

TOWN OF BEDFORD
July 25, 2019
ENERGY COMMISSION MINUTES

A meeting of the Bedford Energy Commission was held on Thursday, July 25, 2019 at the Bedford Meeting Room, 10 Meetinghouse Road, Bedford, NH.

Present: Jeff Kerr (Chair), Chris Bandazian (Town Council Liaison), Catherine Rombeau (Town Council Liaison Alternate), Bill Foote (School Board Liaison Alternate), Sarah Braese

Absent: John Russell (Vice Chair), John Schneller (School Board Liaison), Bing Lu, Andrew Gillis, Tim Paradis

I. Call to Order: Chairman Kerr called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM

II. Quorum Count (5)

III. Approval of Minutes – June 27, 2019

Since there was not a quorum, the minutes could not be voted on and approved. Mr. Foote noted one edit in the June, 27, 2019 minutes, change WREC to REC.

IV. Reports of Members and Committees

a. Legislative update

1. Group net metering 1MW \geq 5MW (HB 365 and SB 159)

Mr. Bandazian reported that there are no legislative updates that impact us directly. There was a wood energy veto that requires purchase of some amount of wood generated energy. Previously it had been bundled with the group net metering change before.

b. School projects

Mr. Foote reported that that they were going to pay for the light upgrade out of cash flow. The bidding process ran too long and then the contractors were unavailable leaving them with only secondary and tertiary contractors which they were uncomfortable with; so it was decided to replace the lights as they go, and perhaps consider this project next year during the summer if Eversource can't come up with the cash. Mr. Foote said it is a shame because it was a \$100,000 \$200,000 reduction in our spend next year in power that was lost.

V. Special Orders

a. Kaitlyn Dinndorf plastic bags to help for the homeless

Kaitlyn Dinndorf talked about her project for the Girl Scout Gold Award. Ms. Dinndorf reused plastic bags to aid homeless people. She had seen homelessness before, but not so much in New Hampshire. Because Bedford can be a sheltered community, she was not exposed to homelessness and did not think about it as much as she could have. Then she went to the Hugo O'Brien Youth Leadership Conference where they spent a lot of time talking about homelessness in New Hampshire. The amount of homelessness in our State really shocked her and opened her eyes, and she began looking for ways she could help. She talked to her youth minister who gave her the idea for her project which addresses both homelessness and recycling. The project involved taking plastic bags and cutting them into strips and tying them together with a slipknot to make plarn (plastic yarn). The plarn is rolled into balls like yarn and can be crocheted into a mat.

Chairman Kerr asked Ms. Dinndorf what made her decide to make mats out of plastic. She explained that her church has several groups working to help the homeless and her youth minister suggested the idea of making mats for the homeless people in Manchester and had an organization in mind that would be interested in taking the completed mats. Ms. Dinndorf chose to make mats because they are made from a recycled material, they are durable (plastic bags take a long time to break down in a landfill), they are long-lasting, they are quick to dry and will not become soaked if they get wet, and they are lightweight. She feels that having a mat under you while sleeping allows one to have a better level of comfort and be able to sleep well. It is also helpful in keeping you off the wet ground and providing warmth.

Chairman Kerr asked how many mats she has made. Ms. Dinndorf started out with the goal of making 12 mats, and with a lot of help ended up making 61 mats.

Mr. Bandazian asked how many bags it takes to make a mat. Ms. Dinndorf shared that one mat takes 500 – 700 bags depending on how thick a person cuts the strips of bags into strips to make the plarn. She estimates that roughly 47,000 plastic bags were recycled for use in her project. Mr. Bandazian noted what a problem it is at recycling plant when plastic bags get into the recycling stream. He feels this is a positive use for the bags.

Chairman Kerr asked about her collection network for the bags. Ms. Dinndorf explained she collected bags from her neighbors, friends, and the public. She did not put up boxes, because most grocery stores already have boxes where people can donate their plastic bags for recycling. The grocery stores agreed to allow her to take the bags from their recycling boxes. So many people began assisting her with this projects that many times she would go to the grocery store for bags and there would be no bags inside the donation boxes.

Ms. Rombeau asked who made the plarn or helped with the crocheting. Ms. Dinndorf worked with 3 nursing homes in Bedford and Goffstown whose residents were making the plarn. At Hillsborough County Nursing Home, they posted flyers around the building and staff would donate bags. The residents really seemed to enjoy plarning. She researched crochet groups and contacted them. Crochet groups from The Bedford Women's Club, a group at her church, and a group who meets at the Auburn library agreed to help with her project. She had a lot more volunteers than she expected. She reached out to the groups hoping to reach her original goal of making 12 mats and ended up with 61 mats in all. The entire project took about 6 months to complete.

Ms. Rombeau asked about Gold Award for Scouts and if the project had to be of a certain scope or last a certain amount of time. Ms. Dinndorf explained the Gold Award project needs to be able to sustain itself in the future. Her youth minister will have kids make plarn and the women's group will continue to crochet mats - so the project will be sustained. She is a high school Senior and will assist with the project over the next year, but the goal is for the project to continue without her for many years to come.

Chairman Kerr asked what the biggest thing she learned from doing this was. Ms. Dinndorf said she learned a lot about organizing people and how to connect different groups. She made 2 mats herself and the majority of her time was acting as the liaison between groups. Some groups of people were collecting bags, others were plarning, and others were crocheting. She had to be able to get the bags to the plarners, and the plarn to the crocheters, and pick up the completed mats. She also made a ton of plarn. That is the part of the project that takes the longest amount of time. It takes a long time to cut the bags and string them together and make the plarn. Over 160 people helped with all phases of the project.

Ms. Dinndorf passed around a mat to the Commission. Mr. Bandazian noted it was impressively durable feeling. Chairman Kerr asked if the bags for the project were new or if all of the bags were re-used. Ms. Dinndorf said that all of the bags used in her project were re-used bags.

Chairman Kerr indicated that another thing Ms. Dinndorf may have learned from this project is about asking people for their help. Asking people is free, and more times than not people are willing to help out and volunteer. Ms. Dinndorf said that her volunteers were excited to use their crochet skills to help someone in need and to have something useful to do with their skills.

Ms. Braese asked if she intended to branch this project out to other parts of the State. Ms. Dinndorf indicated she hadn't thought about that herself, but maybe one day it could get that far. Somebody would need to be there to oversee it full-time.

Chairman Kerr said that one of the things the Energy Commission does is to encourage recycling. Plastic has been difficult. About the only thing you can tell people is to take their plastic bags back to the stores. He asked if it would be useful to have a collection box at the Bedford transfer station for plastic bags, or if she has enough supply with her existing network. She says this could be useful, but to be honest, "when you ask for bags, you get a ton!" She fears having rooms of bags and overwhelming the members of her church with more bags than they are able to handle. She was shocked by the sheer number of bags she received for her project.

If people want to help, she said they could learn to crochet. She herself is not a very crafty person and was able to learn how to crochet, so if she could do it, a lot of people could learn to do it. There are a lot of other things you can make out of bags other than mats such as bags and wastepaper baskets and more. Mr. Foote suggested a hammock. If anyone is interested in volunteering they can reach out to Ms. Dinndorf or her youth minister, Carrie Soucy at St. Elizabeth Seton Church in Bedford, NH.

Ms. Rombeau suggested it would be a cool project for other scout troops to make for their camping trips. Ms. Dinndorf indicated that four other Girl Scout troops assisted her with planning, and one troop crocheted a mat.

Chairman Kerr thinks this is a wonderful thing, and he hopes she stays with it. Perhaps it could become a business she could start in the future. Ms. Rombeau has a feeling her community organizing skills will be put to many good uses.

VI. Old Business

a. Green Business Award

1. Social media promotion update – Flyer

Ms. Braese reported that we now have a Green Business Award poster which she shared with the Energy Commission, and small flyers to come in August. She will need the Energy Commission's help in distributing them from August to February. She specifically did not put a date or website on the poster so that they could be used again into the future. It was suggested to put the posters up in town buildings -especially the library, Town Offices, and the safety complex where the Building Department is located (the latter two locations being spots where many contractors need to go). The posters should also be placed at the business sites of former Green Business Award winners. There are 10 posters that have been printed, and they should be displayed in areas with the highest traffic. Coinciding with getting the posters up in the community, Ms. Braese suggests that we also post about it on the Facebook and Twitter pages using the new graphic. She would like members of the Energy Commission to place suggestions of where to hang the posters and will create an editable Google Doc which she will post in the Google Group so people can do so. Ms. Rombeau suggests hanging the posters after Labor Day once school is in session again, and people are back from vacation.

2. Harbor Group – Meeting scheduled for August 1

Chairman Kerr reported that Harbor Group wants Chairman Kerr to come talk to them first before they agree to come talk to the Energy Commission themselves (perhaps in August or September).

b. EV Charging Station Encouragement Project

Ms. Braese reported that she talked with Russell Hunt a Senior Engineer at Eversource. She asked if they had any existing incentive programs for EV's. Hunt told her that they really support it and they are part of the ZBE Commission from the State, and they made a proposal to establish a network of DC fast-charging stations along NH travel corridors. If that goes through, commercial and industrial businesses will be able to bid on awards to host those stations. They are exploring specific EV charging rates (but nothing has been filed or approved because that would be a rate case). Ms. Braese asked Mr. Hunt what the travel corridors are in NH and was told I93. She encouraged him to also consider Route 101 and Route 3 because those roadways have a lot of commuters and there are not a lot of East-to-West routes either. She also let him know we would like to keep the lines of communication open. She asked if a rate case went through if it would be

retroactive for early adopters, but Mr. Hunt had no answer at this point. She doesn't think any incentive programs will come from Eversource.

Chairman Kerr asked if funds from the VW Diesel settlement would be used. Ms. Braese indicated that Hunt told her that part of the settlement will be used to establish this network. Chairman Kerr doesn't understand what sense it makes for Eversource to put a DC fast-charging station only on I93 because there is already a DC fast charging network on I93 for Teslas (the only cars that can currently use them). If the State is going to do fast charging, he doesn't think makes sense to replicate what is already there. The State should expand it into areas of the State that are not currently being served - which is anywhere *but* I93. DC fast-charging or Destination Level 2 charging makes a whole lot of sense rather than trying to duplicate what is already in existence. Ms. Braese works with many electrical utilities throughout the region and posted something on her personal LinkedIn page asking anyone who is working with municipalities that are in IOU territory, and she may potentially have a meeting with someone next week. There are a lot of companies that install them as part of a package; however, she does not know how you incentivize that for a business; because if they would already be paying for the power. There's always "pay to charge", but that is not the best model.

Mr. Bandazian indicated that it worked out well for L.L. Bean in Freeport, Maine. Ms. Braese says there are a lot of manufacturers that may be willing to get it done, but it does require permitting and a lot of wiring to get that done. Chairman Kerr, a Tesla owner, indicated that Tesla has a destination charger program and if you qualify as a destination (as the Bedford Village Inn has done), Tesla will give you destination chargers for free and pay for an electrician to connect them and then the destination only has to pay for the electricity after that. This is part of a promotion to promote Tesla vehicles, but also to give Tesla owners a place to charge. If we cannot get anything through Eversource, perhaps the Energy Commission could contact Tesla about it using the VW Diesel settlement. The library (rather than a hotel or a restaurant) might be a good destination charging location. Ms. Braese indicated that New Hampshire is part of the Smart Cities program and there is a large network of people across the State trying to get this initiative underway. She hopes to have more information about this at a future meeting.

c. Landfill Solar – Waiting on HB 365 and SB 159

Mr. Bandazian reported that a veto override may occur in September.

d. Solsmart

1. www.thesolarfoundation.org – Start with Bronze level

Ms. Braese reported that she went through the first couple parts of what is required to qualify for the Bronze level of this award: 1) Solar statement, which outlines community solar goals and commitment to tracking key metrics. 2) Twenty points in permitting in one category, and 3) Planning zoning and development regulations.

There are templates for the solar statement, so that should not be difficult to do. Parts that should be covered include: Goals, areas of focus, past achievements or programs, metrics, and commitment of staff time and resources to improve local environment for solar PV. For permitting, the

requirement is that you have to post an online checklist detailing the required permits, submittals and steps of solar community PV process. Ms. Braese asked if any online checklist exists. Mr. Bandazian will check into it. Chairman Kerr wondered how the permitting for the last Solar Up campaign was completed and if it was grouped together as one permit. Mr. Bandazian felt they probably had to be individual but were also probably all handled by the vendor.

Ms. Braese feels that some of the easier tasks to do in pursuit of the Bronze Level award include conducting a review of solar permit fees for residential and commercial solar and compiling those findings in a memo. Ms. Braese asked what the processing timeline is for permitting. One requirement is to do this in 10 days or less (for 10 points). Mr. Foote thinks it would be no different than getting an electrical permit for house construction and that you would just have to go to the Building Department, pull your permit, and off you go. Chairman Kerr thinks that may be correct, and recalled that although Kevin Doherty, the guest at last month's Energy Commission meeting who talked about building the first net zero ready house in Bedford has not done the solar yet on the house, he had said there were no issues in getting solar permitting. Ms. Braese asked how much a permit would cost and if it would be under \$400. Mr. Bandazian felt the permit cost probably would be under \$400 and that we could ask our Building Department official, Wayne Richardson, these types of questions. Ms. Braese said that if we had those 3 things ready we would have 20 points toward achievement of the bronze level already.

She asked if there is a list that we share with first responders about where installations are. Mr. Bandazian asked why first responders would need to know. Ms. Braese explained that when a solar panel burns it emits very dangerous gasses, and firefighters typically drill a hole in the roof at a fire to control it; therefore, firefighters need to use the proper respirators among other things. It is always good for them to know. If the disconnect switch does not work then you could end up with some serious issues. Chairman Kerr's friend who is a Fire Chief told him that one of the first things that firefighters do when they go to a fire is to check the meter and pull the disconnect to disconnect all the electricity in the house. If you have solar panels on the roof they are still feeding into the wiring panels on the house and if firefighters use an axe to cut through a wall or something, somebody could get shocked. So, you really want to have 2 disconnects: One from the grid to the panel, and the other from your solar to the panel. Having two disconnects is the correct way to do it, but whether that is building code and people are really doing it, Chairman Kerr does not know. Mr. Foote indicated the panels on his house are all microinverters, so when the power goes out, they all go out too. Chairman Kerr asked at what point along the chain they go out. The microinverters are feeding into something. Mr. Foote thinks it is a simple circuitry thing – millivolts, so it is not much. Chairman Kerr is unsure what the case is with microinverters, but with regular inverters they sense the grid and when they see the grid go down they shut themselves down. With microinverters, at some point, and he doesn't think it happens at each microinverter – but at some point along the line something looks at the grid and compares it and does that. He is unsure if the wiring is in the wall at that point, or elsewhere. Chairman Kerr would love to have further discussion on this or come check out how Mr. Foote's microinverters work. Ms. Braese said if we train fire and safety staff on PV we could earn another 10 points. There are a lot of people providing this training. It's possible they are already training on it.

Ms. Braese indicated the big part is the planning, zoning, and development portion. The requirement for the bronze award is to review zoning requirements, identify restrictions that

intentionally or unintentionally prohibit PV development and compile findings in a memo. She thinks it would just take a face-value approach to what it is and acknowledging any strengths and weaknesses there. She is unsure who would be able to do that, but it certainly would not be her. Chairman Kerr thinks we have someone pretty knowledgeable about that. Mr. Bandazian said it is really private restricted covenants in town that are the barrier; other than that, it is just the normal setback depending on the height of the structure for ground mounts. Chairman Kerr thinks some of the things to consider are tax valuations. Some towns do it one way, and other towns do it another way, but he thinks Bedford's is fair. He feels that would be something to highlight.

Based on the points, Mr. Foote thinks we could be in the running for silver level and should perhaps consider the Gold level. Ms. Braese explained that in order to earn the silver award you must first complete the bronze level and complete two silver required actions in the planning, zoning and development regulations and also in the inspection categories. You must also earn 100 points overall, rather than just the 20 points required for the bronze level award. In order to earn the gold award, you must first do everything required for silver, complete the gold required actions, and earn 200 points. She feels the bronze level is a good start, and if we are tallying things up along the way and realize we can achieve another level then so be it. We would probably have to consult experts along the way, however. Chairman Kerr asked what the best way to approach this would be, because a lot of it requires working with town employees. Mr. Bandazian thinks he and Ms. Rombeau should approach it, since it involves dealing with the Building Department, Fire Department, and Planning Department.

Ms. Braese will get more information on the other categories and special focus areas which include: Inspections, construction codes, solar rights, utility engagement, community engagement, and market development and finance. She will compile things and we can see where we land. She says that there are a lot of resources available, such as templates you can click on to assist us. Mr. Bandazian commented that this looks very achievable. Ms. Braese thinks that what we have already done by going through the whole process to see if solar PV is viable at the landfill would even give us 20 points.

- e. New Solar Up campaign – Was the survey sent out – No report Mr. Gillis absent.
- f. Eversource bills to calculate demand charges
 - 1. Bing looking at demand charges
 - 2. Adding the pool and library to see if PV will work
 - A. Consider energy storage for pumps/motors – No report – Mr. Lu absent.

Chairman Kerr thinks this should be taken off the agenda because at last month's meeting Mr. Lu already addressed this when he summarized the library versus the pool last and commented on demand charges versus constant charges.

- g. Change transfer station policy to put recyclables in solid waste
 - 1. Proposal to change resident sorting to reduce costs and be ready for any future changes in recycling policy

2. Maybe look at an outdoor screen again as part of the public education effort

Chairman Kerr indicated this would involve coming up with a long-term action plan Mr. Foote thinks he could advocate for a specific direction, but that would have to come from Public Works because they have to live with it. Chairman Kerr asked if the plan would be to separate glass from metal, from plastic, from paper and cardboard and compost. If we can identify those five things we could submit it to Jeff Foote at Public Works and find out that he has already done that. Mr. Foote could give him a call, or else Chairman Kerr would like to have Jeff Foote come in and talk at the August meeting to answer our questions and share what he is thinking about and see if we are on the same page, especially since he is also looking at the contracts.

- h. Town Solar

1. Pool PV array size would be roughly 67' x 60'

Keep in mind putting an outdoor screen at the landfill. Chairman Kerr's hope was if we could get landfill solar revenue we could use that revenue to put the outdoor screen up rather than having to wait for a grant to get an outdoor screen. We will see if that ever comes to pass.

- i. Plastic (#2) to structural plastic wood replacement – No report – Mr. Schneller absent.

Chairman Kerr indicated that Mr. Schneller was working with Public Works to find out if they could supervise. Ms. Rombeau indicated that she also needs to reach out to the Conservation Commission.

Chairman Kerr asked if there was anything else anyone would like to add to the agenda.

Since we are planning on awarding the Green Business Award around Earth Day, Ms. Braese asked if there were other groups such as the Conservation Commission or schools that may be interested in joining forces to recognize the winners of the Green Business Award, or if the Town already does something. She feels it is never too early to start thinking about it. Mr. Bandazian shared that the Town Council and Conservation Commission indicated to him that we may have common areas of interest and that we may be able to do some collaboration. Ms. Rombeau will get the ball rolling and talk to Denise and also get something on the Conservation Commission agenda to see what they might be interested in. Ms. Braese again stated that the schools may be interested. Ms. Rombeau thinks it would be interesting to look into what other Towns have done. Ms. Braese thinks it would be nice to recognize the Green Business Award winners in front of more than just 5 people, so that is why she is suggesting bringing in other interested groups; however, another part of this would be looking at what other towns are doing to celebrate Earth Day. Mr. Bandazian indicated there are a lot of standard programs out there such as carrying your trash around with you all day in a transparent bag. Ms. Rombeau says she is often asked about having a regular trash pick-up day in Fall and Spring. She feels tying getting ready for better weather in with Earth Day makes sense, and kids are interested in being involved in projects like that. Chairman Kerr definitely thinks people are motivated to do things around Earth Day. Being a parent of a small kid, Ms. Braese also likes the idea of getting an Earth Day tradition going, so if that could be achieved as a Town it would be even better! Chairman Kerr says we will keep thinking about that and indicated it would be great to get someone with organizing skills to help us make it a community-building thing.

VII. New Business – None

VIII. Reminders: Next upcoming meeting is August 22, 2019

IX. Adjournment

MOTION to adjourn by Ms. Rombeau at 7:52 P.M. Seconded by Chairman Kerr. Vote taken- Motion Passed

Respectfully submitted by,

Tiffany Lewis