

Jim Nourse called the meeting to order at 7:32 pm. Committee access was via Zoom, and public access was via an associated phone number that had been properly warned by Dina.

1. Jim announced that this telephonic meeting complies with the Governor's Order #12.
2. Members present: Mark Bolinger, Jim Nourse, Matt Brown, David Kahn, Scott Nichols, Mike Novello, Harry Higgs, Dan O'Hara. No members of the public attended. Committee members welcomed David Kahn with a round of virtual introductions.
3. Approved the minutes of our November 9, 2020 meeting. Harry moved, Matt seconded. Motion approved unanimously, with abstention from Scott.
4. Google Drive: Jim asked for member input on the relative ease of using Google Drive vs. sending documents via attachments. Members seemed fine with Drive, so we'll continue with that.
5. Update on Highway Garage: There is enough money in this year's operating budget to install the propane boiler, so that project will move forward, foreclosing any opportunity that we might have otherwise had to fundraise to cover the difference in cost for a pellet boiler. Given that this propane installation goes against the Town's recently established goal of transitioning to 100% renewable heating by 2050, Jim asked whether the Committee should respond (and if so, how) to raise awareness of this disconnect. The general sense of the Committee was that a response (public or private) was not warranted; we have previously provided our recommendation to the Select Board (on several occasions), and the Select Board is aware of our concerns with the decision.
6. Update on Weatherize Outreach: Jim has contacted 5 of 7 recipients of heating assistance funds; 3 are definitely interested in pursuing home weatherization, so Jim will work with them going forward. Unfortunately, the NHSaves rebate level has not yet been established for 2021, given ongoing uncertainty over the imposition of public benefit funds in the time of COVID (i.e., when many are stretched financially). But Jim will at least work with these folks to apply for the audit/assessment portion of the program, and in the meantime, perhaps the rebates will be re-established. Jim will keep us updated on progress.
7. Update on Energy Chapter of Town Master Plan: Jim set a goal of having all sections drafted by the end of January, and **asked all Committee members to think about and jot down recommendations for the end of the Chapter. This can be done directly within the working document, which will reside on Google Drive.**
8. Website: Jim described how the Norwich Energy Committee has two websites – one for official business, the other for education/outreach. Jim would like to do something similar in Lyme, and he and Harry are willing to come up with a draft site for review. We

would link to it from our official Town web page. There was some discussion over the nature of content that would go on this new site. Discussion is to be continued, once there is a draft site to review.

9. New Business:

Transfer Station: A resident had asked Jim if he could look into the status of recycling in Lyme. Jim queried the Select Board, which responded in a letter noting that there is a plan afloat to bring recycling back to Lyme in the near future.

ebike lending library: Mark briefly described last year's program (whereby each summer month a different town in the Upper Valley was able to lend a fleet of ebikes out to its residents to try), and noted that planning is underway to bring the program back—presumably to a different set of towns—in summer 2021. David asked about insurance issues – Mark thought that insurance might have been the reason that last year's program was largely limited to VT (because a VT-based organization--Efficiency Vermont?--paid the insurance bill and the policy did not cover NH). Mark will send out a link to the upcoming planning call; if anyone can join and report back to the Committee, please do.

Lyme Energy Fund: Harry described the concept (which he also wrote up and distributed to members in advance of the meeting—see that write-up for details, which I will not repeat here), which is intended to address the often-higher up-front costs of making renewable/sustainable energy choices. We have a relative lack of incentives (for EVs, for PV, etc.) in NH, so the idea is to set up our own incentive fund. Harry has discussed the concept with several members of the Lyme Foundation, and would like to present the Lyme Foundation with a proposal (to be one of the major donors, and to serve as administrator). Matt proposed making this more of a revolving fund, for example by distributing 0% interest loans, given that many of these choices often end up saving money in the long run (and it is merely the up-front costs that are the hurdle). There was discussion about different approaches and tweaks on the general idea, and in the end, Jim asked members to email him questions and comments about the “energy fund” concept, which he will try to distill for discussion at our next meeting.

Strategic Plan: Given that we were short on time, we did not go through the strategic plan to pick out high priority items, but Jim requested that each Committee member look through the listed items and email him with a list of 2-4 items that we think the Committee should take on in 2021. Please do this by the first week of January.

10. Adjournment: Mike moved; Matt seconded. Meeting was adjourned at 8:33 pm.

Next meeting is scheduled for Monday, January 11 at 7:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Mark Bolinger, Secretary