

## Energy Committee

2019

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

As part of our Renewable Energy Educational Series, on January 30, 2019, the Cornish Energy Committee, in collaboration with the Plainfield Energy Committee, presented a talk on Air Sourced Heat Pumps. Resembling air conditioning units mounted on the wall, with a compressor placed outside, these are one of the most efficient methods of heating homes, using electricity instead of fossil fuels, and thus helping to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The talk was given by an experienced installer, Nate Moore, and several town residents.

At Town Meeting in March, 2019, residents voted in favor of the new Solar Ordinance that had been drafted by the Planning Board with input from the Energy Committee. The Solar Ordinance ensured that every town resident has a right to install solar panels on their house roofs and elsewhere on their property, as long as the space occupied by the panels did not exceed 5 acres of land. The Ordinance provided sensible rules governing the installation of solar panels to ensure they are installed safely and in accordance with the rural character of the town.

On Earth Day, April 22, 2019, the Energy Committee held an event with music and hearty discussion, to commemorate protecting and preserving the Earth.

On April 24, 2019, the joint Cornish and Plainfield Energy Committees presented another forum in their Renewable Energy Educational Series: "The Electric Grid: Looking Toward a Future with Renewables. How the Grid Works, and What Needs to Change to Incorporate Renewables." Graham Turk from Green Mountain Power (Vermont) and Henry Herndon from Clean Energy NH gave an extremely informative presentation in which they discussed centralized vs. distributed generation, home battery systems, micro-grids, smart grids, and time of use metering.

In February and March, James Barker from the Conservation Commission greatly assisted the joint Cornish and Plainfield Energy Committees in identifying our priorities and strategizing on how best to achieve the goal of reaching 100% renewable energy by 2050. This included additional weatherize and solarize campaigns, more educational forums, installing electric vehicle charging stations, publicizing incentives for energy efficiency, encouraging transition to electric vehicles, and more.

On June 23, the Energy Committees brought an "Electric Tool Showcase" to town, where they gave live demonstrations of a wide variety of electrified and battery operated equipment, including electric lawn mowers, weed whackers, wood splitters, chainsaws and more. The goal was to encourage people to move away from gas powered equipment. The committee members then formed a "Green Brigade" in the Plainfield July 4th parade, which involved carrying and demonstrating more of the same electric equipment.

On December 11, 2019, the Cornish and Plainfield Energy Committees jointly presented a talk by Steve Ladd entitled "Electricity 101," which explained the basic principles of electricity, and helped people understand how our energy use is recorded on our utility bills.

In the summer of 2019, the Energy Committee learned that Avitar started assessing solar panels for property taxes. Solar systems were never taxed before this time. During the Fall months, we discussed with the Selectboard ways to exempt solar panels from property taxes, emphasizing that subjecting them to taxes was a poor way to encourage people to install solar. We plan to submit an article to the Town Warrant addressing this issue.

We encourage Cornish residents to join our Committee and help us help the town reduce our carbon footprint. We meet the 2nd Tuesday of every month in the Cornish Library at 7pm.

Shideko Terai, Bill Cable, Nancy Wightman, Joanna Sharf, Will Brown, Dick Gendron, Doug Heaton.