

CORNISH ENERGY COMMITTEE MINUTES
July 8, 2024, 7-8:30 PM
Cornish Town Offices and via Zoom

PRESENT: in person, CEC members Joanna Sharf, Richard Thompson, Bill Schmidt, Mike Belanger, and Alternate Bill Cable; Via Zoom: Bob Jordan, Nancy Wightman, Nick Cohen, and Doug Cogan (Sullivan County Energy Circuit Rider).

TEMPORARY APPOINTMENT OF ALTERNATE MEMBER AS FULL MEMBER: Joanna appointed Bill Cable as a full member of the Committee for this meeting.

APPROVAL OF JUNE MINUTES: Mike made a motion to accept the June minutes, and Richard seconded the motion. The minutes were approved.

NEW MEMBERS FOR THE COMMITTEE: The Committee discussed a replacement for Everett Cass, who submitted his resignation at the last meeting. Joanna reminded everyone that the Committee recommends candidates, and the Select Board has final approval. It is the general practice that alternate members are advanced to fill openings. Joanna suggested that alternate member Myron Kuhre be advanced to replace Everett Cass and the Committee agreed. Joanna indicated there was still a need for additional members to fill alternate positions. Prospective members must be Cornish residents, ideally should attend at least 2-3 meetings, and speak with the Committee about their interest before being recommended for membership in the Committee. Mike suggested consideration of Frank Parks, former Cornish Select Board member, as a candidate. Mike offered to contact him to gauge his interest.

Wind Power Forum: Richard is still waiting for confirmation of a forum date from the primary speaker candidate. He has reached out to Virginia Parker for help. For a second speaker, Joanna contacted the Lempster Select Board but has not received a response. She has also reached out to Eversource for a possible speaker. The Committee discussed recycling of wind turbine parts. The turbines typically last about 20 years and they are composed of many different materials. Bill Cable knows of at least one company focused on turbine recycling. Remnants (e.g., fiberglass) can be used in concrete. Joanna expressed the need for a publicity poster for the forum and suggested that Evan Oxenham might have a template we could use. She indicated that we need to have speakers and other details confirmed within the next two weeks.

OTHER FUTURE FORUMS AND/OR ENERGY PROJECTS: Joanna opened up discussion of possible future topics for forums or projects. Nancy Wightman suggested an open forum focused on answering any energy-related questions that residents might have (no formal presentations). It could include sharing of successes & failures of energy saving projects that residents have experienced. The Committee discussed whether this type of forum should be a recurring event, and whether it should be held during a future regular meeting of the Committee. The group agreed that a catchy title for such a session

is needed. Nancy said she would give it some thought. Doug Cogan suggested that the Committee consider a forum on the need for public EV charging stations in Cornish to ascertain the level of demand.

COMMUNITY POWER UPDATE: Andrew Hatch, Outreach Coordinator for CPCNH, and Evan Oxenham, who serves on the PEC and the CPCNH Board, joined the meeting in person. They had just met with the Cornish Select Board about joining the community power coalition. The Select Board has not decided to join yet but listened to Andrew's and Evan's presentation and asked quite a few questions. Andrew briefed the Committee about the option of joining the coalition through Sullivan County. At the moment, the county effort is moving ahead slowly but would be the simpler option for Cornish. Joining through a county is an option for towns that do not have energy committees, or that are not ready to decide to join on their own. Under the county option, a governing committee comprising participating towns is formed, and Cornish would have a representative on that committee. The Committee discussed the county and individual town approaches and felt that there would be advantages to Cornish joining on its own -- in particular that it would control its own destiny and not be reliant on the county and the county governing committee. Evan shared a document that lists the steps Plainfield took to join CPCNH. Andrew explained that CPCNH is not in any way attempting to undermine any of the utilities, including NHEC – it matches NHEC's rate, which is usually the lowest among the NH utilities, but the utilities make their money through transmission fees, not the energy they procure. For the utilities, CPCNH is just another third party purchaser of power. Andrew explained that towns can choose to include an "adder" to the rates offered to ratepayers (it can be a fraction of a cent), which would be used to build up a discretionary reserves fund that can be used to finance various energy-related projects. As an example, Enfield is using their discretionary reserves to pay for energy audits for town residents. Joanna said she would follow up with the Select Board about a decision timetable.

CEC TABLE AT THE CORNISH FAIR: The Committee discussed the option of having a table at the Cornish Fair in August that would provide information about renewable energy and how to be more energy efficient. Various locations for the table were discussed. After consideration, the Committee decided that the Fair would not be the most effective venue mainly because it would not reach a lot of Cornish residents (attendees at the Fair come from many different towns). The discussion shifted to the Cornish Recycling Center as an alternative. The Recycling Center is a good way to reach a lot of Cornish residents. Discussion ensued about the location of the table at the Recycling Center (including indoors or outdoors and making sure not to interfere with Recycling Center activities), as was the frequency of making it available. Richard will talk to Mike Monette about the possibility of having a table for the Energy Committee at the Recycling Center.

MUNICIPAL SOLAR PROGRAM: The Committee discussed the Municipal Solar Power grant program, for which applications are due August 1st. Doug Cogan clarified that the town would have to front the money and then would get reimbursed upon submission of invoices. He thinks it's possible that 100% of the cost of the project would be covered. Richard indicated that the 2 sites the Committee was considering for this project – the

Town Hall roof and the Town Garage roof -- are not ideal since they are not directly facing south, and that the application requires that we have all our ducks in a row in a very short timeline. Doug agreed. The Committee concluded that no application would be submitted.

STATE FUNDING FOR EV CHARGERS: Doug mentioned that the State of NH is putting together a statewide application for the US Dept. of Transportation's Charging & Fueling Infrastructure Discretionary Grant Program. A lot of funding would come through this Grant if NH wins its application. NH is asking towns to indicate their interest and readiness to install EV chargers in their communities. The more EV chargers proposed across the State, the stronger the state application will be. Even though Cornish may not have "shovel-ready" plans for EV chargers, it still would be beneficial to indicate the town's interest in installing chargers in the near future. If Cornish can get together a list of possible locations for chargers in town, we should submit it to the State. Joanna will review the submission requirements on the state website and work on a possible list of locations. Deadline is August 1. Doug recommended that we hold a forum on the town's vision for EV chargers at which we can get input from town residents about future locations for town EV chargers and discuss things such as electric school buses that can serve as battery backup for town buildings.

CAPITAL RESERVE FUND FOR ENERGY PROJECTS: Doug mentioned that many grant opportunities will be coming down the pike in the very near future. These grants, like the Municipal Solar program, will require that towns pay for projects up front and then get reimbursed by the grants. There is a conundrum in that towns that find funds to pay for projects may be deemed ineligible for grants since they already "have obtained" the money. Other towns have had success in circumventing this problem by creating Capital Reserve Funds for Energy Projects – which by being a general fund, cannot be classified as being designated for a specific project. Nancy suggested that we should get projects ready for future grants – EV charger installations, solar installations, etc. Richard suggested that we should reconsider our former plan to install a large ground solar array on a hill above the Fairgrounds.

GENERAL ENERGY SAVING IDEAS: Bill Cable talked about using energy data provided for customers on a utility's website to troubleshoot the cause of high electric bills. He gave the example of how he figured out that the fan on his air conditioner was on "constant" instead of "auto" and that resulted in a significant increase in his electric bill. Joanna talked about Eco Flow's "Smart Panel" and battery backup, which provides energy usage in real time on selected circuits through their app. She said that seeing the number of watts used by various circuits at every second is a powerful tool that spurs homeowners to shut off un-needed appliances. Unfortunately, Eco Flow's product is expensive and only covers 12 selected circuits in a home. Bill Cable suggested that the Energy Committee set up a team that could offer residents help in troubleshooting high electric bills.

The meeting adjourned at 8:41 PM.

NEXT MEETING: Monday, August 12 at 7:00 PM.