

September 29, 2016

To the Planning Commission:

Revising the Town Plan has been a long and frequently painful process. I commend the Planning Commission for taking input from so many different committees and individuals and managing to produce one, coherent document. The Energy Committee, too, has worked hard over the years on its short three-page contribution to the Plan because we know that if we don't create a document that accurately reflects the times in which we live, it will be meaningless.

A few days ago we discovered by chance that the current version of the Plan eliminated phrasing as well as entire segments that we had agreed upon at the June 23, 2016 Planning Commission meeting on the topic. It is frustrating to have to go back and request that they be reinstated. We would like to focus our energy on new problems and new solutions rather than revisiting old discussions. Nevertheless, here are the points:

Under the section "Key Planning Considerations":

1. #3 included "fossil fuel" in the following sentence: "The average cost of energy inputs continues to rise with **fossil fuel** price fluctuations that are often volatile." Renewable energy price fluctuations are not volatile—the condition applies only to fossil fuels. It's important to name the cause of the problem and not pretend that it's lumped in with other problems that don't exist.
2. #6, the figure was incorrectly changed from 35% to 33.7%. This quote is from the current version of the Comprehensive Energy Plan: "Transportation fuels account for the largest portion of Vermont's total energy consumption, and they include more fossil fuels than any other energy source. Gasoline and diesel account for **more than 35%** of all energy consumed, across all sectors. Petroleum combustion in the transportation sector is also the state's largest contributor — at 47% — to GHG emissions." (From section 8.1, page 135.)
3. #7 was deleted: "Residential average electric (kWh) usage in Charlotte is 24% higher than the state average, indicating opportunities for energy conservation and home weatherization measures." This section of Key Planning Considerations serves as background information that informs how we think about and propose energy goals and plans; this is not a section that includes particular targets. That Charlotte's electric usage is higher than the state average is crucial information—it doesn't mean we have every answer as to *why* it's higher, but it's a factual starting point that we should not obscure by omitting.
4. #8 was likewise deleted: "Life-cycle assessment—quantifying the impacts of an energy-related project, including but not limited to the production of its materials, construction of the project, waste, and emissions through its useful life and

decommissioning—is crucial to smart business planning, energy planning and energy security.” Again, this is an important statement about the way in which we need to be thinking as we move forward in energy planning.

Under the section “Renewable Energy”:

5. #4 needs to be reworded so that it conforms to the information provided by Efficiency Vermont. It should read as follows: “Charlotte will strive to generate 45% of its projected electrical usage (24,000,000 kWh) through renewable energy sources in Charlotte by 2020.”

[The original source, from Kristan Hatfield, Program Manager, Efficiency Vermont, which I emailed to Charlie Pughe on July 25 this year: “The Energy Atlas website is now live and will allow for the tracking of renewable generation as a % of kWh usage, and progress there within Charlotte over time. Via the site’s interactive dashboard: **45% of the 24,000,000 projected kWh usage in Charlotte in 2020 would be achieved through renewable sources.**”]

Rebecca Foster, co-chair, Charlotte Energy Committee