

Town of New Haven Planning Commission Special Meeting
Draft Minutes
Tuesday, October 27, 2020
Remote Meeting

This meeting was held remotely via GoToMeeting.

Planning Commission Members Present: Co-Chair Benj Putnam, Kathy Cahill, Bev Landon, Maggie Eaton, and Pat Palmer

Absent: Co-Chair Rob Litch

Staff: Zoning Administrator Aaron Brown

Visitors: Kathy Barrett, Margaret Benn, Amanda Boddell, Taborri Bruhl, and Steve Dupoise

- I. Call to Order 7:05 PM
 1. Adjustments to Agenda

No adjustments to the agenda were made.

2. Visitors' Business

Visitors introduced themselves.

- II. Energy Plan

Maggie Eaton presented a Powerpoint on state energy goals and New Haven's role in meeting targets. Eaton explained the process for obtaining substantial deference on energy siting under state law and New Haven's history of solar development.

The presentation is available at <https://bit.ly/34MKbp5>, at newhavenvt.com under Planning and Zoning --> Draft Energy Plan, and in video format at <https://transcripts.gotomeeting.com/#/s/8db2bd35d1ed1152c4959cf344ea72d05be6dba631db0e048d02db4487a9e603>.

Benj Putnam said that this is not the meeting for the Planning Commission to adopt the plan but is a final review. The PC will vote on the plan in November.

Kathy Cahill praised the current draft of the energy plan and said she submitted some minor comments to Eaton. Putnam agreed.

Eaton acknowledged that Bev Landon has expressed concerns about the cost of weatherization and discussed opportunities to market long-term savings to town residents.

The group continued to discuss outreach efforts and agreed to publish town success stories regarding weatherization and other local energy projects. Aaron Brown agreed to help promote the materials.

Kathy Barrett expressed concerns about adequately reaching low- and moderate-income households. She encouraged starting with promotions that feature projects accessible to specific income levels. Eaton agreed that affordability is a major concern.

Steve Dupoise encouraged promoting energy projects in the newsletter. He also encouraged framing the discussion in terms of return on investment.

The group discussed fiber optic build-out possibilities. Dupoise explained that fiber optic infrastructure will be needed for the proposed VELCO back-up operations center and that a private company could be encouraged to expand high-speed internet to homes that remain without quality internet.

Eaton said that she's looked into how VELCO's proposed building would increase energy use in town and thus affect emissions goals. The group encouraged her to get more information from VELCO and Eaton agreed to do that.

Putnam expressed concern about the resolution of the energy siting maps. Eaton responded that the plan contains links to high resolution version. Brown agreed to work on inserting higher resolution maps into the draft document.

Putnam asked whether tax map data, parcel boundary, and other information are easy to map. Brown said he is not sure whether the state energy atlas shows that information but he can check. Eaton said she could look at the issue as well.

Eaton said she has looked at the Green Mountain Power map for constraints to local substations and distribution lines. Brown shared the map with the group.

Putnam encouraged that the group review legal requirements to adopt the energy plan as an updated town plan and to vote on the required actions November 9. Taborri Bruhl encouraged the group to stay on track to get the energy plan voted on Town Meeting Day. Kathy Barrett explained the process for warning a change to the town plan.

Putnam reviewed the state statute on updating a town plan and reminded the group that a warned written report is required. The planning commission needs 30 days to warn the hearing.

Putnam motioned to engage the public in an outreach campaign around energy efficiency. Kathy Cahill seconded. All voted in approval. Motion passed.

III. Adjourn

Pat Palmer motioned to adjourn. Eaton seconded. All voted in favor. Meeting adjourned at 8:30.

Respectfully Submitted,
Aaron Brown