

DRAFT
Hartford Energy Commission Minutes
July 23, 2020 via Microsoft teams

Present: Fred Randall, Niki Thran, Molly Smith, Lynn Bohi; Alan Johnson, Selectboard; Geoff Martin, staff; VLS guests: Ciara Hopkins, Lily Elmore, Jenny Carter, Megan Calla, Alex Nohelty

Molly called the meeting to order at 5:10 PM and read the Act 92 statement.

Changes to the agenda: Move the VLS presentation to the beginning of the meeting.

Vermont Law School (VLS) group studying transportation had two topics to discuss with us.

Electric vehicles (EV)

- There are many reasons to buy an EV. The benefits include: types, costs, and incentives.
- Two types: all electric and hybrid.
- Costs: the upfront costs are more, with lower costs as people drive. The brands with lower up front prices are the Hyundai Ioniq, Mini cooper, and Nissan leaf. The fuel costs are: gas \$2.19 vs. \$1.78 for electricity.
- Incentives: there are Federal and Vermont incentives. And from some electric companies. Other cost savings come from maintenance and fuel.
- Used EVs can be purchased. However, many go out of state for higher auction prices and there are fewer incentives up front.
- Charging: level 1 (120V slow), level 2 (240V medium), and DC (fast 480V) which uses a different plug. The majority of public charging stations are level 2. There are 238 charging stations in Vermont.

Community Outreach

- A Hartford specific information booklet is being developed with help from two focus groups. It is possible a webinar will be developed.
- Ordinances may be used to change policy. They looked at barriers. Incentives, the scope of the town's power, and how to enforce.
- Ordinances include: zoning, building, electrical, and signage.
- Ordinance changes can incent behavior, reduce regulation, and mandate support.
- There is a problem with electric installations. Electricians are ruled by T26 Chapter 15.
- Building energy codes include RBES and CBES and are updated every three years. They change in September 2020 and will include EV chargers in residential buildings with many units.
- Ordinances to motivate behavior changes can be seen in Chelan, Washington. They relate to charging stations.
- Parking benefits can be used to motivate EV buying. Free parking in public pay lots or on street metered spaces.

- Additional financial benefits are available to install charging stations.

Questions and comments:

- The climate emergency declaration expanded conservation powers and defined electrical fixtures.
- There are minimum building energy standards (RBES) and stretch code is above those. Building integrity group commented that they are looking at stretch code becoming Hartford's standard and Geoff spoke with the Planning Commission this week about that. They also are working on a Net Zero pilot project for future adoption.
- A commissioner asked how the VLS team found the focus groups. They said that they spoke to Vital Communities, and posted on listserve a few times.
- RBES and CBES - differences? They do not know if one is higher than the other or how they differ. Hartford's Certificate of Occupancy is tied to a builder signing a form saying the home meets RBES standards.
- Is a permit required for a charger? No, only for a new home. A charger not attached to a building has a \$50.00 fee.
- Fees as incentive – how much will the town lose if waived? \$125 plus five cents per square foot over some number.
- Local level fossil fuel fees – wonder if they may be used as an incentive to decrease usage. Perhaps look at fine or fee for polluting air. But be careful of increasing fees that hit lower income people hard.
- Can there be EV only parking spaces?
- Stretch code regulates the number of parking spaces dedicated to EVs.

The students were thanked for the hard work as well as interesting presentation.

Future Meeting Time: Niki moved and Fred seconded that the meetings start at 5:00pm until the COVID crisis is over. The motion passed.

Minutes: Molly moved and Niki seconded that the June minutes pass as presented. The motion passed.

Municipal Update:

- Geoff has taken another job. His last day is August 19.
- The Department of Energy has a grant involving heat pumps and thermal storage. Bugbee may qualify for this. Geoff does not know if the grant needs Selectboard approval. Grant is due next Monday. However, Woodstock is applying and perhaps Hartford could put a project in Woodstock's application.
- Geoff will try to wrap up all current projects prior to his departing.

Fred needed to leave the meeting, thus a quorum was lost and meeting ended at 6:31pm.

August agenda: Ana from Vital Communities and recruitment will be on the agenda.

Respectfully submitted;

Lynn Bohi, Clerk