

Northfield Energy Committee Meeting Minutes  
January 16, 2024. 6:00pm, Town Hall

Present: Judy Wagner, Co-chair  
Jim VanNatta, Co-chair  
Spirit Joseph  
Seth Hansell, Secretary

1. December, 2023 minutes approved as amended.
2. Meeting with Finance Committee to discuss reasoning for the warrant item we put on the town meeting
  - a. Mon, Feb 5th at 6:00.
  - b. Can we get Andrea to put together numbers associated with the savings we have generated with work from this committee.
    - i. Spirit will work with Andrea to get these numbers.
  - c. MEI data estimates savings we can point to
    - i. Didn't have complete data
      1. Most recent work at NES
      2. Vehicles aren't properly reported (at least not fully)
      3. Some estimates are clearly above since some projects were cut after original estimates were made.
    - ii. Always likely to be some errors, but it would still be a good idea to get data for the buildings we did work on.
      1. Library
        - a. Hours could be different
        - b. Weather normalized data graphs presented as options
      2. NES
      3. Town Hall
    - iii. Sometimes the data will show a steady decrease in energy use, but a constant cost, so savings are not obvious since the cost of energy went up.
    - iv. Covid affected a lot of the numbers.
  - d. We really just want a fairly simple paragraph which states what we did, gives some idea of the savings we made to energy, if not to cost
  - e. We also want to point out that while our work was originally focused only on energy, the future work is likely to also consider decarbonization initiatives.

### 3. Solar Planning Project

- a. There were a number of items in the report from the UMass Energy Extension which we are not interested in pursuing at this point.
- b. Very clearly heard from planning board that there is no interest in using forest or farm-land for Solar development
- c. There was some good information which came from them, but really not in the form that we would want to present at this point
  - i. We may want to condense much of it to bring towards the planning board in a more polished document that we can fully get behind
  - ii. We can definitely incorporate some of it for our own use in terms of updating our future plans for this committee.
  - iii. Perhaps some of the information can be used to help the open space committee for their next cycle (post 2028).
- d. We should get additional feedback from these various committees (open space, agriculture, financial, and conservation), then craft an official preface along with a summary of the report with our own goals in mind. This we could then ultimately present to the select board.
- e. Goal to get some kind of revised version of this report before we do the outreach.
- f. Also need to get this general information to the public to see about increasing solar adoption among residents where there is interest.

### 4. Presentation to Select Board

- a. Let them know what we have been doing
  - i. Green Communities grant
  - ii. Working with the solar report from UMass
- b. Show them that we have run into the need for technical support which needs to be paid for and the issues with this.
- c. Make them aware of the nature of the grants that are out there but which require town support to obtain matching grants.
- d. See when the select board is meeting and we can try to schedule when more of our committee can be present as well.

### 5. Committee Membership

- a. Seth will apply to remain on the committee for another term
- b. Spirit has applied to remain for another term
- c. Need more people which would allow more of us to work together without having a quorum and a required need for posting meetings, agendas, etc.

6. Additional Items not anticipated at time of posted agenda:

- a. Annual reporting from town committees is changing and we need to put some work into our report
  - i. We are being asked to come up with metrics as well as goals and objectives hopefully tied to the metrics.
  - ii. Due March 1st
  - iii. Goals and objectives
    - 1. Reduce emissions due to energy use in town buildings and vehicles
      - a. Reduce emissions due to energy use at NES
      - b. Other town buildings
      - c. Electrifying town owned vehicles where appropriate
    - 2. Reducing emissions due to energy consumption town-wide.
      - a. Encouraging construction practices that create more energy efficiency
      - b. Community outreach to achieve greater energy efficiency town-wide
    - 3. Obtaining outside funding for the purposes of helping to achieve these goals
- b. Should we look at our street lights?
  - i. Make sure all our lights are LED rather than high pressure sodium.
- c. Website for aggregation needed updating. This was done, but is still missing some information that we would like added/revised.
- d. A google drive now holds our documents so that it can be more readily accessed by anyone on the committee
- e. We need to continue with Ben, Scott and Elliot together at NES with some pre-planning to get ahead of the next Green Communities Grant cycle.
  - i. Ben wanted to meet with Gretchen in Jan (now) to discuss how to fine-tune the plan.
  - ii. Might want to hold off on getting Elliot involved until we are further along. He did a lot of work previously and has not yet had any payoff due to the nature of the bidding process.
  - iii. Get Ben to help us figure out not just the next step, but the whole process both with NES and what would be the best type of work to help Northfield as a whole move forward.

Adjourn 7:43 pm

Next meeting: Tues, Feb 13 at 6:00

Minutes approved 3/19/24