

Waitsfield Energy Committee – Meeting Notes 6/6/07

Attending Members: Sal Spinosa, Paul Hartshorn, Val Capels, Dennis Derryberry
Public/Guests: Bob Ferris, Executive Director of Yestermorrow

Sal encouraged his vision for the Energy Committee to promote the environmental benefits of action, yes, but to be sure also - and perhaps even first - to demonstrate the cost savings. The goal of the Committee is to go beyond popular theories of efficiency, conservation and advocacy of renewable energy sources by directing practical projects at town properties which are “on the ground and running.” Such projects shall be tangible and measurable experiments from which to evaluate future opportunities for the town.

To that end, what follows is a list of near-term energy projects which were discussed by all present at the meeting and for which there seemed to be unanimous support and general enthusiasm:

Town Garage: Currently the main experiment incubator and a potential location for solar panels. We should consider hiring a consultant for a site visit, get estimates for various options, compare potential returns with current and past usage data. It was also suggested that we talk with Andy Shapiro about geothermal opportunities there.

Wait House: Investigate insulation issues and opportunities for upgrade. Possible use of an air-tightening insulating paint. See: <http://www.alsnetbiz.com/insulate/> for more information on this technology. Bob Ferris suggested the Town could perhaps use Yestermorrow labor for site work as a teaching project if we can schedule it 6-9 months in advance.

Town Trucks: Investigate the use of B20 biodiesel, possible conversions of one or more vehicle. Talk with Fayston (Jared Cadwell) about their timetable and supplier.

I have since talked with Troy Kingsbury about his supply arrangements for B20 biodiesel. I think he said he's using Champlain Oil out of Barre, his regular fuel dealer, and bought about 3,000 gallons of preblended B20. I'm not sure what price he got. Kingsbury is not yet sure what the demand will be or how soon he will begin to run out. He said sales have dipped slightly to start compared to the previous run of regular diesel. I intend to get back in touch with him to find out how frequently he has previously run through 3,000 gallons of regular diesel which might indicate his resupply period for the B20) and ask him what kind of a price he got it at.

Fire House: Bob also suggested the Waitsfield Fire House could benefit from the installation of straw bale insulation, which could also utilize Yestermorrow labor and expertise if scheduled properly.

Policies: Consider anti-idling policies for town trucks, as well as other policies which might benefit municipal conservation efforts in the workplace. Might we consider creating/allowing signs that say “ENGINE OFF?” to be stationed alongside Route 100 and visible to drivers where they will be waiting in line all summer for construction traffic?

Microhydro: This technology was discussed as a tough one to get OK'ed but it can be done. ANR this past week gave early encouragement to three proposed small hydroelectric projects in Plainfield, Bennington and Middlebury. Waitsfield should work to identify and catalog potential locations along the Mad River and its tributaries. Lori Barg of Community Hydro could be a big help in this effort as she is already involved in the processes for the Plainfield and Bennington projects.