

These minutes were approved at the September 3, 2024 meeting.

DURHAM ENERGY COMMITTEE MINUTES

August 6, 2024

7:00 – 8:30 PM

Committee Member Attendees:

Matthias Dean-Carpentier --Chairperson
Ti Crossman
Charles Forcey
Emily Friedrichs (joined at 8:30 via video)
Steve Holmgren
Mike Klein
John Lannamann
Mike Lehrman
Eric Lund

Guest and Other Attendees

Michal Konopko (future member)

I. Agenda Discussion and Approval

Request made to add discussion of Friday Update postings to agenda. Motion made and all were in favor to accept agenda with addition of Friday Update discussion.

II. Prior Minutes Review/ Approval

Prior minutes were reviewed. Request was made to amend minutes to reflect Michal Konopko as guest attendee. Motion made and all were in favor of accepting minutes as amended.

III. Presentation of Durham Housing Task Force

Sally Tobias, Heather Grant and Michael Behrendt attended to present findings of the Housing Task Force as a form of community outreach and request feedback from committee members.

Sally began by summarizing the history of the Housing Task Force. She reported there have been relatively few developments built except for student housing. The town had a housing assessment done by RKG consulting. Sally reviewed what is “work force” housing and the states Fair Share Housing Production model. The states model suggest the state needs 88,000 more housing units and Durham’s fair share of the goal would be 455 new units by 2040. Durham has had little growth and housing is not affordable.

Demographics were reviewed as well as Durham zoning and the types of housing allowed and disallowed. Conservation sub-division zoning was described and it was noted the current minimum lot size in rural zone is 3.5

acres. That drives the construction of large expensive single-family homes. Multi-family housing was discussed in regard to how to restrict it from being taken as student housing when the need is for lower income housing. It was pointed out that currently there is plenty of student housing. Michael Behrendt spoke about the missing "middle housing", smaller single family, duplexes and smaller 4-8-unit apartments.

Committee members voiced support for multi-family units both to meet need and as a more energy efficient housing form. Questions were raised about the role of UNH in helping develop affordable housing to help faculty and grad students. Support was voiced for smaller rural lot sizes, particularly given advances in septic technology. Questions were also asked about where town-house style housing might be appropriate.

IV. Energy Code Adoption for Density Incentives

Emily had asked the committee to consider endorsing a motion to recommend that any density bonus incentives developed for Workforce Housing also include the requirement that the construction include complying with the energy codes. Such codes can be required if part of a density bonus but not as a baseline requirement of the town. A motion was made to "Recommend adopting the current energy code as a condition of awarding of any density bonuses for Work Force housing." The motion was seconded and approved by all.

V. Federal CFI EV Charger Grant Application

Jack Lannamann reported that he recently worked with Todd and other town managers to put together a short notice application for federal grant money to help fund adding more EV chargers in Durham. It was an 80/20 federal grant being guided by the state. The state will package town applications into one state wide grant application.

VI. CPCNH Updates

Steve Holmgren reported on the new electric rates for the rate period starting August 1 and emailed a copy of the rates to members today. CPCNH now has a higher percentage green/ renewable energy plan that is less expensive than the Eversource rate. Consistent with the Town Council guidance, Todd will endorse making the CPCNH Granite Plus rate plan the default rate plan for CPCNH in Durham. Granite Plus is 33% renewable vs 24% renewable for the base Eversource and CPCNH plans. Granite Plus will be 11% less expensive than Eversource vs the base CPCNH plan that will be 17% less expensive than Eversource. It was explained that anyone who previously selected another CPCNH plan is no longer in the default category and whatever plan they have selected will remain their plan until they make another selection. Anyone who wants to go to the least expensive CPCNH plan can opt for that plan also.

Questions were posed about how people can find out which plan they are in. It was discussed that the utilities don't provide much information on the bill and CPCNH is still in the process of developing their web site to provide more online account information. For now, people can just call CPCNH. There will be a letter going out soon to customers explaining the new rate structure and default rate change.

Opt-Up Campaign- Steve reported on a challenge that will be launched in the future with the intent to create some friendly competition among seacoast towns to see which town can have the largest percentage increase in customers selecting higher renewable energy options.

VII. Friday Update- Energy Committee Proposed Topics

Matthias reported that Emily has submitted four proposed short article topics on energy issues for Friday Update. Emily suggested that individual members might volunteer to take a future month and prepare short "blurbs" for publication rather than creating a sub-committee for this purpose.

With respect to the 4 proposed articles, it was noted week 2 seems to promote Solarize Seacoast, an entity that made a presentation last month. After the presentation the committee specifically declined to endorse them since there was no comparative pricing information or other research done on the company. It was suggested to not include that article for Friday Update.

Charles Forcey volunteered to create articles for September issues of Friday Update.

VIII. Durham Farm Day

Matthias reported that Teresa walker of the Agriculture Committee asked if the Energy committee wanted to participate in Farm Day. Mike Klein volunteered to participate.

IX. Next Month Agenda Request

Mike Lehrman asked if the committee could plan to review the revised EV ordinance again with the new proposed required EV charger numbers Jack had developed with the work group. It seems to have slipped off recent agendas.

Adjournment Motion was made, seconded and all were in favor to adjourn at 8:55pm.

Motion to Adjourn