

CORNISH ENERGY COMMITTEE MINUTES

Tuesday, April 9, 2024, 7-8:30pm

Cornish Town Offices and via Zoom

PRESENT: in person: CEC members Joanna Sharf, Richard Thompson, Everett Cass, Bill Cable, Mike Belanger, and Myron Kuhre. Via Zoom: Bill Schmidt and Richard Gendron. PEC members via Zoom: Evan Oxenham.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Richard made a motion to accept the March 11, 2024 minutes. Mike Belanger seconded and all approved.

NH SAVES BUTTON UP WORKSHOP: The virtual workshop will take place on April 16th from 6:30-8:00 PM. Ted Stiles, BPI Building Analyst at NHSaves, will present. There are currently 23 registrations, including 6 committee members. The Committee discussed further promotion of the event to boost these numbers. Joanna has placed a notice in Cornish Connect, Steve Ladd sent out an email earlier today (Joanna will ask Steve to add Everett, Mike, and Myron to the email list), and Evan Oxenham has put the event on the Plainfield calendar and will place it on the Valley News calendar and Next Door. Joanna mentioned that the Cornish Garden Club is holding an event at roughly the same time, which could be affecting registrations for our Button Up event. Bill S suggested promotion in Day Break and volunteered to follow up. Joanna will email Ted Stiles to reconfirm and encourage him to arrive 15 minutes early. Evan will send out reminders. The event will be recorded for those who cannot attend next week.

INFLATION REDUCTION ACT (IRA) UPDATES: Josh Elliott from the NH Department of Energy will attend the Committee meeting on May 13th to discuss state implementation of the IRA. Evan requested that the meeting be recorded, and Joanna agreed. Joanna said she would speak with Josh about a forum at some point later this year. Committee members were encouraged to come to the meeting prepared with questions.

WINDPOWER FORUM: Richard has arranged for a tour of the Lempster wind farm on May 10th at 4:00 PM. Ken Diley from Groton Wind will lead the tour. So far, 7 people from the Committee plan to attend; to date, nobody from PEC will be attending. Joanna will publish a notice in Connect Cornish to invite participation from Cornish & Plainfield residents. We want to limit attendance to 20 people, although a few more than 20 is OK. Richard will touch base again to confirm the tour, and any attendees who want to will meet at the Cornish Store at 3:00 PM on May 10th to carpool. Richard will check again with Groton Wind to see if they are on track to do a presentation at a forum this fall. Everett mentioned that there is a town ordinance relating to the maximum allowable height for towers in Cornish, which could present obstacles for constructing wind turbines in Cornish, but he wasn't sure what the maximum allowed height was.

LETTER TO NH LEGISLATURE RE: UPDATED BUILDING AND ENERGY CODES: The Committee discussed support for a letter circulated by the NH Environment, Energy & Climate Network requesting that updated energy codes be included in HB 1059, a bill being considered

in the NH Legislature which updates NH building codes to comply with 2021 national codes. However, the current bill excludes updated energy codes, and proponents are concerned that this could lead to increased costs for businesses and residents in the long run, and make NH ineligible for certain federal funds to support energy upgrades. Information had been sent to the Committee in advance and Joanna encouraged discussion. Mike said he would need to review the current IEC codes before he could vote to support the letter. Evan indicated he would send Mike a link for those codes. Everett expressed opposition to these additional regulations. After discussion, Joanna called for a vote and the count was 3-2 in support of signing onto the letter. Joanna said she would sign on as Chair of the Committee. Everett requested that the vote count be included in the communication. Joanna indicated that she would take that suggestion under advisement.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Richard is currently serving as Treasurer and Vice Chair. He indicated that he cannot give a precise report as he is still awaiting information from Heidi, but he confirmed that the Committee currently has about \$700 left in an account consisting of donated funds. The Committee was reminded that it has no annual budget from the town, though pursuing a warrant in a future town meeting was a possibility.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS: Joanna reminded the Committee that Officers are elected each year. Joanna suggested the following slate of Officers: Joanna: Chair, Richard: Vice Chair, Mike: Treasurer, and Bill S.: Secretary. Joanna called for a vote and the Committee unanimously voted in favor of the slate. Joanna indicated that she will be stepping down as Chair after this year and suggested the need for more members. She offered to place a notice in Connect Cornish seeking volunteers. Joanna clarified that the Committee recommends new members to the Select Board and the Select Board approves the recommendations (or not). Joanna also stated that prospective members are encouraged to attend Energy Committee meetings before being considered.

TOWN OFFICES ENERGY AUDIT: Joanna shared that new digital thermostats have been installed in the Town Offices building. She will be making some adjustments to address concerns about the building being too cold. Joanna said she has spoken with the Select Board about 2 estimates for insulating & sealing parts of the Town Offices. The Select Board had additional questions for Joanna that she is following up on. The goal is to decide on an estimate and then approach Eversource for possible financial support. Richard mentioned that if the bat guano in the attic is going to be cleaned out as part of the insulating work, we need to make sure that no bats are still living there.

COMMUNITY POWER: The Committee discussed the advantages of Cornish joining the Community Power Coalition of New Hampshire (CPCNH). The Select Board needs to sign a Joint Powers Agreement to begin the process. Joanna suggested that work should begin on the Electrical Aggregation Plan (EAP) since the process takes time. The EAP requires collection of data on numbers of customers from the utilities, but this can be done in collaboration with CPCNH. Based on information from CPCNH about results to date, Cornish residents could benefit from reduced electrical rates resulting from the pooled purchasing power of the

Coalition. Joanna clarified that once the Joint Powers Agreement is signed, and the EAP is approved by the Select Board, at least 3 public hearings must be held to inform the public about the program. The Committee discussed urging the Select Board to bring this issue to a vote at next year's Town Meeting. The Committee discussed ways of educating Cornish residents about the program's benefits. Joanna suggested an educational piece with a link to CPCNH in Connect Cornish.

NEXT MEETING: Monday, May 13 at 7pm.

The Committee adjourned at 8:25 PM.