

ENERGY COMMITTEE

2022

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

The Cornish Energy Committee has been in existence since 2007, and during that time has led Cornish on the path to reducing its energy usage and replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy. It has organized 3 solarize campaigns, 3 weatherize campaigns, and presented numerous educational forums. This year, as part of a process to formalize and equalize all town committees and boards, and ensure compliance with RSA 91-A (NH open meeting rules), the Selectboard appointed 5 committee members and 2 alternates, and had them sworn in. The Selectboard requested that the committee draft bylaws, which the committee finalized in December.

The committee spent the year continuing to educate itself and the Selectboard about Community Power Aggregation, which would give our town local control over electricity purchasing. The committee had hoped that the Selectboard would sign a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) with a coalition of NH towns, which would be a non-binding first step in enabling the town to discuss and vote on the issue. The Selectboard declined to sign the JPA, but left the issue open to further discussion.

The committee also researched a possible solar array at the Recycling Center. Two solar companies, Same Sun of VT and Solaflect, visited the site and provided solar proposals. There is not enough non-wetland and un-used flat space for a ground mount, but approximately 25kw could be mounted on the roofs. The committee met with an engineer from Liberty Utilities to discuss bringing power to the site, which would be necessary for the solar array to be connected to the grid. This is an ongoing project.

The Committee joined with Plainfield, Windsor & Hartland to conduct its third, very successful Solarize Campaign, which launched via Zoom on February 26, 2022. The unusual cooperation of 2 New Hampshire and 2 Vermont towns for such a campaign, along with very effective publicity, led to a Valley News article and an invitation to present at the Vital Communities Energy Showcase forum on May 12, 2022. 154 people registered for the virtual Launch Event on Feb. 26, 2022, and 100 people actually attended. There were 6 participating solar installers. Cornish had the most installations, with 15 households installing solar and 1 community solar rooftop array. Among all the 4 towns involved, 28 households signed contracts.

Laird Klingler generously donated \$1,000 to the Committee in February, 2022, of which \$289.35 so far has been used for publicity for the Solarize 2022 campaign – \$151.40 for postage for a mass mailing and \$137.95 for photocopies.

The Committee worked with the Plainfield Energy Committee to organize a Heat Pump Forum, which was an in-person event held on June 23, 2022 at the Plainfield school. A Mitsubishi representative, a Haier distributor with a trailer display, and 2 heat pump installers were the presenters. More than 60 people attended. Attendees learned that a heat pump can transfer around 300% more energy than it consumes, compared to 97% for a gas furnace.

The Committee invited Dr. Ye Tao, an MIT & Harvard scientist, to give a virtual presentation on July 16, 2022, about his innovative technology that uses mirrors to help cool the Earth. Dr. Tao founded Mirrors for Earth's Energy Rebalancing (MEER) to design & deploy surface-based mirrors to help reduce the planet's rapidly rising temperatures. 74 people registered for the virtual event, 38 actually attended, and 166 viewed the recording.

Committee member Bill Cable organized and ran the third annual E-Bike Lending Program from August 17-30, 2022, during which time 28 residents in Plainfield & Cornish took advantage of the opportunity to borrow and test-ride 4 different e-bike models.

On October 5 & 6, 2022, with the help of Mike Boutillier and Bill Taylor (Cornish & Plainfield Fire Chiefs), the Committee held a solar panel & battery fire safety training for firefighters. Captain Richard Birt, a 30-year veteran of the Las Vegas Fire Dept., founded Solar and Fire Education (S.A.F.E.), which provides these free trainings for firefighters. Richard Birt also builds and operates emergency solar & battery power kits for disaster relief. More than 30 firefighters from Plainfield, Cornish, Windsor & Hartland attended the training at the Plainfield Fire Station, and many claimed it was the best training they ever received.

Richard Thompson and Bill Cable attended a Window Dressers DIY Workshop that was held in Hanover from Oct. 14-19. They learned how to make inexpensive window inserts that help to reduce heat loss. The Committee is considering whether to provide such a workshop in Cornish.

On October 27, 2022, jointly with Plainfield, the Committee held a forum entitled: “Charge Me Up! An Introduction to Electric Vehicle Chargers.” This event occurred via Zoom. Jessica Wilcox (NH Dept. of Environmental Services), Eric Sandberg (NHEC) and 2 EV owners (Richard Thompson & Evan Oxenham) informed 85 participants about different types of EV chargers, the forthcoming fast charger infrastructure in NH, incentives offered by NHEC, installing EV chargers in one’s home, and charging details for long trips.

The Committee continued to publish its “Did You Know” series, consisting of short informative articles about different energy matters in Connect Cornish once a month throughout the year. One of the postings covered the energy incentives offered through the recently passed Inflation Reduction Act, much of which are still in the process of being determined and will probably not be available until the end of 2023 or early 2024. The Committee will keep Cornish residents updated on these incentives as new information comes to light.

2022 Membership

Everett Cass
Joanna Sharf
Richard Thompson
Fred Weld

Nancy Wightman
Bill Cable, Alternate
Dan Poor, Alternate