

Energy & Water Conservation Committee
Meeting Minutes
February 13, 2008
5:00 PM

Attendees: Town Manager Sutton, Bill Johnstone, WT Bishop, Ron Comeau, John Hettinger, Pat Romprey, Jim Spanos, Rick Kelley, Marty Robbins, Paul Kasianchuk, Tom Smith and Susan Chenard

Town Manager Sutton called the first meeting of the Energy and Water Conservation Committee to order and thanked everyone for coming in spite of the snow storm. The Town Manager explained that we had decided to start this committee last October, when he met with Bob Varney, a friend and Regional Administrator for Region 1 of the Environmental Protection Agency, at the Brownfields event at the mill, and Mr. Varney asked us to join. Town Manager Sutton went over most of the handouts, and then introduced Account Executive Bill Johnstone of the New Hampshire Electric Cooperative (NHEC). The Town Manager had asked Mr. Johnstone to help us get started with our first meeting of the Energy and Water Conservation Committee. Mr. Johnstone explained that he dealt mainly with commercial customers, and spoke about the award the Co-op received in December 2007 for its energy efficiency efforts at NH ski area, saving more than \$50,000 in energy costs last winter through rebates and incentives for more efficient snow guns.

The New Hampshire Electric Cooperative serves 116 towns in the state, and about 70 have formed energy committees, according to Mr. Johnstone. A handful has contacted the Co-op, and he has attended several of their meetings. He has found a variety of directions being taken, from ones focused just on the town facilities, while others are geared more towards the public at large. Mr. Johnstone went over his handouts, which also showed solar hot water rebates and marathon water heaters. Tom Smith, a local motel owner, asked if the rebates would be available to heat a motel pool, but Mr. Johnstone explained that this program was geared more towards residential customers. John Hettinger asked about BTU's in and out, looking at cost differences between propane, oil and solar, and if saving energy would cost an arm and a leg. He also wondered about if the cost of producing energy in one location took into account the cost of creating it in another – such as using fossil fuels to create electricity. Mr. Johnstone explained that he has been working with Rick Kelley at Loon Mountain to do cost analyses, and in cases like solar power, tries to bring the costs within the reach of the average consumer. He agreed that one needed to look at the business side of energy savings. He said that in places where solar power is used to actually create surplus energy, it still doesn't make business sense yet, but economies of scale should help in the future.

Pat Romprey asked about giving people what they need, versus what they want. He explained that at a mall that he was remodeling recently, stores complained that they didn't have enough energy, but some had power boxes that were much larger than necessary. Mr. Johnstone explained that, yes, load data sheets must be filled out before

installation. Mr. Smith confirmed this, and remembered them as being quite extensive when he was building liquor stores throughout the state.

When asked what Lincoln should do first, Mr. Johnstone said that we should first request that the Town ask the Co-op to do an audit of town facilities. This would initially involve a walk-through, looking at lighting, heating, insulation and other obvious items. The report that comes back would show current effectiveness and give suggestions for where to make improvements. WT Bishop said that an infrared audit had been done at the school through the Step program. Mr. Romprey suggested that we get someone from Woodstock and from the school to join our committee as well, and Town Manager Sutton felt that Paul Rand might be a good addition to the committee. He also felt we should contact the FBLA (Future Business Leaders of America) group at the school.

Mr. Johnstone also suggested that we start public outreach programs, like Plymouth's anti-idling campaign, Loon's switch to bio-diesel, locating bike racks throughout town to encourage non-motorized movement, etc. He was happy to hear about our trail program, assuming that it connected the central parts of town to be of use to everyone. He pointed out the NHsaves catalog in his brochure, which had low energy and low water usage appliances that new construction should be encouraged to use. The Town Manager asked Paul Kasianchuk, of InnSeasons resorts, if they were using efficient fixtures, and Mr. Kasianchuk said yes, but that it depended on the contractor. Mr. Johnstone said that he has been working with Ed Brisson of Centex and that developer has already switched to marathon water heaters, which are 97% efficient and come with a leak-proof guarantee. The Nordic Inn had recently switched to these, and actually now had guests complaining that the water heater closet no longer kept their boots warm! Propane heaters are usually 50-60% efficient, but Mr. Hettinger said that power plants that produce electricity are usually only 30% efficient.

Rick Kelley mentioned the small steps program he had recently read about, where you can save money by doing little things. Suggestions on ways to save energy at home, at work and on the road can be found at <http://www.smallsteps.coop/>. Marty Robbins asked about energy audits in homes, which used to be free if you had electric heat but had a cost if another heat source was used. He wondered if, due to the higher electric load due to home offices and other appliances, and the changeover from many vacation homes to retirement homes, these might be available again. A Home Energy Analysis is free to NH Electric Co-op members with electric heating systems and/or meeting certain minimum electricity usage levels per year, http://nhec.com/residential_homeenergysolutions.php. Rebate money is also available through this program. Another program offered through the Co-op is SmartSTART (Savings Through Affordable Retrofit Technologies), where the customer can pay nothing out of pocket to have energy efficiency products and services installed in their home or business. The cost of the improvements is repaid over time, using the savings generated by the products themselves. The cost stays with the meter.

Town Manager Sutton mentioned aiming for a 10% reduction in energy cost reduction, but that seemed like a large number, per Mr.'s Johnstone, Romprey and Kelley, but Mr. Johnstone thought that potentially by switching sources one could save costs. Mr. Robbins asked again for a list of things we should be following. Mr. Johnstone suggested taking a few steps every year, starting with the town building energy audit and publicizing the committee and bike trails. Potentially we could hold a community forum to educate the townspeople, and the Co-op would be happy to send someone up to speak, whether it be a Saturday daytime or Wednesday nighttime project. Also, we should publicize the committee and its intentions on our town website and on bulletin boards throughout the community. Mr. Johnstone said that he is trying to set up a regional meeting of energy committees, which he hopes to hold in March, and the Carbon Coalition is offering speakers for that event as well.

Mr. Bishop asked if sewer/waste could be used for co-generation, and Mr. Johnstone said he had experience with this actually. Basically, one puts manure into a digester, which captures methane that's released to run a generator. One could get more information on Vermont public service under cow power. Nashua actually does this with their sewage already, but it is a big project.

The Town Manager started to wrap up the meeting, and it was decided that the next one would be on March 5th, again at 5pm at the Lincoln Town Hall. In the meantime, he asked that the group read over the booklet from the Carbon Coalition, and think about officers and a chairman. He is hoping to get someone from the Carbon Coalition to speak at our next meeting. Both Town Manager Sutton and Mr. Johnstone were happy to see the variety of attendees at tonight's meeting, from developers and ski area operators to involved townspeople, but the Town Manager asked that people spread the word and invite others as well. Mr. Johnstone also mentioned that Franconia is holding an energy expo on April 5th at 9am at Profile School.