



TOWN OF STRATHAM

INCORPORATED 1716

10 BUNKER HILL AVENUE STRATHAM NH 03885

VOICE (603) 772-4741 FAX (603) 775-0517

MINUTES FOR STRATHAM ENERGY COMMISSION MEETING Nov. 9, 2021

Meeting held at the Stratham Municipal Center

Commission Members:

- Michael Ream
- Matthew O'Keefe
- Charlie Case
- Michael Welty
- Joe Van Gombos

All members were present

Also attending

David Moore Town Administrator
Joe Lovejoy Member Town Select Board
Henry Herndon Community Power Coalition New Hampshire (CPCNH) consultant

Call to Order: 6:07 PM

1.Minutes from October 12 2021 were approved

2.Henry Herndon led a discussion on Community Power

Henry Herndon has been a consultant for CPCNH. A group of people met in early 2020 to kick off a Community Power initiative for New Hampshire. CPCNH was incorporated October 1, 2021 with 14 towns (including Exeter) and one county participating.

Mike Welty first commented that Community Power would be for anybody in Stratham. He said the current international natural gas shortage has forced Unitil to offer a much more expensive "standard offer power contract" to their customers starting December 1. The standard offer power contract rate will be increasing from 7.1 cents per kwh to 17.5 cents per kwh which will make a significant increase in resident's electric bills. Community Power would allow the Town to control energy costs as well as offer generation from renewables for residents by being part of a much larger coalition with its bulk purchasing power.

Community Power would be set up in an "opt out" arrangement vs "opt in" for those people who are on the Unitil standard offer power contract. Community Power allows bulk purchase of electricity, load shifting, load distribution and energy portfolio management.



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Each member municipality can set up its own parameters. Any customer can opt out at any time. Those who are on a third party contract can end their contract (including charges) and opt in.

CPCNH is setting up a Coalition Aggregation method (as opposed to a Community Method with a single fixed price) and will hire experts who can act as a broker.

David Moore asked what the motivation is to set up this type of system and how did this get through the legislature? Henry explained that this is a local control issue and that the motivation is generally reducing cost or increasing the amount of renewables (or a combination). The specific percentage of renewables would be set up by the Select Board.

Stratham can initially join the Coalition at no cost by following the specific requirements in the NH statute (SB286) which allows municipalities to establish Community Power - and by agreeing to CPCNH's Joint Power Agreement. This step must be approved by the Select Board and may allow the Town to be part of the CPCNH Governing Board. The Board is limited to 21 seats and 15 are filled so far.

A first step is to establish a Community Power Committee to examine details and propose a Stratham Community Power Plan for the Select Board and the Voters to review. The State Law governing Community Power requires the Committee to hold public hearings to include the community in the Plan conversation. The Plan must include universal access to those in the Town, define how the Community Power Committee will work, set rates and administrative costs, define how net-metering will be included, and other specifics. Unitil would continue to provide power distribution services as they do now. Once Plan specifics are defined and approved at Town Meeting, Stratham can then become a full member. It is believed that Mitchell Law Offices in Portsmouth have advised other Towns on Community Power.

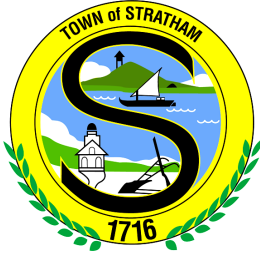
Henry Herndon left the meeting at 7:15 PM

3. Town Utility Cost/Usage Report – David Moore reported that progress is being made to automate data collection and reporting for Town electricity usage directly from Unitil's database. There will be a meeting on November 10, 2021 to work on details. Attendees may include David Moore, Joe VanGombos, Matt O'Keefe and Christiane McAllister (Finance Administration).

4.2022 Goals

Community Power as a Possibility for Stratham

Other Municipal Solar Projects – example: possible solar installation on the Public Works Salt Shed. See discussion in the Energy Commission minutes from July 13, 2021.



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Resource for Cluster Development Solar Projects – At our May 11, 2021 meeting, the Energy Commission met with Jeff Gallagher (Stratham Green Condo Association), David Peck (Crockett Farm Condo Association) and Kim Woods (Aberdeen West Cooperative). Their experiences of developing Solar Arrays at each site were shared. The Energy Commission is not part of the approval process for Solar Projects. However, developing a resource checklist for other Cluster Development Solar Projects could help smooth the planning process. Questions that need to be answered for Cluster Development projects like the Aberdeen project are: what is “Conservation”, what is “Development” and what percentage of coverage should be allowed in the common space.

The Planning Board held a public hearing on the Aberdeen West Cooperative Solar Project application at their October 20, 2021 meeting, and currently plan to continue the hearing on November 17, 2021. Mike Welty and Charlie Case attended the hearing and felt that the Aberdeen West presenters were not ready to sufficiently explain details on their proposed project or to clearly answer questions from residents. Mike Welty approached Select Board member Mike Houghton to clarify what Energy Commission members can say at a Planning Board meeting and found that we can speak as citizens. David Moore suggested that the Town needs a group discussion on Cluster Development Solar Projects since we will likely hear from more of them. We believe there are a total of 42 of Cluster Developments in Stratham.

Electric Vehicles (EVs) – David Moore commented we should collect information on possible use of EVs as Police Cars and meet with the Police Chief separately.

5.New Business – David Moore said that funding from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) will enable the Town to move up several Capital Plan ventilation projects outlined by Nate Mears at the Energy Commission’s July 13, 2021 meeting. These are: Year 2024 – Replace heating and cooling units at the Police Department, and Year 2025 – Replacement of five propane powered roof top HVAC on top of the Wiggin Memorial Library. Mike Welty asked Mike Houghton (speaking as an HVAC specialist) what his recommendation would be for the type of replacement systems. Mike Houghton suggested that Heat Pumps could be a replacement HVAC system at the Police Station, but not at the Town Building. David suggested that the Energy Commission have a separate conversation with Nate Mears (Director of Public Works).

David Moore noted that the Energy Commission does not have a Select Board representative attending meetings, as the Planning Board and Conservation Commission do.

Adjourned 8:05 PM

Next meeting will be December 14, 2021

Respectfully submitted – Charlie Case