

DORSET ENERGY COMMITTEE
Minutes of December 15, 2015 Meeting
(2 pm at Dorset Town Hall)

Present: Jim Hand, Ellen Maloney, Nancy Faesy, and Rob Gaiotti, Town Manager.

The Dorset School: TDS is working on a 5 year plan for work required on the school building. Jim Salsgiver reports that no decisions have been made, but they are looking at replacing two boilers. They looked at the possibility of using heat pumps, but found there are a number of issues specific to schools that raised complications. There are requirements for ventilation (met by existing Univent unit heaters throughout the school) – which made it somewhat difficult to determine whether a switch to heat pumps would meet requirements. Also, there were concerns with respect to the number of units that would be required. It is possible that a solution might be available, but the school hasn't felt it has the resources to adequately assess the feasibility of such a switch. A study was completed (for all the schools in the Supervisory Union) of switching from oil fired boilers to pellet boilers. But the cost of such a switch at Dorset was high, and the payback period / return on investment was not all that attractive. No decisions have yet been made.

The committee members and Rob will look for possible grants that might be available for schools to get assistance with biomass or other non- fossil fuel units.

Park and Ride: Ellen Maloney reported that Wayne Davis, DOT engineer, says "Green International" is still in the data-collection phase. After the Holidays there will be a "local concerns" meeting at which public comment, requests, etc. will be taken. After that the "preliminary design" is drawn up. Jim Sullivan (BCRC) has expressed a strong interest in having the Regional Commission involved, especially as to "green infrastructure" aspects that Jim Henderson has been working on. (Storm runoff, drainage, plantings, etc.) The State hopes that any town public transport will be coordinated with this project. Mark Anders will also ask to be kept in the loop. The State will own and maintain the site. The process will probably take up to two more years.

Vermont Energy Education Program (VEEP): The Vermont Energy Education Program (VEEP) is offering free workshops to each class at local schools. Laura MacLachlan is the western Vermont educator. They work with individual classroom teachers to set up the workshops from a selection of five. We strongly support bringing this program to the Dorset School. Jim Salsgiver will pursue this with the school (following the meeting, Vickie Haskins of the School Board offered to work with Ellen Maloney on this project). See info@veep.org for more information.

State Funding for energy projects: State Treasurer, Beth Pearce, has initiated a program of investing a portion of the State Pension Fund in local energy projects. Loans have just been made to NeighborWorks and Efficiency Vermont, among others.

Recycling/Solid Waste: Rob Gaiotti reported that the Bennington Solid Waste Alliance is finally formed and operational. It includes all Bennington County towns and will have a public education component. Towns will be assessed in proportion to population.

Continuing Real Estate Education: Jim Hand proposed that we bring a continuing education program devoted to energy efficiency in buildings to our area so that realtors can be made more aware of the sales potential of the homes they are handling. It would be through the Vermont Realtor's Association so that continuing education credits would be available. Ellen Maloney and Jim Hand will pursue this. Brian DeCesare of Green Mountain Appraisers is very interested in bringing the appraisers on board. Ellen will set up a date for us to meet with him. Ellen or Jim will also get in touch with Alison Cummings, the current chair of the local board of realtors to advance this idea.

Petition related to Gas Pipeline: Someone from Middlebury is passing around a letter to Gov. Shumlin and the PSB opposing the gas pipeline to go through Middlebury. He was seeking the endorsement of the committee. We decided not to sign as a committee, but that individuals could sign as they wish.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen Maloney