



## Energy Committee

Town of Hinesburg  
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### Meeting Minutes - January 19, 2016

- Approved -

**Present:** Chuck Reiss, John Pacht, Carrie Fenn, Nikki Kuhn, Richard Watts

#### Minutes

The minutes of November 17, 2015 were approved as amended.

#### Energy Section of the Town Report

Chuck explained to Nikki and Richard, prospective new committee members, that HEC had done an extensive rewrite of the energy section of the Town Plan and that the whole document was still being reviewed by the Planning Commission, but at some point at the public hearings, HEC may want to be more aggressive on screening of solar installations.

#### Community Solar Project

A discussion about what is meant by community solar brought up the many ways solar projects can be organized. What the HEC wants to do would not involve the town, but rather a LLC would be organized that would finance and develop the project and receive the Renewable Energy Credits (RECs) as well as the solar field's energy production. Richard said it would be nice if the town itself could organize such a project so that there would be more public support for solar projects, but towns cannot receive federal tax credits.

Dick VanVliet and Caroline Nickerson, owners of the proposed community solar site would like to complete the project this year so the HEC needs to focus on this until it is organized. The HEC plans to model its project on the Boardman Hill Community Solar Project that has shared their organizational documents on line. First the committee needs to generate a budget and assess if there is interest.

#### Solar Screening Changes to the Hinesburg Zoning Regulations

Chuck has been working with the Planning Commission to add language to section 5.6.5 of the town's zoning regulations that would require appropriate screening and sighting for solar installations as well as other commercial or industrial development. After making some minor changes as a result of comments at the public hearing, the Planning Commission will send the changes to the Select Board to be reviewed, and public hearings held before the changes are approved by the Select Board.

## **Magee Hill Solar Project**

Andrea Cohen and Lisa Morris, representing Vermont Electric Cooperative (VEC), and Chad Farrell and Chad Nichols, representing Encore Redevelopment joined the group at about 8:15 to discuss their joint solar project on Magee Hill. Andrea talked about the rural character of most of VEC's territory that affects the cost of providing electric service to their members. Small net metering projects usually add to rates, but large projects such as Magee Hill spreads costs, so as a utility, they can comply with Vermont's Comprehensive Energy Plan. Two advantages of the location is a nearby VEC substation that provides the needed 3-phase power connection to transmit the power to the grid, and a somewhat large number of VEC members close by. The HEC wanted to know how many VEC members lived in Hinesburg and Andrea said she would find out and let us know.

Chad Farrell said the 2-megawatt project that they will develop, would cover 7 or 8 acres with 6,000 panels providing power to 300 homes. A third party, SoCor Energy, is the financial backer. Chad assured the committee that there would be adequate screening. The time frame for the project depends on how the permitting process goes, but by meeting with local boards early in the process, and dealing with their concerns, they hope to start construction by the end of the year. A meeting is planned with the Select Board on February 1.

## **Action Items**

1. Chuck to contact Keith Roberts of the Primmer Piper Law Firm to get more information about community solar organization. Also Chuck to contact Green Mountain Power about next steps for community solar.
2. The committee will meet for a site visit on Magee Hill on Saturday, January 23 at 10:00 a.m.
3. Dick Hopwood, Nikki Kuhn, and Richard Watts to formally apply to the Select Board for appointment to the Hinesburg Energy Committee. Contact Trevor Lashua, Town Administrator, at [tlashua@hinesburg.org](mailto:tlashua@hinesburg.org).

## **HEC Agenda for February 16 Meeting**

1. Discuss Rutland's resolution to increase the input of VT municipalities regarding the siting of renewable energy projects in Certificate of Public Good (CPG) projects in proceedings before the Public Service Board.
2. Hear reports about our community solar project and decide how to move forward.
3. Discuss observations from Magee Hill Solar Project site visit.

Respectfully submitted,  
Carrie Fenn