

APPROVED
Hartford Energy Commission Minutes
July 25, 2019

Present: Niki Thran, Paige Greenfield, Lynn Bohi, Erik Krauss: Alan Johnson, Selectboard liaison, Geoff Martin, staff

Erik called the meeting to order at 6:33.

Agenda changes: add Button Up and RPC grant and remove roundtable

Minutes: Niki moved that the June minutes be approved as posted. Paige seconded and the motion passed.

Transportation Work Group:

- **Advanced Transit (AT) funding;** to significantly increase the Town's allocation to AT, Hartford voters would need to petition the Selectboard to put an article on the ballot. That takes signatures of 5% of registered voters. Van Chestnut, executive Director of AT, is worried that a significant increase would not be welcomed by voters. HEC would need to initiate an outreach campaign using Town Plan information and highlight the cost of owning a vehicle. The allocation can be raised by a certain percentage without going to voters. To appreciably increase funding, HEC should work with all other towns that benefit from AT. The AT plan for the future is called the Transportation Development Plan and is on SharePoint. Perhaps the request for a higher allocation could be tied to a new line or extended hours, as voters may be more inclined to approve of an increase when they know how the money will be used.
- **Carpool:** discussions are being held with large employers, such as King Arthur Flour, Hypertherm, DHMC, and Dartmouth. The workgroup would like to determine the number of employees that are currently carpooling so that there will be data for comparison after the outreach campaign.
- **Purchasing policy:** Geoff is drafting a policy for Town purchasing of vehicles. He has committed to completing a draft by August 2.
- **E bus pilot:** There is state funding available to replace diesel busses with electric busses. The AT busses are not old enough to qualify for funding, but Butler School busses are eligible. They are considering submitting an application for funding.
- **VLITE funding:** The VLITE program is offering grants of between \$5000 to \$250,000 to support transformative energy projects that support the objectives of Vermont's Comprehensive Energy Plan. 75% of the funding will go to projects that benefit low income residents. (See below for further conversation.)
- **Town facebook page:** Paula Nulty is the only person who can post on the fb page. HEC can send items they would like posted to Paula or Geoff. (*Correction since 7/25/19 HEC meeting: any requests to post to the Town's fb page should go to Geoff first to pass on to Paula.*)
- **Messaging:** To remind the public that HEC exists and is actively working on everyone's behalf, HEC needs to communicate to the public regularly. HEC can use the listserve, DailyUV, Town website, or

Town facebook page. An item for discussion next month: develop a theme for the message for the next year.

- **Upper Valley EV expo:** September 14 is the date for the electric vehicle expo. Vital Communities has a poll where volunteers can sign up.

Building Integrity

- **Hemlock Ridge:** The workgroup is holding an event Saturday, July 27 from 9:30 to 11:00am at Dan Frazer's condo emphasizing solar panels and heat pumps. The construction of the condos makes insulation very difficult, so the other products make more sense. Geoff, Dan, Efficiency Vermont (EVT), and Green Mountain Power will be presenting. Bright Light Company will attend as a heat pump contractor.
- **Net Zero Building Codes:** The work group had a recent phone conversation with Brian from EVT. There was a discussion of the process of EVT's net-zero program. The group also discussed other certification programs, such as HERS, RBES, and LEED. Brian, when pressed, said LEED is not good in terms of thermal energy use and that the certification depends on a collection of measures so that buildings can meet the standard without having a good envelope. There is training for RBES standards, which are being upgraded. Brian said the state does not track RBES trained builders. HERS is another path to a net-zero house without using the EVT program. Getting a HERS rating costs \$1000 to \$1500. There were eighteen single family houses built in Hartford in 2018, of which four were in the EVT program. The next step is to talk with JoAnne about which builders to invite to talk about requiring net-zero construction.
- **Revolving loan fund:** EVT is interested in supporting HEC efforts for this. No one has yet looked into how REGI funds that were going to the PACE program are now being used.
- **Button Up:** Vital Communities applied for and received a \$100,000 grant to work with low income people to duplicate the program HEC was involved in at Olcott Falls. EVT's Button Up program is rolling out. There is a survey that towns that participated last year are being asked to fill out. Geoff will complete it. There will be 500 free home audits offered statewide through the program, and it will be first come-first served. HEC can host an open house and EVT will bring food and advertise the event. People who get the EVT audit will take the audit to a contractor to complete some of all of the recommended work. It would be good if HEC can find some stories from other years to help people realize the possible benefits.

Miscellaneous Reports:

- **Resilient Hartford:** they are discussing an extreme event scenario for employees and commissions. It is a two hour program for disaster planning. The date is not known. Also they are encouraging a community work day in each village. Relevant topics might be: creating swales, or installing plastic over resident's windows.
- **Vital Quest:** Paige needs to get permission from the owner of each site. VERMOD is happy to be involved, as long as people do not intrude into the work area. Hartford's Parks and Recreation Department has not yet responded about Kilowatt Field. Geoff will talk to Scott Hausler. Alan gave permission to use his house. As a side note: VERMOD has built 100 homes in Vermont.

- **Extinction Rebellion Upper Valley:** The group's focus is on making transformative change to address climate science. There is a link on the HEC agenda to their facebook page. It is a grassroots organization and they have great information on the most up-to-date climate science. There is a core of about twelve people. In August and September, there will be non-violent direct action trainings. A group will be going to the Bow, N.H. coal fired plant in hopes of shutting it down. They are focusing on climate strikes for systemic change. They meet every other Sunday evening from 6 to 8pm at the Bugbee Center.
- **Two Rivers Ottauquechee Regional Commission:** they received funding to help local towns establish Town Energy Plans or to provide technical assistance to start an energy committee.
- **Selectboard priorities:** There are 37 Selectboard priorities for the coming year (see attachment 1). #4 is fix or replace Bugbee, #6 is a regional solution for adequate low income housing, #9 is to plan for clean energy disruption and the effects on the Town's economy (see [Tony Seba's video](#)), and #19 is to develop ideas for using WABA year round.

Municipal projects:

- **Flexible load management pilot project:** Geoff is working with EVT and Green Mountain Power (GMP). GMP gives notice to the Town on peak power demand days. There have been five so far. EVT and GMP have not yet developed a baseline for Hartford's energy usage, so is no way of knowing how successful the Town's responses have been. There will be upgrades made to the controls for heat pumps and ventilation system. EVT is paying for the upgrade.
- **WABA heat pumps:** the locker rooms at WABA currently have space heaters. There is money in the budget which possibly can be used to replace them with heat pumps. A ventilation system will need to be installed as well.
- **Energy audits for all town owned buildings:** Some buildings need more detailed audits and some need a first audit. Geoff wants to submit a request for funding to complete the audits in the next budget cycle.
- **Bugbee Center:** The USDA grant for a new roof was approved.

VLITE grant: The purpose is to advance completion of the State's Comprehensive Energy Plan. Grant amounts will range from \$5,000 to \$250,000. There will be a total of one million dollars per year available. The money comes from VELCO. The focused the program will be on supporting low income residents. Applications will be received quarterly. Applications with partner agencies are encouraged. Possible partners for HEC: Vital Communities, Twin Pines Housing Trust, SEVCA, COVER, and other energy committees. See the link on the agenda for funding and other details. There is an August 10 deadline, with the next being November. HEC will need ideas for what and how to do something that will be substantial. Suggestions: In home thermal storage units for heat pumps.

Website upgrade: if HEC directs people to HEC's website during public outreach. How can HEC improve its website so that people will learn more about what HEC does? There has been work done in the past, but the work has been dropped. There should be information about what has been done before on S SharePoint. Paige will investigate.

The meeting adjourned at 8:23.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn Bohi, Clerk