

St. Johnsbury Town Energy Committee

August 1, 2022

Members Present:, Steve Isham, Pam Parker (Chair), Lynn Wurzburg, David Zajko, Ben Deede

Guests: Travis Samuels, COO Zion Growers, Robert Michael, Otto Wurzburg, Bob & Pat Swartz

1. Introductions

The Committee and Guests introduced themselves.

2. Minutes

The minutes from the June meeting were reviewed and accepted.

3. Zion Growers Presentation on Hemp Business

Travis Samuels, COO of Zion Growers, gave a presentation on Industrial Hemp. Zion Growers have purchased the former Ide building on Bay Street in St. Johnsbury to establish an industrial hemp processing plant.

His presentation included information about the difference between industrial hemp and CBD, what part of the plant that is utilized in industrial hemp, what the output product is, and how raw industrial hemp can be used in a variety of products.

Travis outlined the benefits of industrial hemp. The committee was particularly interested in building material using industrial hemp to produce negative-carbon buildings that cost less to heat and cool. The committee also was interested in how an industrial hemp processing plant could be an economic driver for the area.

Fairbanks Museum Archivist Pat Swartz mentioned that the Fairbanks brothers started out farming hemp, and that they developed the platform scale to accurately weigh their product. Over time, manufacturing scales overcame farming hemp. She pointed out that an industrial hemp business would be bringing St. Johnsbury back to its historical roots.

The committee had many question that Travis gladly answered.

4. Cross-laminated Timber Pilot Project at Fairbanks Museum

This discussion was postponed until September because of the amount of time taken by the industrial hemp discussion.

5. Large Solar Arrays in St. Johnsbury

Steve explained that the substantial deference that St. Johnsbury has because it has an enhanced energy plan is through the plan itself. In the case of a large (commercial) solar array, the installer has to meet the requirements as stated in the town's enhanced energy plan. If the town has bylaws on solar citing beyond what is in the enhanced energy plan, the PUC is not required to give them substantial deference.

Steve is going to e-mail the planning commission, Chad, and Paul Berlejung with the information that Pam got from NVDA.

The Mayhew solar array is on the August Planning Commission agenda. Pam encouraged committee members to attend the meeting on August 16.

6. Colors of the Kingdom

We have reached out to NEK Chamber of Commerce to obtain information about the Colors of the Kingdom, but have received a reply from them. The committee hopes to have a booth at the event. September 17 is also the date of the Danville EV event.

7. Future Meetings

The committee discussed whether to hold in-person meetings or continue on Zoom. We do not have the technology to have a hybrid meeting. The committee thought that having a mix of in-person and Zoom would work. The September meeting will be on Zoom.

8. Other Business

There was no other business.

Next meeting is Tuesday September 6, 5:30-7:00 pm