

## CORNISH & PLAINFIELD ENERGY COMMITTEE MEETING

June 12, 2023, 7 - 8:30 PM

Cornish Town Offices & via Zoom

**PRESENT:** in person: Joanna Sharf, Richard Thompson, Nancy Wightman, Everett Cass, Fred Weld, Bill Cable, Bob Jordan (PEC). Via Zoom: Tony Newton, Nick Cohen (PEC).

**APPROVAL OF MAY MINUTES:** Fred moved and Everett seconded. All in favor, and May minutes were approved.

### **EDUCATIONAL FORUMS:**

1. The Effect of Climate Change in NH. No word from Evan Oxenham about the Professor from UNH who would do the presentation. Joanna sent an email to Evan with no response. We may have to think about a different forum instead.
2. Plastic Alternatives. Richard suggested a possible forum which would discuss “plastic alternatives.” Cindy Heath is a great resource for this.
3. Electric Bikes and battery powered lawn equipment for August. On track.
4. Battery Forum via Zoom for October 18. Tony Newton will present information on a variety of battery systems available on the market. Kim Quirk from ReVision will speak on their battery installations. Catamount most probably will speak about their use of the Fortress battery. Joanna is following up with Catamount for a definite confirmation. Richard Thompson is following up with NHEC to get them to speak about their pilot program using electric vehicles to power the grid.

**EV CHARGER IN PLAINFIELD.** Cindy Heath spoke with the new owner of the Plainfield Country Store and said he seems open to having the original EV charger reinstalled. Bill will talk to the owner and check to see what would be involved in re-installing it.

**RECYCLING CENTER SOLAR INSTALLATION.** The NH Charitable Foundation’s James Tasker Covered Bridges Fund has awarded \$3,275.00 to the Energy Committee to build a small off-grid solar system with battery backup at the Recycling Center. The grant money has been turned over to the Town. Joanna drafted a letter of thanks and appreciation to the NH Charitable Foundation which the Committee agreed upon. It was also agreed that she would submit a notice to Connect Cornish.

The goal is complete the project as soon as possible. Joanna, Bill, Richard and Tony are working out the details of how the components will actually be installed. Once completed, we can hold instructional demonstrations for town residents. It would be great if we could monitor the solar production and functioning of the system online, and post it on our website, but would need wifi at the site to do that. If we can purchase an AT&T cell phone, which the Selectboard requested for emergency use, and get a hot spot for it, we could have wifi at the Recycling Center.

**COMMUNITY POWER:** After a discussion on how best to encourage the Selectboard to start the process of joining the Community Power Coalition of NH (CPCNH), Joanna said that it is important to let the town residents know where things stand regarding Community Power's prospects in Cornish. Residents have a right to know that at this point the Town is not starting the process (of drafting a plan and holding public hearings) that would bring the matter for a vote at Town Meeting. Joanna proposed that we publish a statement in Connect Cornish explaining this. Motion made by Joanna and seconded by Richard that: Joanna will meet with Selectboard and present a draft statement about the current status of Community Power in Cornish to be posted in Connect Cornish, and will work together with the Selectboard to word the statement in a way that is respectful to both sides of the issue. Joanna, Richard, Nancy approved. Everett and Fred opposed. Motion passed. Letter to Selectboard and draft statement are appended to these Minutes.

**PORTFOLIO MANAGER:** Joanna will follow up with Zack.

**WEATHERIZE TOWN BUILDINGS:** Audit of Town Offices by Margaret Dillon was done this Spring. The report will be completed later this summer. Joanna was looking into having an energy audit done at the Town Hall, but NHEC won't fund such an audit unless it can be demonstrated to result in sufficient energy savings. The Town Hall may not qualify because it is not used frequently enough. NHEC referred Joanna to Margaret Dillon. Margaret Dillon's usual fee for an energy audit is \$1800, so it would be too costly to have her do the audit if NHEC won't cover it. Dillon works with Shakes to Shingles (weatherization contractor) and thought they might do it for free. Joanna will ask Shakes to Shingles about a free audit.

**KEEPING TRACK OF SOLAR INSTALLATIONS IN CORNISH:** Joanna will check with Mary Curtis about a way, once a year, to get a list of permits submitted for solar installations, in order to gather info on how much solar energy Cornish is producing.

**ADDITIONAL WAYS TO SAVE ENERGY:** due to lack of time, tabled.

**OTHER:** Fred requested that we find a time to discuss our position on different kinds of renewable energy (wind, solar, hydro, biomass, etc.) and Everett suggested that we set aside 15 minutes at the end of each meeting, if possible, to discuss energy issues.

**NEXT MEETING:** Monday, July 10, from 7-8:30pm at the Town Offices.

**ADDENDUM:**

Letter to Selectboard and Draft Statement on Community Power:

Sent via Email on June 14, 2023

Dear Cornish Selectboard,  
I hope you are all doing well.

Richard Thompson and I would like to meet with you again next Monday (June 19), if possible, to see if you've had a chance to revisit the topic of Community Power. We're hoping that Jason Bourne has been able to read the Valley News article (copy attached).

The Energy Committee would like to inform town residents about where things stand with regard to Cornish adopting Community Power. Several individuals have told us that since the matter is not being brought before Town Meeting for a vote, they feel they are being prevented from having a choice in the matter.

We would like to post a statement about Cornish's position on Community Power in Connect Cornish. We have drafted a proposed statement (copy attached) and would like to work together with you to word it in a way that is respectful to both sides of the issue. We hope you will have time to review the attached draft before next Monday, and be able to discuss the wording and the matter at large with us.

Thank you very much!  
Sincerely,  
Joanna Sharf  
Chair, Cornish Energy Committee

***DRAFT:***

**A MESSAGE FROM THE CORNISH ENERGY COMMITTEE  
Community Power helps to fight climate change**

The latest findings of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) paint a dire picture. Global temperatures are rising faster than originally thought, and we face dangerous climate effects unless we take significant steps to reduce carbon emissions.

The town of Cornish set renewable energy goals in 2018, and we have done virtually nothing to reach them in the last 5 years.

But there is good news! Neighboring towns have adopted Community Power, and already are offering their residents lower utility rates even for renewable energy options. The Community Power Coalition of NH (CPCNH) is a nonprofit electric power agency with a growing

membership of 30 municipalities statewide. CPCNH has greater flexibility than utility companies, and is able to negotiate lower costs and build a financial cushion to stabilize rates. In addition, over time, its member communities will be able to create innovative projects, such as building large solar arrays, to shape our renewable energy supply and make it more local.

At this point, the Cornish Selectboard has chosen not to start the process of bringing the matter of joining the CPCNH to Town Meeting for a vote, and instead is adopting a “wait and see” approach. The Cornish Energy Committee would like to encourage our town to seriously consider adopting Community Power, and start the lengthy process of drafting a plan, holding public hearings and bringing it to Town Meeting for a vote.

There is an excellent Valley News article written by neighboring towns who have adopted Community Power. [LINK](#) It demonstrates persuasively how Community Power can help create a more renewable and fossil-fuel-free power supply and at the same time stabilize utility costs for residents.

As the IPCC report says, there is no time to waste.

For more info on Community Power, go to <https://www.cpcnh.org/> or contact [josharf@gmail.com](mailto:josharf@gmail.com).