

Energy Committee

2020

Mission Statement: The Town of Cornish takes local steps to save energy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. (2007)

In 2020, the Cornish Energy Committee passed 2 warrant articles, ran a weatherize program, organized an e-bike loan program, launched an energy information series entitled “Did You Know?”, collected data on the amount of solar power produced in Cornish, began exploring the benefits of Community Power Aggregation, and continued planning toward our goal of achieving 100% renewably sourced energy by 2050.

Some of our activities are jointly run with the Plainfield Energy Committee. We continue to meet regularly with the Plainfield Energy Committee on the 1st Tuesday of each month, and have been holding meetings via Zoom since the pandemic started. We also hold separate Cornish Energy Committee meetings on the 2nd Monday of each month, also by Zoom. We welcome new participants.

On Jan. 22, 2020, we held a kickoff event for the Plainfield & Cornish 2020 Weatherize Campaign, which outlined the incentives offered by the NHSaves program, and introduced interested residents to several licensed home energy efficiency contractors. Over the course of the year, Energy Committee members provided information and support to residents who chose to have energy audits performed on their homes and insulating & sealing work done. We succeeded, even in spite of delays caused by the pandemic, in getting 8 Cornish residents to have all or part of their homes weatherized.

At Town Meeting 2020, the Cornish Energy Committee succeeded in passing 2 warrant articles: The first article sought to exempt solar installations from property tax by adopting RSA 72:62 of the state tax code. The Energy Committee advocated in favor of this article because we felt putting a tax on solar installations would disincentivize renewable energy at the precise moment when it is critical that we encourage them. The second article was the New Hampshire Resolution for Climate Action, which called upon federal and state representatives to enact carbon fee and dividend legislation.

The Committee has been exploring the benefits of Community Power Aggregation (CPA), which, through state law RSA 53-E, allows towns to become the direct purchasers of electricity for their residents. CPA’s can lower the cost of electricity for residents and promote the use of renewable energy. Some of our members participated in the Community Power Summit on June 5, 2020. Our committee is starting to educate our town about this option through postings in Connect Cornish and through conversations with the Select Board. The Committee has taken the first step which was to get the Select Board to appoint the Energy Committee as an Electric Aggregation Committee which can draft a plan and present it to the town.

For 2 weeks in August, the Energy Committee, jointly with Plainfield, ran an e-bike loan program during which residents could try out a variety of electric-assist bicycles. Organizers ensured that all COVID safety precautions were adopted to protect the health of participants. Thanks to the hard work of Bill Cable, the program was a great success, with all participants reporting great enthusiasm for these bikes, which are especially useful for all the hills in our area.

Finally, the Committee started a printed educational series entitled “Did You Know?” which published short articles on interesting energy facts on a regular basis in Connect Cornish.

Joanna Sharf, Chair
Shideko Terai
Bill Cable
Nancy Wightman
Dick Gendron
Doug Heaton
Zach Hallock
Richard Thompson
Dan Poor