

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, Mike Novello, Harry Higgs, Dan O'Hara, Scott Nichols.
3. **Approved the minutes of our February 8, 2021 meeting.** Dan moved, Harry seconded. Motion approved unanimously, with Scott abstaining due to not being present at our last meeting.
4. **Existential discussion of the future of the Energy Committee:** In light of recent discouraging interactions (e.g., Highway Garage boiler replacement) and communication (see email correspondence copied at the end of these minutes) with the Select Board, Jim posed several questions: How can the Energy Committee work most effectively with the Select Board to advance our goals? Where do we go from here on advocacy, fund-raising and education? The Committee spent the bulk of the meeting engaged in a wide-ranging discussion of these questions and other thoughts on how we can best work towards implementing the Town's 100% renewable energy goals.

There seemed to be consensus that the current structure—i.e., operating as a formal Energy Committee that must abide by Committee rules (e.g., limiting email communications, prohibiting meetings that are not properly warned)—is not ideal, and results in slower progress than will be necessary to achieve the Town's goals. Moreover, the Committee's recent experience with the Select Board regarding the Town Highway Garage boiler replacement suggests that working through the formal channels does not necessarily result in the due process that a standing Committee would expect (as the Select Board essentially ignored the Committee's recommendation on this matter, and in so doing also acted against the Town's stated wishes to move away from fossil fuels and towards renewable energy). The Committee discussed several alternative paths forward, including (but not limited to): (1) seeking greater leeway and authority from the Select Board, so that we can be more effective at accomplishing what needs to happen; (2) forming a separate unofficial group that could work in parallel to the Energy Committee but not be bound by the same bureaucratic constraints; or (3) even dissolving the Energy Committee altogether and shifting the bulk of its work to a group of interested residents who could operate more nimbly and who would not be bound by the limits imposed upon an official Town committee.

Before our April meeting, members are to send Jim their thoughts on both the advantages and disadvantages of being a formal Town committee (as well as any further

thoughts on any of the potential alternatives discussed at this meeting). Jim will compile and distribute, and we will continue the conversation at our April meeting.

5. **Energy Chapter of Town Master Plan:** Jim has fleshed out the remaining chapter sections with draft text, and requests that all committee members review the chapter and provide comments. The “recommendations” section at the end of the chapter is likely to be the most important and impactful section. Jim raised the question of how specific these recommendations should be, after having reviewed a few other master plans (provided by CENH) that, in some cases, get into the weeds of providing specific recommendations for suggested edits to zoning language. Committee members should keep this question in mind as they review the text. Jim’s goal is to wrap this up at our April or May meeting and then send it off to the Select Board.
6. **New Business:** The Committee briefly discussed the concept of crafting a primer on home heating options that would hopefully be of use to Lyme residents who are considering replacing or upgrading their existing heating systems (as well as for new-build projects). This is in response to a listserv posting from someone seeking the heating equivalent of what Harry has pulled together on EVs. Harry has already drafted some initial thoughts, and Jim will circulate to the Committee for comments.
7. **Adjournment:** Harry moved; Scott seconded. Meeting was adjourned at 8:51 pm.

Next meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 12 at 7:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Mark Bolinger, Secretary

Appendix:

Excerpt from David Kahn email to Jim Nourse on February 12, 2021, reflecting David’s recollection of Select Board deliberations on questions posed by the Energy Committee:

“The Select Board spent some time yesterday talking about political intervention by the Energy Committee, about the website question you raised, and about the creation and/or administration of a charitable fund for energy related projects. The Select Board’s view on all of these issues is very much tempered by the fact that the Lyme Energy Committee is an official committee of the Town of Lyme, and as such, represents the entire Town.

On the question of advocacy, the Select Board acknowledges section IV.F. of the Committee’s charge authorizes the Committee to “contribute to a dialogue in the State of New Hampshire about public policy on energy issues.” Nevertheless, the Select Board believes that, with respect to potentially controversial political issues, particularly issues where there may be significant disagreement among residents of the Town of Lyme, the Committee should be cautious about taking positions that are potentially divisive and that have not been authorized in advance by the

Select Board or the Town. A Town Committee probably should not be lobbying on behalf of specific political or policy positions with which any significant segment of the Town might disagree unless the Town has explicitly authorized it to do so. I don't know enough about the two bills you mention below to offer concrete advice, but I think, before weighing in, the Committee should probably either (a) get approval from the Select Board or the Town itself at Town meeting, or (b) feel comfortable that the positions the Committee is taking are either non-partisan (e.g., merely providing data or other information that is informative or helpful to decision makers) or are otherwise non-controversial.

On the website issue, once again, the LEC is a committee of the Town of Lyme. As a result, the Select Board feels that all official LEC materials should be posted on the Town's official website. I'm told that Jordon at the Town offices can get materials posted for us relatively quickly. If there are delays or problems, or the amount of posted material becomes overwhelming, the Select Board would be happy to revisit the issue.

Lastly, there was an inquiry regarding LEC participation in the administration of a charitable fund to support energy projects and/or education. Once again, as an official committee of the Town, any participation by the LEC in the administration of such a fund would require that the fund be subject to the Town's normal budgeting rules and practices, which is probably not practical.

Of course, all of these items which are challenging to do as an official committee of the Town, pose no problem whatsoever when done by Committee members, individually or jointly, in their individual capacities."