

**DRAFT Minutes
Town of Henniker
Energy Committee
November 28, 2011
The Grange**

Present: Mark Mitch, Tony Caplan, Barbara Bernstein, Nicole Gage

Guests: Tara Germond

Reviewed minutes from 11/7/2011. Approved unanimously.

COMMISSION VS. COMMITTEE: Tara mentioned that in 2007 the RSAs allowed a “commission” to be established through a warrant article at town meeting, allowing energy groups to have a budget. We noted that we are not a commission but an advisory committee appointed by the selectmen.

We reviewed the history of the energy committee, the RFP and energy audit process. We looked over page 10 of the audit report for an overview of recommendations.

OUTREACH: Mark noted that outreach and synopses of the findings needs to be put out there. Discussed how the committee has been around since 2007 and that monthly town e-news and the annual report (due in January) are good communication outlets. **Tony offered to help write the annual report article for January.**

SCHOOL COLLABORATION: We discussed the lack of collaboration with the schools. In 2002 the school did an energy audit on their own. Nicole asked if our objective involves the schools, individual businesses or residents. She heard some significant testimony recently of towns and schools collaborating together and achieving 80% reduction in energy costs. Henniker municipal energy costs is at about \$120,000/year but what about the schools and how their energy consumption affects taxpayers? Barbara asked for our original mission and goals and Tony noted that the original mission was established at Town Meeting and basically it is to save the town money. We discussed previous attempts of the energy committee to do public outreach to residents on energy usage.

Barb gave some background on the school’s past initiatives with Brenda Wright in the early 2000’s. Tony noted that the SAU leadership has changed quite a bit since then. Mark & Tony suggested we research with PSNH to see how much money has been saved by the changing of light bulbs.

Tony volunteered to the talk to the principal at the elementary school to begin to open the dialogue with the school on energy issues.

GREEN HOME TOURS – PUBLIC OUTREACH: Mark suggested that in the summer there are green-home tours and that publicizing the tours could be a community outreach objective.

MASTER PLAN / ENERGY CHAPTER: We noted that the Master Plan may be updated for 2012 and that we could add an energy chapter. Tara said that our regional planning commission could possibly assist us with writing the chapter, but time and funds are running out quickly. **Tara will email us a simple**

outline on how an energy chapter can be written for the Master Plan based on her work with the Southwest Regional Planning Commission.

OBJECTIVES: Nicole suggested that our objectives for the coming 2-3 years, if the committee can sustain and grow itself, could involve 4 parts: 1) warrant article/funding options for improvements 2) Energy chapter in Master Plan 3) Community outreach on residential energy use and 4) School involvement / opening communications with SAU.

TRACKING / BENCHMARKING ENERGY USE: Tara would like the committee to begin tracking energy usage from this point forward, and collate data from previous years and off the recent audit, to help with benchmarking usage in the future. She is willing to set up the collection system initially (databases or spreadsheets) and train a staff person to do the monthly data entry. Nicole suggested that we have a part-time staff person who could do the entry regularly. Mark has a student in their new Sustainability Major who is looking for a special project. He suggested that his student shadow Tara so the student can learn how to do the same for the college. **Tara and Mark agreed to talk about this more outside of the meeting. Mark MADE A MOTION to have Tara begin a data collection process in collaboration with the town finance officer. Nicole offered to brief the finance director on the why & how of the proposal. Barbara SECONDED. Passed unanimously.**

WARRANT ARTICLE / OUTREACH: Mark discussed the recent department head presentation. Only the Administrator and Road Agent were able to be present. The Administrator suggested a warrant article for a CIP fund rather than going at each improvement individually. Tony noted that capital improvements would have to be raised thru taxation. Alternative funding could come into play for the following year (2012-13). Barbara noted that she is on a new statewide committee that is focusing on funding options; she will keep the committee apprised of changes and new opportunities. She noted that some organizations are considering bundling towns together into larger groups so that energy services would work with them, because individual towns are not large enough to warrant some energy services. Mark noted that misconceptions were cleared up recently, at the small department head meeting and at the selectmen's meeting, that pellets are a clean, renewable source and is not the same as construction debris which has been banned by the state.

We discussed the benefits and timing of proposing a warrant article now to the Selectmen, vs. next year. The Road Agent seems to be strongly committed to budgeting for vapor insulation for 2012. Tony suggested we break down to "phase 1" suggestions. Mark suggested we need to decide which of the 11 buildings we should tackle. Nicole noted that staff buy-in at the thinking-strategic-planning stage is important.

Barbara will prepare a draft warrant article around the 5 highest paybacks and email the draft out to the group after she meets with Chuck Connell and Russ Roy to discuss warrant article strategies. We agreed to make phone calls to each supervisor to get their feedback and suggestions. Barbara will contact Tom Dunn (Historic District who is looking to renovate Town Hall) and Carl Knapp (Highway). Once Barb gives the go ahead, Tony will call Mick Costello (Fire Station) and Mark will call Ryan Murdough, Police Chief. When phone calls are made, the point is to discuss the committee's take on the proposals while getting their suggestions and feedback.

ANNUAL SPRING CONFERENCE: On a Saturday in April or May there will be an annual conference for energy committees. Barbara highly recommends everyone attend. Date to-be-announced.

PRESS RELEASE: Nicole offered to disseminate the press release to Concord Monitor, Villager, town administrator, selectmen, department heads and town website.

NEXT MEETING: December 19th, 7pm at The Grange. Nicole will bring a camera for a group picture for the annual report.