

Hartford Energy Commission minutes
January 26, 2023

Present in person: Molly Smith Dunn (2025), Jesse Pollard (2023), Lynn Bohi (2024); Dana Clawson, staff, Eric Francis, guest

Present virtually: Laura Simon (2026), Esme Cole (2025), Ashton Todd (2023); guests Gary Dir (Randolph EC), Jerry Ward, Jonathan Dowd (REV), Ally Tufenkjain, Anna Gunther(Vital Communities), Remington Nevin, Linda Gray (Norwich EC), Kate Yeo and Matthew Timofeu (Dartmouth Energy), Dan Fraser, (Selectboard)

Jesse called the meeting to order at 5:05pm.

Minutes: The special meeting minutes Molly moved and Laura seconded that they pass as presented. The motion passed.

Public comments: none.

Coordinator's report: The budget was finalized last week. The police Department have a request for a hybrid SUV, Parks and Recreation is requesting electric mowers, and the Fire Chief has looked into an idle system for emergency vehicles. It would cost around \$15 thousand and has a payback of three years or less. The report that UNH discussed in December arrived this week. Public Works has requested a \$100 thousand study of the landfill and methane. It was capped between 1990 and 1992, but no idea when it opened. Clean Cities group will work with the School District and Butler Bus to run an electric bus demonstration. Hartford will get a \$75 thousand grant for energy because we are one of Vermont's ten largest municipalities.

Remington Nevin: He is a medical and legal consultant. He also is interested in energy and bit coin. He has an interest in an energy consulting firm which urges companies to invest in bit coin. He expressed that renewable energy will fail because of blackouts and then there will be a need to fall back on fossil fuels. There is a carbon free option, nuclear. Bit coin takes large amounts of energy to produce. People do not own bit coin, but they control it and can transfer it to others. Retail investors use bit coin. Bit coin uses more power than the state of Vermont uses in one day. Bit coin can use renewable power when it is available and is a guilt free way to get bit coin.

Since HEC mentioned landfills, there is much stranded ethane in landfills. One can use a generator to capture it and combust it.

Questions: Bit coin is old block chain technology. Why go backwards?

Jonathon Dowd of REV: He discussed the renewable energy standard (RES) and Climate Crisis. Transportation and thermal are the sectors that produce the largest percentage of CO2. Both sectors can be reduced by increasing use of renewable electricity. Today's electricity comes from 19% wind and solar, 25% Hydro Quebec, 2% landfills, 7% biomass, 12% other hydro, 17% NE system.

He feels the 2015 renewable energy standard failed to reduce climate change. Vermont has done little about adding new renewable energy. He proposes a new RES and reducing reliance on older renewables. This would be 30% regional solar, 30% wind and solar, 40% existing renewables. Vermont is 49th in the U.S. for in state production of renewables. There are financial benefits of pursuing this; 30 to 50% tax credits, and new job creation would be statewide. Large scale solar should decrease use of natural gas. There will be a bill introduced soon about a new RES and new renewable energy. There is a climate rally on February 11 from 1 to 3pm on the Statehouse lawn.

Questions:

- Can Molly and Jesse get a copy of this presentation? Yes.
- Are nuclear and hydro renewable? Yes, especially since many dams are now run off river.
- Should VT get more from Hydro Quebec? A limited amount, even though HQ has extra power.

Subcommittees

Trailblazers: There will be two trainings

- Vermont Adult Learning will be in April for two weeks with 8 to 12 students. It is a one week of skills training and one week of OSHA and EPA training. It is fully funded. HEC can spread the word.
- Vermont Works for Women will be in August or September for seven weeks, 3 weeks in the classroom and 4 weeks at an internship with a business. The price tag was \$30 thousand, but much has been covered. The students will receive a stipend and transportation reimbursement.

Energy Development ad policy: distributed solar: Wilder One has not submitted the permit yet. GMP has released an RFP due today. HEC is not involved. There is one project in this area. CAST has submitted comments.

Energize Upper Valley

This is the first planning meeting for the event. It will be held on Saturday, April 1 from 11:00am to 3:00pm at the LISTEN Center dining area. The plan is to have 15 tables of exhibitors around the outside of the room. Some examples are: solar installers, COVER, VECAN, and heat pump and water heater installers. In the center of the room will be experts able to answer questions. Examples could be: Federal IRA information, such as Matt Christie from Strafford, SEVCA's Kevin O'Brian, Jonathan Dowd from REV, local State Reps and Senators to discuss possible legislation, Drive Electric, Vital Communities with an emphasis on low and moderate income people, E bike loan group, energy basics, especially about energy transition, and Window Dresser inserts.

HEC will need to recruit attendees and advertise. The Dartmouth Energy Justice group will conduct a survey about how people receive information and Matthew and Kate will design ways to reach people. Discussed options: social media, a quarter page sheet, listserves, newspaper, radio, CATV/JAM.

Volunteers for tasks: recruit EV exhibitors, Linda Gray has a list from the Norwich EV event and will connect them to display the cars again. We would like to have 15 to 20 cars.

Vital Communities is the local contact for Ebikes. Anna will recruit volunteers.

What would HEC like to see the result from Dartmouth be: our research, sign up ten homes to install solar panels, interest in Community solar, interest in rebates, where should HEC focus our future work, connect to people, make more people aware of HEC, and build a coalition of organizations and people for future collaboration?

Next steps: Molly and Laura will try to finalize exhibitors in the next week.

HEC will meet on Thursday, February 16, since Dana will not be available on the fourth Thursday.

The meeting adjourned at 6:40pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn Bohi, clerk