

# Town of Bow

## Energy Committee

Location: Baker Free Library

Time: 6:30pm

AGENDA

Wednesday, June 15, 2022

Attendees: Jessica Dunbar, Chris Moore, Michael Leuchtenberger, Russell Anderson, Alex Grene, Stephen Elgert, David Hughes

### Welcome

The location for the meeting was switched last minute to Baker Free Library.

In addition to regular members, the group welcomed a guest, David Hughes, an anthropologist from New Jersey.

### Report on June 11

Jessica Dunbar reported on the June 11 event. She said the turnout was small. This was likely the combined result of graduation and some baseball games. However, it was still worthwhile. One person who came had a lengthy conversation with Peter Martel of HAREI and appeared very interested in solar. There were some other productive conversations as well. Peter Martel had said that attending the right event can make a big difference, recalling that a recent success at an event geared toward a local crowd. The Committee thought about what other events it could attend. Stephen Elgert suggested the Primaries in September. Chris Moore suggested having incentives like free lightbulbs to attract more people. He also said it would be helpful to have materials to pass out, like a flyer. The committee will brainstorm what this might look like and what information it would include.

Jessica Dunbar passed around completed surveys from people who came on June 11. Some of these people joined the email list; Jessica Dunbar will send welcome emails. The surveys included questions and suggestions about information residents would find helpful. Jessica Dunbar also mentioned that some people's comments indicated they may have misconceptions about energy efficiency options. Stephen Elgert suggested an idea for an article that would clarify common misconceptions. Another article suggestion was to include people's energy/solar stories and how this could include information on how much money is being saved by the total number of residential solar panels in Bow. Stephen Elgert said Concord Monitor may want to do their own story as well. We also discussed ideas for creating FAQs and other resources to post online. Based on one of the June 11 surveys, Alex Grene showed interest in getting started on a collection of summaries/checklists to clarify the different options, costs, and related permits/regulations.

## Solar Outreach

Jessica Dunbar share news that she had obtained a list of all properties with solar panels. There are 83, including those on the Safety Center. This number seemed small, yielding lots of potential for improvement. Jessica Dunbar said the only business that appeared to have solar was Casa Dei Bambini. She did not understand why, on the list of solar buildings, their panel owners were not Casa Dei Bambini. She thought the committee should reach out to them to find out their story and how it might be helpful/inspirational to other businesses.

The committee discussed how it might organize a solar or energy home tour. Chris Moore suggested that an energy tour incorporating a variety of energy efficiency measures would be more interesting than just solar. Michael Leuchtenberger thought it might be a good idea to have homes in different neighborhoods to reach different areas of town. We talked about ways to attract people, such as with picnics or a block party feel. David Hughes suggested an Energy Independence theme in July. However, the committee agreed that timeframe would be too soon. It was thought that September might be a better month since the weather is still nice, but people are not as busy with summer activities. The point was raised that electricity rates are expected to double for some residents in late summer, another reason to postpone the tour until early fall.

We were reminded that Michael Leuchtenberger will be leaving on sabbatical in July. Before he leaves, he will contact someone he knows who built a very energy efficient house and might be interested in participating in the energy tour.

Michael Leuchtenberger suggested looking around town for home sites that would be ideal for solar and contacting them directly. We agreed a postcard would be a good way to make contact. The committee talked about the uncertainty about whether any money is available for mailings.

Another data point for outreach is cumulative energy generation, which solar users are usually very proud of. Stephen Elgert and Michael Leuchtenberger knew theirs off hand.

Stephen Elgert volunteered to help Jessica Dunbar do some early planning for the energy tour.

Russell Anderson shared his story of looking into solar and finding out it was prohibitively expensive (and required cutting 30 trees!) on his property. He was highly discouraged. The committee discussed how others in town will be in a similar situation and what messaging and help could be provided for these cases. Russell Anderson said we should look beyond built homes to consider zoning and how to ensure solar-readiness is accounted for when placing new homes. He also brought up that, based on his wife's real estate experience, some people perceive solar as a detriment to their ability to sell, even though solar usually raises home values. He noted the importance of recognizing these perceptions and how they may affect people's decisions.

Another big picture topic is the problems with net metering, which are especially important for those who cannot install solar for themselves. This could be a good topic for outreach at a table at the

Primaries or Election Day. Jessica Dunbar suggested that Community Power is another important pursuit to consider as it can help all residents, not just those with the right conditions for solar.

The group raised the question of resilience through battery backup or islanded capability. It is a lot more expensive; plus, power outages are most likely in winter when solar production is lower.

Stephen Elgert asked if the town had information on the number of registered electric vehicles. Jessica Dunbar said she didn't know, but could ask.

### Button Up Workshop

The group agreed that September would be the best time for a Button Up workshop and that it should be done in person.

### Business Outreach

Jessica Dunbar share that the library is organizing a business expo at the library on October 15<sup>th</sup>. The Energy Committee will have the opportunity to participate. Jessica Dunbar thought the committee should bring outreach materials and think about a follow-up business-oriented event to which businesses could be invited at the business expo. Chris Moore suggested inviting a representative from NHSaves to help answer questions.

### Closing Comments

It was mentioned that the different events being planned can be difficult to keep track of. Jessica Dunbar offered to send out a calendar of planned or proposed events. She will also start a Google folder for documents such as a shared doc in which to brainstorm FAQs and other resources ideas.