



## Hinesburg Energy Committee

Town Of Hinesburg

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### Meeting Minutes January 15, 2014

**Attendance:** Hannah Jackson, Katie Emerson, Ray Keller, Carrie Fenn, Chuck Reiss, John Pacht

**Guest:** Maggie Gordon

1. Review minutes from our last meeting
2. Interim energy standard regulations – all new construction
  - Efficiency Vermont has no known problem with towns requiring Energy Code Plus or higher and still getting their incentives and they are checking with the Public Service Board
  - Problem brought up by Peter Erb about people building their own homes and he feels they should be exempt. The code does have a very specific exemption that the homeowner/builder has to be the person physically building the home (ordering materials, on-site etc.) The homeowner/builder is required to document that it does not meet code (if they don't want it to) with an explanation so if they sell their home the new owners will be aware.
    - Perhaps only owner/builder home above a certain square feet (1500sqft) need to be in code (John)
  - Chuck suggested requiring homeowners/builders enroll in Efficiency Vermont's new builder program to get a building permit as an option.
    - There is a concern that scheduling to get EVT out to inspect and produce a rating (a week or more) could delay the building process and getting at certificate of occupancy.
    - What if someone skips a step and inspection is impossible?
    - The final inspection shouldn't take long because problems would have been revealed in mid-project inspections.
  - Peter Erb needs a handout of information that homeowners can give to their contractors – Efficiency Vermont does have lots of materials so one of the goals of our committee is to produce a packet/ handout of what people will need to do for Energy Code Plus (EVT files the residential building efficiency paperwork for the state)
    - Make sure we are not assuming a official role when we are solely an advisory committee
    - Not additional work for Peter- tell homeowners to talk with Efficiency Vermont or this committee
  - Potential problem passing the select board because of additional costs to builders and homeowners. Need comparison of costs of homes with and without Energy Code Plus for Select Board meeting.

- The difference between Energy Code Plus and current Energy Code requirements may be negligible. There are also a lot of variables in homes (appliances, air leakages etc.) to make the comparison difficult.
  - Make sure the code is cost effective
- How detailed should our recommendation be? Do we want a big policy picture, want to iron out small details (highly likelihood of passing)? We may want to offer our goal and include less desirable options
- 3. Recap Monday night's meeting with Select Board about HEC's budget
  - \$450 unconfirmed best-case scenario (the town wide mailing was deemed unnecessary)
  - Use some of the money as seed money for grants
- 4. Quick update on the Norris development
  - Letter was sent to Peter Erb and the DRB, Chuck will send a electronic copy to committee members
- 5. Discuss our position on the PACE program and prep for the meeting with the Select Board
  - Requested a meeting with Select Board
  - We would like more information about whether the PACE program is designed to enroll lower income families who cannot afford traditional loans (rates are comparable)
  - Arrange a meeting with Lani Malipan (runs the PACE program); everyone email specific questions they would like answered.
- 6. Haystack Meadow development
  - Request from Alex for various committees to weigh in on this development
  - Chuck and Carrie attended the meeting on January 14<sup>th</sup> to offer their personal opinions
  - Background on project: based on village visualization of maximum build out done in the past
    - Because the development is so large and the houses so close together passive solar and netzero energy use will not be possible
    - It is in line with the town goal of dense village and rural outlying areas
    - Need density bonus (like the Norris project)
    - Ball fields are not part of the development (cannot count towards density bonus)
    - 68% of units are attached multi-family units, some with below ground parking
  - The town is planning another meeting and materials are available online
  - The DRB meeting is on Feb 18<sup>th</sup> and is very responsive to audience comments, the project is in the sketch plan phase where the most change can happen.
  - Preliminary Observations – Hannah will write a letter expressing our thoughts
    - Small buildings and multi-family homes are typically more efficient
    - Current subdivision regulations address orientation of homes for passive solar and many structures in the development are not set up to take advantage of the sun.
    - Group net metering solar to offset those who cannot get passive solar could be a solution
    - Move the road to the baseball field and line it with solar trackers (would greatly reduce number of houses)
    - We don't know how the buildings are being built; if they want density bonus they may have to include green building technology
    - Is there enough electrical grid capacity?

7. Energy modeling (Ray) – see presentation next time with projector (first agenda item)
  - HERO is a software program that will run energy modeling scenarios
  - Ray will take an example building from the Haystack development and model it with a better solar orientation.
  - Natural Resources Canada has easy to use software for renewables
8. Group net metering presentation (Hannah)
  - Sunfarmvt.com (presenter at VECAN conference) site brings you to a Colorado company – Hannah will continue to try to find him through VECAN. – Update –Nick Ziter was the presenter from Sun Farm Community Solar at VECAN.
9. Possible Wood pellet (biomass) heating presentation
  - Presenters in Monkton tonight were out of Maine so they may not be able to come back but an alternative would be Burton (Burlington)

#### **Action Items**

1. Chuck will draft a letter recommending Energy Code Plus circulate electronically with comments by the end of next week.
2. Chuck will send copy of Norris development letter to committee members
3. Everyone will email questions on the PACE program to the group
4. Hannah will draft a letter regarding the Haystack development
5. Ray will take an example building from the Haystack development and model it with a better solar orientation.
6. Hannah will continue to try to find net metering presenter