

TOWN OF BEDFORD
September 23, 2021
ENERGY COMMISSION MINUTES

A meeting of the Bedford Energy Commission was held on Thursday, September 23, 2021 in the Town Meeting Room, 10 Meetinghouse Road.

I. Call to Order: Chairman Paradis opened the meeting at 7:00 PM

Present: Tim Paradis (Chair), Bing Lu, Bart Fromuth, Andrew Gillis, Chris Bandazian, Sue Thomas (Town Council Liaison), Bill Foote (School Board Alternate)

Absent: John Russell (Vice Chair), Lori Radke (Town Council Alternate), Tom Elwood, and John Schneller (School Board Liaison)

II. Quorum Count (5)

III. Approval of Minutes

– **August 26, 2021**

MOTION by Mr. Gillis to approve the August 26, 2021 minutes. Seconded by Councilor Thomas. Vote taken – all in favor.

IV. Special Guest Alex Vailas

a. Review proposed Rte 101 corridor Gas station/convenience store to include charging stations

Alex Vailas stated that he was there with Jack Sullivan, his partner on this project. He explained that it is two parcels comprising approximately six acres and is along Route 101 at the lighted intersection of Hardy Road/Jenkins Road/Route 101. He explained that this project came about many years ago when they had done the Hannaford project across the way, and they had to acquire land across the way to align the lighted intersection and as part of that they brought Town water all the way up Jenkins Road. One of the things that was called out was the need for some type of neighborhood gas/convenience/coffee shop. He mentioned Alex Ray's Common Man project on Route 93 and how they are working on a project with Alex Ray in Concord, and his prototype is partnering up with folks who provide electric charging stations. Mr. Vailas thought they should look at electric charging stations as part of the Route 101 project for super charging stations. They are there to talk about something conceptually about having the development look towards bringing some sort of electric charging opportunities integrated with the convenience store. The convenience stores themselves are permitted within the zone, and it would be having a gas component along with electric charging. They talked to a lot of vendors who feel during a transition it was important to have both options. Mr. Vailas stated that the growth curve for electric vehicles was tremendous, but thought there would also be the demand for gas at some level. They are there to let them know they have this in mind and are looking to have this be a Bedford design. There

are a few people in the community that are involved in gas station development who are integrating electric charging stations. The intent would be to look to those local folks and do something, but they wanted the opportunity to talk to the Energy Commission about it, share some thoughts, and start to accumulate some ideas and bring the project forward. Along with the parcel of land, they have a user that is a local business owner that wants to build a warehouse/office area as part of this. It would be totally by itself, but they want to bring the projects together.

Mr. Vailas showed the Commission a diagram concept of the project and the land area and explained the buildings on the diagram. He would like to see up to six charging stations. He stated that they are expensive and each individual charging station can cost \$75k - \$100k. He reached out to the State of NH and they do have money available through DES through the Volkswagen settlement. Tim White at DES is spearheading it. Mr. Vailas stated that Route 101 has been a targeted area for it. Mr. Gillis stated that it's a perfect spot, because a lot of people travel out to Keene; he loves EV charging. He stated that the charging stations don't have to necessarily be out by the road. If you are in an EV your car tells you where the charging is, so if they were in the back they would find them. He thought the biggest thing they miss with EV is if you are towing a trailer and talked about drive-through EV charging. They don't have them, so Tesla is going to fix it. He showed on the diagram where they could be put. Mr. Vailas stated that for some reason, they want to show people that these EV stations are out there, so they want to bring them out front right on Route 101. Mr. Bandazian suggested maybe they just do one alternative one. Mr. Gillis stated that he liked the physical aspect of all the stuff; people don't think there's this cute little post that you charge from. There's also this thing that's the size of a shipping container that has all of the batteries in it. He stated that at a gas station there is an underground fuel tank and you pump gas from that and into the cars. In an EV station, there's a giant battery. The grid couldn't possibly provide the amount of power that these things need, so there is an enormous battery there that fills the car. He wanted to make sure that Mr. Vailas put in on the plan somewhere, because if it's out by the street, it's going to block everything. It has to be above the ground and within 50 feet of the chargers. Mr. Vailas thought they could be put underground. Chairman Paradis mentioned the EV chargers at Whole Foods and didn't see a huge battery in the parking lot. Mr. Gillis stated that there were only two chargers there and they are very small and very low wattage, so maybe they don't have a battery there. He mentioned that Charge America just built the brand new two 350 kilowatt charger at the Mall of NH right in front of the food court. It's the highest amperage in the country. Mr. Gillis stated that Tesla could potentially pay for the whole thing too. Mr. Vailas stated that the architecture and everything else would have to conform. They are trying to figure out the best way to get as much information; do it on the ground level, and design this with a lot of thought to make sure they were providing enough sufficient area to do a battery charging area and everything else. He would also reach out to a couple of local people who are doing this now.

Mr. Bandazian thought it was great that it was on 101, which dovetails with the State's EV charging network. One of the restrictions they have in Town is the 2-mile limitation, but they've only got one gas station, which is being constructed that is only going to have two EV charging stations, and that's four miles away from this project. He saw it as a good transition of having both the gas and the charging stations; you need to have a hybrid mix. It was a good transitional project. The engineers will deal with storm water and traffic. Mr. Vailas thought the good thing about having the traffic light was it gives control access in both directions. He agreed that you have to have both, gas and EV charging stations. Chairman Paradis wanted to know if he's connected with

the buildings across the way, because if there is a place to eat across the street from where they work and gas and charging, it would be very attracting for them. Mr. Vailas stated that they had reached out to them and have talked to folks next door. They are trying to get as much information as possible and do it right. He stated that when you are proposing any use that has a gas component to it, there's going to be opposition to it. Mr. Gillis thought that the coffee and food that they would sell would bring in the customers and wondered if they would even need the gas station component. Mr. Vailas stated that the vendors they've spoken to have stated that they have to have both, so that's part of their model. Chairman Paradis talked about quick turnover. Councilor Thomas thought a Common Man type of place would fit right in there.

Mr. Vailas thought it would be helpful to get some thoughts from the Energy Commission as to how they should approach it and what components they should integrate into the project. He's already heard things that were very helpful, but anything else they could think of to reach out to him. Councilor Thomas stated that they've spent a lot of time talking about how the Town could have more charging stations and would the Town do it, but this project to put in charging stations was kind of a win-win. It gives the Town more charging stations and it's a private development. Mr. Gillis thought they had it figured out and that it's the perfect spot; it really couldn't be any better. They are going to get all of the traffic from the people that kind of live in the middle of nowhere and go by there every day. Mr. Vailas stated that the limiting factor for them serving food is sewer. Murphy's had to do an enormous septic field. Without having sewer, they can't just put a restaurant with electric charging stations. Mr. Fromuth stated that he loves the Common Man express and he'll go out of his way to go there. Councilor Thomas stated that that type of facility Bedford needs in that part of Town, plus having charging stations with it seems to make sense. Mr. Vailas hopes the Town embraces the project and allows it to go forward.

[Councilor Radke joined the meeting]

Chairman Paradis moved up the Solsmart discussion.

a. Solsmart

Councilor Radke stated that yesterday she met with Becky and Jill from the Planning Department and talked about the Solsmart program. She was excited to say that they were going to ask the Planning Board about some zoning options having to do with solar. They are moving forward with it, they signed the paper and it went on to Nick. She hoped the Planning Board would support some zoning as far as solar. Once they get that in the books, they become closer to getting that designation. Chairman Paradis wanted to know if the zoning was required for the bronze designation and Councilor Radke responded yes. Councilor Thomas wanted to know what the zoning would be and Councilor Radke responded like how big the solar rays are going to be or how tall they were going to be, etc. She was surprised that Bedford really didn't have any restrictions on solar and thought it was a smart idea to put something in the books, because it's becoming more and more popular.

V. Reports of Members and Committees

a. Legislative update – None

b. School projects – None

VI. Old Business

b. EV charging stations

Chairman Paradis mentioned how they've discussed where to put EV charging stations as a Town and talked about possibly the Library especially since their parking lot was going to be torn up anyways. Councilor Radke stated that they found out last night that the Library project was going to be pushed out a year. Chairman Paradis stated that a couple of meetings ago Councilor Thomas mentioned getting on the Council agenda. Councilor Thomas stated that she mentioned it and Dave (Gilbert) nodded like he knew. He sets the agenda, and he said yes, nodded like 'okay'. Mr. Fromuth wanted to know if the Town or the Library reached out to Tesla if they would foot the bill for a station or two over there and Mr. Gillis thought they totally would. The biggest problem with Tesla was they will give you the charges, pay the electrician to install them, they'll run the conduit, wires, everything, but when you charge from them, they won't pay for the electricity. You either have to a) wait for Tesla to come up with a system where you can bill, which they are working on, or b) you only have them turned on a limited amount of time; you can turn them down, so they are only charging small amounts. He stated that you can put a non-Tesla charger on the exact opposite side of the pole, and they've still paid for the whole thing. He sees it all the time.

Mr. Bandazian thought at this point they were looking at 2025 for that to happen, so hopefully there will be a way to monetize it. Chairman Paradis wanted to know if they needed to have the paving. Mr. Bandazian stated that they don't, but you have to disturb the paving to bring conduit out to wherever and the parking pattern right now doesn't lend itself to having an EV charger; they don't have enough parking period. Mr. Gillis thought it might be better to have the EV chargers at BCTV, then they can pull in there and walk to the Library, because it's much less used, especially the lower lot. Because there is space between the road and the lower lot, they could run conduit there without disturbing the pavement. Mr. Fromuth thought it made logical sense, but he liked the idea of promoting that there's available charging in Town. Mr. Gillis stated that they've got Town Hall, the Library, BCTV, but thought BCTV would be the best. Mr. Foote wanted to know if the parking lot at the Library was going to be a new design. Mr. Bandazian stated that the circulation would be a little bit different at the lower lot. Mr. Foote suggested contacting Tesla now and see if they could put them in. Mr. Gillis stated that it wouldn't be a bad idea to contact them, because those things take time too and they aren't always in a hurry to get things done, and they get a lot of requests. Chairman Paradis stated that they would put it in, but could the Town monetize it or did all the money go to Tesla. Mr. Gillis stated that at the moment, no money goes to Tesla, but the Town would have to pay the electric bill. Councilor Thomas stated that the end up in this whole thing is who pays the electric bill. Chairman Paradis wanted to know if revenue would partially offset it and Mr. Gillis stated that there is no revenue; it's free charging. All the chargers Tesla gives you for free are free chargers. They need Tesla to come up with a way to monetize it, which they've said many times they are working on. Someone should ask Tesla what the wait list is to get free chargers, because he thinks it's over a year.

c. Transfer Station

- i. Congressionally directed spending discussion**
- d. Municipal Aggregation Cost Analysis and Presentation**
- e. Town Pool PV Shade/Shelter**
- f. Public Works Highway Garage PV Vehicle Port/Shelter(s)**

Chairman Paradis mentioned going to the Council to discuss the Transfer Station and Congressional directed spending, municipal aggregation and the Town pool PV shade/shelter and the Public Works Highway Garage.

Councilor Thomas suggested he give Dave (Gilbert) a date certain or the Town Manager, because they put together the agenda. She suggested sooner rather than later, because they get the budget the end of October. Councilor Radke stated that she spoke to the person who did their municipal aggregation presentation and he's willing to give the presentation to the Council. Chairman Paradis stated that he would call or email Dave tomorrow. Councilor Thomas stated that the October meetings were the 13th and the 27th.

VII. New Business

Chairman Paradis stated that John (Russell) emailed them regarding the continual reduction in the cost for recycling versus trash. It's gone down even more, \$18. Mr. Gillis stated that the cost to truck the recycling somewhere, it's basically free. Mr. Bandazian stated that the Town pays for the shipping.

Chairman Paradis wanted to know if anyone had talked to Jeff Foote regarding the composting. Mr. Gillis took a look at it and thought it was a pretty good setup. Chairman Paradis wanted to know how well it was being received. Mr. Gillis stated that it's just one more pile; they are already doing composting. Mr. Foote stated that the problem with composting is you need so much area and one pile wasn't going to be enough. Mr. Gillis stated that it's a big pile.

Chairman Paradis mentioned that Mr. Bandazian had sent them some stuff from Portfolio Manager. Mr. Bandazian thought Portfolio Manager was a powerful tool to have. It lets you see energy use intensity, how much energy buildings use. The Town looks at 14 facilities, but the main users are BCTV, Town Offices, Safety Complex, Highway Garage and Library. It lets you do weather normalization and it's interesting to see things normalized for weather. It brings out buildings with envelopes that don't perform well and those are the ones with high cooling costs in the summer if you are the Safety Complex or high heating costs in the winter if you are the Highway Garage. He talked about improvements, percentage of savings and the weather normalization. If you are going to make energy improvements, it tells you where you should be focusing, what buildings. Mr. Gillis asked about solar panels and thought they were supposed to get a quote for solar. Mr. Bandazian stated that the RFP hasn't gone out and that's one of the things they want to meet with the Town Council about.

Mr. Gillis stated that next week is drive electric week, so if you have an electric car, drive it around. There will be some events on both weekends all over the country. You can see EV cars and there will be dealers there and a bunch of stuff, however very little in NH; Nashua was the only one. He mentioned an event in Beverly, MA at the middle school where there will be an electric bus that you can ride on.

Mr. Bandazian mentioned the Local Energy Solutions conference. Chairman Paradis stated that he sent an email to everybody and you can still sign up. It's October 8th. He is planning on attending. Mr. Bandazian stated that he was planning on being there. Chairman Paradis mentioned that if they are a member they get four free tickets.

VIII. The next meeting October 28, 2021

IX. Adjournment

MOTION by Councilor Thomas to adjourn by at 8:01 pm. Seconded by Mr. Bandazian. Vote taken – All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by,

Dawn Boufford