

Mason Energy Commission Minutes draft February 4, 2019

Present: Members Kathy Chapman, Liz Fletcher, Dave Morrison, Michele Siegmann, Michelle Scott

Alternates Garth Fletcher, Curt Spacht, Doug Whitbeck

Meeting began at 7:00. Minutes of 1/7/19 MEC meeting approved as amended.

Bev Edwards of Temple Eco-Energy Committee (TEEC) was the featured speaker. TEEC began in 2007, to implement the Climate Change Resolution adopted by Temple Town Meeting that year. Bev recommended visiting TEEC's website, www.teec.info to find out what the Committee has accomplished. Their first step was to achieve energy efficient lighting for all town buildings, using PSNH's 50-50 rebate program.

TEEC focused on raising community awareness about cleaner air, renewables, and energy efficiency. Helping people to implement energy saving measures was a strong part of the effort, along with education. The Committee began participating in the annual Harvest Fair by doing recycling and giving out information. Bev recommended the Union of Concerned Scientists as a great source of informative hand-outs to share with residents at town events, including separate articles on climate change in the Northeast and in NH.

In 2008, TEEC members took video training on do-it-yourself weatherization techniques and provided basic free home weatherization to residents in need. Eventually they hired a local carpenter to provide more in-depth weatherization for home owners needing help, supported by a grant from Temple's local church.

At that time (2007-9), NH Public Utilities Commission had a strong sustainability program, funded by the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI). In 2009, the PUC awarded Temple a RGGI grant for \$332,000 to conduct deep energy efficiency retrofits for three of their municipal buildings. It was based on the groundwork of TEEC's local initiatives, including their data collection from the in-depth inventory they had completed of Temple's municipal energy usage from 2005-8 as well as the detailed reports from Margaret Dillon following her exhaustive energy audits for Temple's Municipal Building, FD, and Library, including one 165 page report filled with thermographic photos of the most serious energy leaky areas in the Municipal Building/FD complex.

This grant was received on condition that TEEC would continue its municipal recycling programs and public education about saving energy. One educational project was a "carbon challenge competition" with the towns of Jaffrey, Rindge, and Bennington, to see which town could sign up the largest percentage of its population to commit to taking new steps to increase their home's energy efficiency. Temple won and celebrated with an ice-cream social for their residents plus the leaders of the other towns' efforts.

Other educational efforts included the creation of a website, www.teec.info; TEEC's hosting of free "Button-up NH" workshops for residents to learn do-it-yourself home weatherization techniques; the elementary school eco-recycling program; and work with their Planning Board to create an Energy Chapter that was adopted into Temple's Master Plan, including energy saving policies and clean energy goals.

Another TEEC project was producing a “Shop Locally” reference book listing all town businesses, to encourage people to save energy by shopping locally. Bev emphasized that making friends in town was important, and it was very good to provide food at community events.

Now TEEC has evolved into the Temple Task Force to implement the 100% Renewable Energy by 2030 Goal for the town, passed unanimously by 2018 Town Meeting. This was a petition Warrant Article that TEEC members had gathered signatures for at community events. The Task Force aims to make possible a large solar array to provide all municipal electricity.

MEC members thanked Bev for giving such an encouraging presentation. Her work in Temple is a great example of how much can be accomplished on so many fronts.

Energy Audit: At the January 8 Select Board meeting and again at the Jan. 22 Town Budget meeting, MEC members strongly encouraged the BoS to implement the energy saving measures called for in Margaret Dillon’s Mann House Energy Audit, using Eversource’s weatherization rebate program. MEC was able to obtain a quote from Newell and Crathern of New London, weatherization professionals recommended by Eversource, that supported the estimated costs listed in the Audit.

But the Board of Selectmen isn’t ready to implement the Mann House energy saving measures. They would like to have a structural study of the building first. A cause of their reluctance may be the result of the recently released engineering study of the Town Hall, which found serious structural issues that will be expensive to address. They feel the Town Hall project is enough to take on at present.

MEC unanimously expressed a vote of thanks to Bill Newell of Newell and Crathern, who came at short notice to inspect the Mann House and give an estimate. MEC intends to keep this project on the town horizon for the future, we’re not giving up on it. Newell and Crathern will be kept in the records.

Donations for Clean Energy NH town membership: Henry Herndon has invited MEC to become a municipal member of Clean Energy NH, the new incarnation of NH Sustainable Energy Association. It costs \$250. Henry was very helpful and informative when he came to speak to MEC, There are benefits of being in a state-wide network of renewable energy groups. We could fundraise for membership to help establish a track record of support. Michelle Scott offered to write up a Facebook article on MEC to encourage donations. Thank you Michelle!

Publicity for MEC: Kathy Gregg, who writes op-ed pieces for regional newspapers, has offered to write a piece on MEC and our work. We agreed that this would be very helpful for our efforts. Liz will express MEC’s appreciation of her offer and invite Kathy Gregg to our next meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 8:55pm.