

TOWN OF BEDFORD
ENERGY COMMISSION MINUTES
June 22, 2023

A meeting of the Bedford Energy Commission was held on Thursday, June 22, 2023 in the Town Meeting Room, 10 Meetinghouse Road.

I. Call to Order: Vice Chair Bandazian opened the meeting at 7:00 PM.

Present: Chris Bandazian (Vice Chair), Jeanne Walker (Assistant Town Manager), Matt McLaughlin, Carolyn Mahoney

Absent: John Russell (Chair), Chuck Nettleship, Bill Foote (SB Liaison), Bing Lu, Sue Thomas (TC Liaison), Lori Radke (TC Alternate), Mindy Bator (SB alternate)

Vice Chair Bandazian stated that they didn't have a quorum.

II. Approval of May 25, 2023 Minutes – Tabled as there was no quorum.

III. Resignation of Andrew Gillis

Vice Chair Bandazian stated that Andrew Gillis moved out of Town, so he's no longer able to serve on the Energy Commission. Andrew had been on for a very, very long time. They will very much miss his knowledge, experience, and creativity. He's promised that he would be willing to help out. They are using raspberry pie to put up announcements and what he rigged up at the Transfer Station. That's just one example of the many things. He was very active in HAREI, and hopefully still will be helping small businesses and homeowners make renewable energy improvements on their homes. He's sorry to see Andrew go and they will have an open seat on the Energy Commission. They will have to get the Town to post that vacancy. Anybody who has an interest who wants to know about the Energy Commission, they were all happy to talk to them.

IV. Reports of Members and Committees

a. School projects progress and planning – Bill Foote was not present

1. **Progress with systems upgrades** – Ongoing
2. **Portfolio Manager** – Bill Foote checking into

Ms. Walker stated that Bill Foote sent an email and she read from that email, *'The latest word I have on the School side projects is that maintenance is going full speed. A water line for the Memorial sprinklers was recently stubbed out in front of the building. Other than that, he won't get any details until the middle of July.'*

V. Old Business

b. Solar Project Update

Ms. Walker stated that they extended the bid period, so the bids were not due until June 27th, so she can't give them any results of that or any information or anything of that nature. They went through the question and answer phase and there was a little bit of a delay getting some information back out to them, so the Town decided that they would delay the bid opening to give adequate time for responses.

c. Eversource 3 Phase Power update

Ms. Walker stated that the poles had been delivered. There was a plan and they were anticipating that it would be done before the end of June. They haven't started installing any of the poles, so she thought that was overly optimistic, but she didn't have a new schedule.

d. Community Power Initiative: Discussion regarding RFP vs. CPCNH

Vice Chair Bandazian stated that without a quorum they couldn't move anything forward. He didn't know if it was worth putting a link to the Exeter presentation anywhere. Probably not enough people would see it to make a difference. Maybe they should have them come in and meet with them. Mr. McLaughlin thought that was a good idea. Vice Chair Bandazian thought especially given this very temporary, but eye-opening Eversource reduction in their rates. Putting that in its proper context and long-term decisions, he thought it was worth doing. Mr. McLaughlin wanted to clarify that the way this would work is they as a Committee would make a decision to recommend to the Town Council if they want to pursue it. Vice Chair Bandazian confirmed that process. He stated that ultimately something would have to get on the ballot, so it may seem like a huge amount of time between now and March, but it's not. There has to be public hearings and so forth. Hopefully if they need to get people in they can do it between now and October when the Town Council is looking at the budget; that's when ballots get considered as well.

e. SolSMART – Bronze Level Achieved

Vice Chair Bandazian stated that they finally made the finish line and congratulated Ms. Mahoney for working on that and Ms. Walker for working on that as well. It had been a long, long road.

Ms. Walker stated that Ms. Mahoney was already talking about what they could do to step up potentially, so it's not over as of yet. They have provided them with a 'tool kit' to get the word out that Bedford was now designated as a SolSMART community; they've achieved bronze level. Things like press releases, using the logo, and sharing on social media. They've provided a lot of that information and they will get on that.

Ms. Mahoney stated that they would look at the scoring and see if there were opportunities to score a little higher in some areas or gain some points.

Vice Chair Bandazian stated that from a practical point of view, what this means to residents and businesses is that they have made their processes easier for them to get approvals for renewable projects; easier access on the website.

Ms. Walker stated that Solsmart would include them on the map on their website. Vice Chair Bandazian wanted to know how many communities in NH had actually gone through the process. Ms. Walker stated that she didn't have the number, but would get that for him.

f. Website Review

Ms. Walker stated that she had not made changes. The proposed change would be to add the Solsmart designation logo. They could do a blurb on that if they would like. She could draft up something, they could review it next time and post it after the next meeting.

g. Messaging Signage at Transfer Station

Vice Chair Bandazian stated that he and Ms. Walker had exchanged some information. Ms. Walker stated that she hadn't had a chance to sit down with the Director of Public Works and figure out what size they could accommodate and those types of things. She thought in order to look at pricing, she needed to know how big they were looking at and to give her a chance to do that. Mr. McLaughlin wanted to know if they thought they could put it underneath where they recycle. He took some photos of it after last month's meeting. There are plenty of rafters in the overhead; that would get them out of the weather and really get where people are stopped for 5-7 minutes. That might be something Ms. Walker could ask. Ms. Walker stated that she would definitely do that. It was a wonderful suggestion. She wasn't familiar enough with their operations and exactly what their lifting and how close it's getting. That's what she didn't want to interfere with; their operations. Vice Chair Bandazian stated that they have to think about keeping traffic moving; making it interesting, but not too interesting. They've had the grant money for close to 10 years.

h. Other

Vice Chair Bandazian stated that he and Ms. Walker exchanged some information about Town Hall and a feeling like they should do an energy audit of the Town Hall; it's never been done. When the building was looked at during the infrastructure study, the feedback from the engineers was you couldn't do too much to improve the building envelope, because then snow would stay on the roof and it's a 1911 or so building not made for that. It's possible that nothing significant could be done, but it was also possible that something could be done. With increased parking, it could be utilized more. Objectively, the data in Portfolio Manager shows that it uses 2.7 times more energy per square foot than the Library. It's apples to apples, because both of those buildings they track both heat and electricity consumption. A lot of work done on the Library, but obviously they can't insulate to that level and keep snow off the roof, but it's worth a look. He thought it was running annually about \$15,700 a year for energy expenses. Improvement of a quarter or a third wasn't going to change taxpayers' lives, but it was a place where he thought there could be some improvement. Ms. Walker stated that if they could do it, it's the right thing to do. Vice Chair Bandazian stated that there were ways to get energy audits done without paying full price.

II. New Business:

- a. CENH Updates** – already discussed
- b. Other new business** – None

III. Reminders:

a. Next upcoming meeting July 27, 2023

Vice Chair Bandazian stated that hopefully in the interim they've done some review of bids. They may want to have a special meeting before then. There's a procedure for calling those and doing public notices. If they want to give Town Council feedback, that would be necessary. They certainly would have met before the Energy Commission meets next.

IV. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:13 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,

Dawn Boufford