

St. Johnsbury Town Energy Committee

October 5, 2020

Members Present: John Ajamie, Scott Campbell, Elmore Dickstein, Brenden Fowler, Steve Isham, Pam Parker (Chair), Keith Whitmore, Lynn Wurzburg, David Zajko

1. Minutes

The minutes for September's meeting were reviewed and accepted with two minor corrections

2. Meeting with St. Johnsbury Academy

Lynn's notes from the October 1 meeting with two faculty members of St. Johnsbury Academy:

St. Johnsbury Academy Faculty: James Bentley, Sustainability Coordinator, and Elia Desjardins, Head of Science Department

Members of St. Johnsbury Town Energy Committee: Lynn Wurzburg, Scott Campbell, Steve Isham, Elmore Dickstein

- Intro of all present . Lynn gave summary of our goals for meeting (curriculum, Capstone, En-ROADS Climate Interactive program, current energy activities at Academy)
- Elia described current science curriculum requirements for all students: Biology, Chemistry, Physics classes condensed into 2 years, 3rd requirement for juniors or seniors is called Science Research Methods and Environmental Systems- which addresses the scientific method (via authentic research methods) and ecology and human impacts- started 4 yrs. ago.

James Bentley teaches a class-(elective)- about sustainability.

In terms of overall awareness and discussion about climate change on campus - they indicated it's referenced on regular basis during Chapel, many activities regarding changing energy usage have been undertaken (see list below) and the students are either hand-wringing liberals worrying about it, building- trades students who might get jobs out of it so are aware, and students who think since it's still cold and snowy all winter there's not much to worry about.

He also made the comment that the trustees don't want the school to come across as a "hippie school" because of embracing too much new energy technology- which Scott didn't hesitate to point out is a very mainstream position now (to embrace it). And, the new headmaster (Howland) drives a Tesla- so she's being a good role-model.

List of Academy actions regarding energy efficiency improvements:

- Boiler rooms reinsulated
- Kitchen hoods retrofitted
- Field house- 60,000\$ spent to install digital controls and automatic pool cover
- LED retrofits all over campus
- Dussou Solar field installation- provides 17(?) % total electricity
- Electricity costs down in past 15 years
- Governors Award for Environmental Excellence- 2016
- Colby Hall retrofit, w/cold climate heat pumps- project not funded yet

- Window retrofits- Ranger Hall

Bus fleet- used for long-distance, not practical to convert to electric

Building Trades program starting to come back- setting students up for "green technology" jobs

Scott brought up the suggestion of using an electric car for Driver's Ed classes, which James Bentley thought was a great idea and feasible- after getting one purchased, or donated. The Driver's Ed instructor, Gary Thornton, would have to be on board with the idea.

Sophomore Challenge- Experience Day - focuses on some environmental activity that the whole sophomore class undertakes

- Capstone- Environmental Capstone class currently not being taught (if I recall correctly) James and Elia indicated that providing list of climate- related issues for students doesn't work well unless it's an idea they've had themselves and will own. I indicated we would be happy to act as mentors for any relevant experience we have that might aid a capstone student.
- En-ROADS Climate Interactive- we described the online resources and provided them with printed info about the program. They were not familiar with it but were very interested.
- We finished with a recognition of Elmore and David's membership in our committee and the contributions (Instagram account and Logo) and indicated we'd be eager to have more students join us in our efforts.

3. Button Up Vermont Campaign

Button Up Vermont events are being promoted on Front Porch Forum and Facebook.

4. Enhanced Town Energy Plan

The Committee had a final review of the Enhanced Town Energy Plan with a hand full of additions.

Pam reported that she called Jim Brown, the chair of St. Johnsbury Planning Commission. He requested a copy of the plan in order to make a decision about presenting it to Planning Commission as a whole. Pam sent a copy to Jim Brown

Action Items: Pam, John A, Lynn and Steve will follow up with a meeting with the Planning Commission to explain the plan. Pam will contact Jim Brown to set up the meeting.

5. Recycling and Composting

John A. and Lynn met with Paul Tomasi. There is still some confusion about the situation with waste in St. Johnsbury. Paul gave a lot of options available from NKWMD. He could not guarantee that it would be cheaper with NKWMD.

The procedures for recycling and composting by Casella and NKWMD are not identical.

Waste haulers and individuals use the St. Johnsbury transfer station because it is cheaper than other alternatives. This added to average per person poundage of waste for the town.

Casella owns the land that St. Johnsbury's transfer station is located. They charge \$19,000 administration fee annually for their service. Committee members thought that it should be included in their fee for waste

Casella's original agreement expired in 1988. The committee believe it should be renegotiated, particularly about the administration fee and identifying the residence of people who use the St. Johnsbury transfer station with a higher fee for non-residents.

Action Items:

John A. and Lynn will develop a negotiation document to present to Chad Whitehead.
Brenden will review Casella's agreement for termination provision

6. Other Business

Pam talked to Chad Whitehead. He gave her the name of the contact to have our agenda and minutes posted online.

The town has 20 inground composter and 30 above ground composter that will sell at a discount. They are not actively being sold, so the committee will discuss if this is something we want to take on.

Next Meeting is Wednesday November 11 from 5:30 to 7:00

December's meeting is scheduled for Wednesday December 2 from 5:30 to 7:00