

DRAFT
Hartford Energy Commission Minutes
August 22, 2019

Present: Erik Krauss, Lynn Bohi, Martha McDaniel, Niki Thran; Alan Johnson, Selectboard; Geoff Martin, Staff; Becca White, Efficiency Vermont

Erik called the meeting to order at 6:32.

Button Up: Becca is the statewide coordinator for Button Up for 2019. There are several differences from last year's Button Up. HEC can work with other organizations, such as COVER. The goals are for the program to be simple, easy, and fun. This means the requirements will be clear, barriers low, and there will be interesting things to discuss. Efficiency Vermont (EVT) will be performing the free home visits (audits) and will follow up with people who sign up. Town partners will do one or both of the following: host a "Step Up to Button Up" workshop, which consists of a 20 minute talk by EVT and a longer question period, or arrange a tour of homes that have had work done previously. If HEC finds the houses for the tours, Becca will set up the tour. For the workshop, HEC will tell Becca the date, time and place for the workshop and she will take care of everything else. The incentives have gone up significantly this year. Those who are low to moderate income (\$80,000 for two persons) can receive 50% of the project cost up to \$4,000. People with higher incomes receive 50% of the project cost up to \$2,000. Additional incentives are available for basement or attic work and for installing a cold climate heat pump. Finally, EVT is offering a \$20 rebate for a new appliance for anyone that has a home energy visit. The program starts on July 15, 2019, and runs for eighteen months.

Commissioners noted that Hartford had a problem finding contractors last year. While there are no new contractors this year, it may help that the home visits will be performed by EVT. In addition, EVT auditors will provide homeowners with a work scope, as well as a list of local contractors. This way, much of the work load will be taken off of the contractors, and when contractors are contacted by homeowners, the contractors will know that it is a warm lead.

The role of the Town is to hold a workshop, a tour, or both; to drive attendance; and to sign people up. At the workshop or tour, there will be a website for people to sign up for a specific date for the visit. EVT has funding for food, which they will bring.

The timeframe: there is a webinar on Wednesday, September 4, and on Sunday, October 2 there will be a kick-off celebration. They prefer the home tours to be on one of the following dates: October 5, October 16, or November 5. The final day to sign up is November 30. Additional sign ups may be made on the website.

HEC agreed to participate.

Minutes: Niki moved and Martha seconded that the July minutes be approved as amended. The motion passed.

Climate Emergency Declaration: There is a climate coalition working on a non-binding resolution to declare a climate emergency. The goal is to mobilize a response to the environmental problems outlined in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report. The purpose is to declare an emergency, and then to act accordingly. The IPCC report found that the world has only ten years to act to avoid the worst impacts of climate change. The public needs to be engaged. The coalition wants to work with towns to declare an emergency, and then have the declaration move up to the state legislature and have them declare an emergency. After a declaration is made, the next step would be to convene “citizen assemblies” to develop solutions at the local level. Each group will decide on a local level how best to reduce emissions, increase resiliency, and amplify deep adaptation. This is also an ecological declaration in order to reduce consumption to within our limits.

Extinction Rebellion (XR) Vermont would like many towns to declare a climate emergency this fall so that there is momentum at the beginning of the legislative session. See the link in the August agenda. Currently 955 local governments around the world have done this. Among the documents in the link is wording for a petition.

The timing may be a problem. The Selectboard is very involved now with the fair and impartial policing policy. The public is also on edge. At the state level, there was an XR rally at the Statehouse during which some participants were overzealous and somewhat alarming to some legislators. Perhaps the idea would be better on a ballot. There are elections in March and August 2020. Perhaps HEC could write a letter, with Selectboard approval, to legislators.

Possible actions: each village declares a goal or goals; emphasize regenerative agriculture; and write a monthly article about this.

Monthly articles: The articles could help to get the word out to the public about HEC’s work. A volunteer will write an article and post to Sharepoint one week prior to the HEC meeting. HEC will accept or amend the article at the HEC meeting. Then the volunteer will post the article to the listserve, as well as to the Town website, Facebook, and Twitter. Commissioners discussed coordinating the articles with current projects, such as the Quechee rideshare program and Button Up. Becca offered to write an article about the new auto inspection system and emissions standards. HEC can coordinate articles with other energy committees. Several suggestions have been made to Erik, who will add them to the list on Sharepoint. Having articles ready in reserve in case there are months when no Commissioner can write an article was recommended.

Niki left the meeting at 8:00 to attend work. With no quorum, the meeting adjourned at 8:05. The following are notes taken after the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn Bohi, Clerk

Transportation Work Group: Martha will speak with DHMC near the end of August. They seem interested. Geoff will talk to King Arthur Flour next week about vanpooling and GO! Vermont. Erik

suggested talking to them about installing a solar canopy for the office parking lots. Geoff has an appointment with Van at Advanced Transit to discuss how much money they would need to meet certain goals in the Transportation Development Plan. The cost could then be divided among local towns and businesses.

Martha left the call at 8:10.

A Dartmouth PhD student will present his research on transportation options and gaps in Upper Valley on Wednesday, August 28 from 12:00 to 1:30.

Building integrity: no discussion on this workgroup because there were no members of other work groups present.

Municipal updates: Geoff added all available data to the Energy Star Portfolio Manager.