 miles per gallon to get a credit (the theory being the more gas you use; the more you are paying taxes at the pump. This registration fee was raised from \$0.00 to \$111 as vehicles got more efficient). This is retained in committee; however, it may not be dead and come back next year. Mr. Gillis noted that Tesla's

don't have road fees (they are just given a flat fee), so this is probably how they are trying to generate more revenue. Mr. Foote stated that it seemed strange to subsidize gas guzzlers. Mr. Bandazian opined that there are probably diversion interests at play: Those who sell gas guzzlers who have their lobbyists; those who just want another revenue source; and those who say, "We've just got to fix the roads, so where are we going to get the funds?" Mr. Lu commented that a better way to approach it would be to tax the tires on every vehicle. Mr. Gillis noted that they've talked about having chips installed so that they could tax you by the mileage because that would be fairer than taxing you by the year (Especially for those who barely drive their car very much compared to someone like a salesman who is driving on the roads all the time).

Mr. Bandazian stated that there are House and Senate versions of basically the same bills. Just about all of the bills in committee must be finished by March 14th and then they go over to the opposite branch. There is a lot that is still pending including updating the building codes. One version has everything except energy updated from 2009 to 2015 and there is a version that includes the energy code. Mr. Foote asked what year the energy code is up to these days, and Mr. Bandazian noted that 2015 is probably not the most current year, so we would still be lagging about 10 years behind.

Lastly, there is a bill once again to increase the amount of energy funds that go to school districts and municipalities from \$2 million to \$5 million for the renewable energy fund (similar to the geothermal grant). Most places use it for PB. Mr. Foote thinks it may be a nice revenue source for the bond we are hoping to pass because it would immediately offset a big chunk of that. Mr. Bandazian noted it would reduce carbon emissions.

b. School projects

Mr. Foote reported that the compostable lunch trays made from polylactic acid (a biodegradable and bioactive thermoplastic aliphatic polyester derived from renewable resources, such as corn starch) are being used in Bedford Schools. The Girl Scouts started the initiative for these trays 10 years ago, and after 2 years of work, Destination Imagination pushed the initiative across the finish line. The school district began using them in mid-January. The polylactic trays cost the same price as the previously used Styrofoam lunch trays, which were un-compostable. Due to the efforts made by the Town of Bedford, these trays became a purchasable item in the State purchasing consortium, so any school district that wants to use the compostable trays can now purchase them from the State commodity clearinghouse. Anything schools want to buy in bulk, such as these trays, can be found on a shopping list of items that can be purchased at the State level.

Mr. Foote also reported that the Annual Town Election is coming up on March 12th. This year we are looking for approval of the energy and infrastructure bond (\$3 million) and \$60,000 of first year interest on the bond. The first-year payback is larger than the bond cost, so we would be cashflow positive when the first year of improvements are put in. It's a 10-year bond that is cash-positive every year. The first year is significant because not only would we get the savings in the power usage from going to LED lighting, but we would also receive a \$170,000 rebate from Eversource for making LED lighting installation. Mr. Foote noticed that the PTA came out against support of the energy bond, and it is confusing to him why anyone would come out in support of something that would not reduce taxes. He is unsure how the PTA came to that conclusion but

would love to talk to anyone on the PTA in hopes of changing their minds because the energy bond is a very simple, very positive benefit for the Town. He hopes everyone will go out and vote on March 12, and vote for the energy infrastructure bond.

V. Special Orders – None / No reports.

VI. Old Business

a. Green Business Award

1. Lex social media promotion update –no report in Mr. Joy’s absence.

b. EV Charging Station Encouragement Project – no report in Mr. Joy’s absence.

c. Tour of recycling and incineration facilities – no report in Mr. Russell’s absence.

d. Landfill Solar

1. New RFP

Mr. Bandazian reported that the new RFP is out and is currently in the question period. It will close March 6, 2019. Mr. Foote asked how many questions of interest were received. Mr. Bandazian stated that there was one place that wanted to do a power purchase agreement who stated once again that they were not interested, but two places that do leases indicated interest in submitting bids once again. There was one other place that contacted us out of the blue about leasing land who indicated interest. Decision making on the school ballot, people, Town zoning amendments and bonds will take place during the budgetary Town meeting on March 13th.

e. New Solar Up campaign

1. Was the survey sent out?

In Ms. Potvin’s absence Mr. Bandazian reported that the Solar Up campaign survey has become a tedious clerical task. Ms. Potvin wrote the letter; Mr. Bandazian edited it; and they have a spreadsheet of who to send it out to, but the spreadsheet has a field that cannot be easily merged to a correct salutation (for example, it may be the name of a trust rather than a human being, or it may contain both a name and an address) so there is no easy way to pull out the salutation for the letter. Mr. Gillis offered to look at it, as he is very experienced working with mail merges and has scripts that can split all that stuff up. He asked Mr. Bandazian to send him the spreadsheet, and he feels certain he could spit it up.

f. Transfer station

1. Mandatory glass separation in effect – Lex and Catherine article after tour

Mr. Bandazian reported that there is nothing new to report - the program continues to run well, and the Town is saving a lot of money. Mr. Foote asked if there was any movement with recyclables volume – either up or down; and if trash volume is up or down. Mr. Bandazian stated that they are tracking the seasonal pattern. In general, because transfer station stickers have been being checked, the volume is down a little for everything; but otherwise it is following the historic pattern. Mr. Gillis noted that they started charging a fee for construction waste.

Mr. Bandazian noted that depending on what happens at the budgetary town meeting, there should be a reconfiguration of the transfer station so that the entry road will be closer to Wallace Road and the weighing station will be moved closer to the entry area so they can keep better track of what goes in and what goes out. This is planned to occur with other road construction work during the summer and allow for better and more efficient circulation since the transfer station facility will probably not be replaced in the next 10 years.

Mr. Bandazian says the real question with recycling is whether it makes sense to separate even further than we are currently doing (for example separating paper from cardboard). Mr. Gillis asked if things we are currently doing such as glass separation has decreased the overall volume. It has not, so that is good because it means people are adapting and simply separating out the glass from their other recyclables with no effect on the volume. Mr. Bandazian shared that compliance has been good with glass separation. Mr. Foote speculated that as time goes by, we may want to consider a fiber baling operation and forget about plastic because there is no money in it and it is a drag on the whole system. A baling operation may be more labor-intensive for transfer station staff, but baled cardboard would be much more valuable (Mr. Gillis speculated it is about \$2,500 per truckload). Mr. Bandazian stated that the cost to recycle mixed recyclables is double what it is for regular. Mr. Foote feels having value would be key compared to what we are currently doing by paying to get rid of it. If they are going to be reconfiguring everything at the transfer station, this may be something the Town would want to look into.

Mr. Foote expressed his interest in a webinar on March 20th that Mr. Bandazian shared with the committee, because he feels it would present a more global solution to how we would deal with the entire waste stream (Mr. Bandazian has the information for the webinar if anyone else would like it). Mr. Foote wondered if it would be better to get a grinder to turn tires, plastic, and home construction debris to create a refuse-derived fuel in the form of burnable chips that could be sold to incinerators. Mr. Gillis feels that there are just not enough incinerators out there. In his brother's town in Maine they just took out an incinerator because it smelled bad. The smell didn't come from what was coming out of the smokestack (they use filters and scrubbers to alleviate that), it was just housing all the trash in one location. If you came within 500 feet of the trash the smell was intolerable and it also encouraged rats and seagulls. Mr. Gillis would be interested to see how they deal with things in Andover because it is such a dense area. He feels there is a need for more trash incinerators to make electricity.

Mr. Foote shared that in Kentucky they create so much high-quality compost they can't do anything with it and people can't get it into their yards fast enough, so there are mountains of compost that have to be hauled away. Mr. Gillis stated that no town or city has been able to get over 50% recycling by mass without offering composting. Mr. Gillis speculated about starting a composting operation on the large tracts of land behind the transfer station but figured it would

probably cost a lot of money to build. If anything like that were to happen for a place as small as Bedford, Mr. Bandazian speculated it would most likely be privatized. It has been on the radar for many years.

- g. Eversource bills to calculate demand charges – Bing looking at demand charges

Mr. Lu reported that he hasn't done more work on calculating the demand charges. He already analyzed previous bills to determine the demand charges. 70% of our electric bill is for demand charges. Now we must look at the sports fields to see exactly how they use the power. He did some research and found that demand charges are generally measured by 15 minute or 30-minute durations. When the season comes and people begin using the sports fields, he can go to the field to collect data by reading the meters every 15 minutes for an hour. A week of data should be enough for us to understand the power usage. Eversource reports the number, but they do not report the way we should spread out lighting the fields to save on the demand charge, so we have to figure out how we can best manage that.

Mr. Foote stated that way back as far as 1990 in New Haven, Connecticut the electric company would send him a report of his company's power consumption with a graphic representation showing where the power spikes occurred. Eversource does not provide such a fine-grained report (we don't get anything more granular than the amount of power we use in a day); however, Mr. Lu will talk with Eversource to see if they can perhaps provide such information. He's pretty sure they have the data, otherwise they would not be able to charge us

VII. New Business

- a. Solsmart – no report in Chairman Kerr's absence.

Mr. Gillis recalled that there was something sent around about the things the Town could do to be more friendly for solar and then earn a gold or silver recognition. Mr. Bandazian noted that the town is already pretty solar friendly. We just don't have an award for it.

VIII. Reminders: Next upcoming meeting is March 28, 2019.

IX. Adjournment

MOTION to adjourn by Mr. Gillis at 7:36 P.M. Seconded by Mr. Foote.

Respectfully submitted by,
Tiffany Lewis