

Mason Energy Commission Meeting Aug 3, 2020

Present for this Zoom Meeting: Darrell Scott, Curt Spacht, Kathy Chapman, Liz Fletcher, Garth Fletcher, Joe Harney, Dave Morrison, Richard Stockdale, Michele Siegmann, Kate Messer, and Michelle Scott

Approval of minutes by roll call. See above. Motion by Liz Fletcher, seconded by Michelle Scott, unanimous approval.

Meeting started by welcoming Kate Messer, and each of the energy commission members and alternates introduced themselves to her. We are all very happy to have young voices represented on this commission.

First item on agenda: The Board of Selectmen (BOS) expressed concern about links to the videos on the Town Website. Darrell was at the meeting and he suggests that if not on the Town website, it could be on an alternative website but we would have to advertise it and make people know where it is. Garth offered his unofficial Mason town website, or we could create our own FB page.

Garth pointed out the difference in the RSAs between boards that educate and boards that are semi-judicial such as the Planning Board, or the Zoning Board of Appeals. Darrell wrote a letter after the meeting to respond to the concerns of the BOS, and with the MEC approval will send it to BOS so as to clarify the MEC intent to educate. Darrell will send the final version of the letter around to MEC members before sending to BOS. We all thought it was a good idea to see how other towns manage their websites as far as links are concerned. We will provide this info for the BOS.

Motion: Send a letter to the BOS drafted by Darrell, requesting them to reconsider the decision, and giving them ways to accommodate the MEC education regarding energy per our RSA mission.

Solar Tour: Joe says that Bob Dillberger wants to be a part of these videos on alternative energy. So we await his pictures/explanation of his geothermal set up. Darrell will refer to the info as a Powerpoint with audio rather than a Youtube video, since this is the format used—slides with audio.

Dick and School Energy Education Dick has prepared a document that has a list of projects and associated pertinent websites. Many projects can be done at home by the students on their computers. The students could contact MEC members and use the MEC as a sounding board. Next step for Dick is to send the project list to more teachers. This is strictly for educational purposes, and we are not directing the students to do particular things. It is "Inquiry based research". For elementary, the students might need a bibliography, and Denise Ginzler, Mason's librarian, would probably be very helpful. Dick will contact Denise. So Dick will send this document to the various teachers he has contacts for, and give us feedback on how they might use Dick's project list. The idea is to get students excited about all aspects of energy conservation. Students may find sites that have partisan issues, so we could take note of Kate Messer's suggestion on ways to look for bias and this is another avenue for students to explore. Dick feels his list is for any level of student, and depending on their level and interest they could go in as deep as needed. Kate will send her outline that she had for her environmental class as an example of a guide for these plans.

Ready for 100: Michelle Scott gave info about the Plainfield progress toward 100% renewable electricity 2030. Cornish has very similar goals AND they worked with Plainfield on the Sierra Club Ready for 100 campaign. What steps are they taking? What steps should we take? We have taken on the solar tour by Darrell, and the K-12 education projects headed up by Dave Morrison and Dick Stockdale. And what else can we do? One idea put forth and embraced by the committee is to ask people if they want to save money by using alternative energy.

Kate feels more education all around on renewable as people really know only vague info. (Darrell's videos could help.) The Town of Plainfield has a simple Powerpoint that is kind of like Bob Dillberger's wonderful PP he did for the pipeline education of towns folk! https://www.plainfieldnh.org/energy/WebDocs/R100Presentation_Nov_2017.pdf

Building inspector input: Liz reported on her Action Item -- Building energy savings: landscaping, house siting, passive solar, rain gardens and rain barrel, main roof facing south, most expanse of roof facing south were all items Liz mentioned could be added to what Jake Olson explained were the recommendations made by Building Inspector requirements. Our additions would come as suggestions, not mandatory.

Next Meeting: Since our next meeting falls on Labor Day, we had a discussion followed by a motion to meet on 14 of September. 7 pm Zoom Michelle made the motion and Dave/Michele seconded. A motion was unanimously passed by roll call.

Liz moved to adjourn meeting and Dave seconded. Kathy called for a roll call of members; all responded in the affirmative. Meeting adjourn at 9:04

Report on Plainfield and their pursuit of alternative town power sources

Evan Oxenham, of the Plainfield EC says they had 3 meetings to inform residents about the benefits of alternative sources of energy besides nuclear and fossil fuels, including a ButtonUp workshop. Each meeting was only about 20-30 people (town pop. 2400). Their last meeting they did in conjunction with Cornish and had 75 attendees, and in this they envisioned what their town would look like with 100 % renewables. See slide show https://www.plainfieldnh.org/energy/WebDocs/R100Presentation_Nov_2017.pdf

Both Cornish and Plainfield had signed up with Allyson Samuel from Sierra Club (SCR100), and with support also from Hancock which was first in NH to join in this intent. As Allyson explained last month, they give support to the energy commissions, info, signs, and more. They sent out a info letter to all town residents prior to getting it prep as a warrant article.

In Plainfield, the BOS sponsored the warrant, but in Cornish they had to get signatures for a petition. Plainfield had to have at least 100 people at town meeting who would vote yes, and they did!

Here is the text of the warrant:

That the Town of Plainfield vote to commit to a goal of 100% reliance on renewable sources of electricity by 2030 and renewable sources for all other energy needs, including for heating and transportation, by 2050.

The impetus for this goal is to achieve the public benefits of protecting the economic, health and social well-being of our citizens; to reduce energy costs to the community and to keep energy dollars in the local economy; as well as to reduce the risks to the community associated with any future escalation in energy prices, and to address the threat of global climate change.

The intent of this article is to effect policy at the local level in a fiscally responsible manner that will support and encourage individual action to shift toward renewable energy. It does not mandate changes to private property or the behavior of private citizens.

Of course, the SCR100 is all about intent, and then the work started to make it happen. They feel that the community power aggregation is the best way for their small town to proceed. Check out what Evan said: "Along those lines you should be aware of an organisation called Community Power New Hampshire (CPNH - <https://nhcommunitypower.com/>) arose originally as part of a joint effort between the towns of Hanover and Lebanon and Clean Energy New Hampshire, and has grow to include many towns in New Hampshire. Read the information on their website as it provides a way to ensure that your town can get electricity generated entirely from 100% renewable energy. I got a notification recently that ***"The target date for incorporation of CPNH as a locally governed public power entity to provide participating member Community Power Aggregations with support services is mid-September. Following incorporation, CPNH will hire internal staff and issue competitive solicitations for vendor services, with the aim of being operationally ready to provide service to member Community Power Aggregations early in 2021."*** So this could be a valuable resource for you and you can use its existence to explain to townspeople how the town could get to 100% renewable energy.

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