

## Energy Committee Minutes

June 6, 2017  
7:00 – 9:00 PM  
Town Hall

Attending: Members Matt Burke, Rebecca Foster, Suzy Hodgson, Meghan Mahoney, John Quinney; Guest Deirdre Holmes.

Welcome to Deirdre who has her interview with the select board on 6/26.

- 1) Approve 5/2/17 minutes; Rebecca to post online.
- 2) We will have a joint meeting with the planning commission on 6/15 to discuss the CCRPC request for response to the 4/30 memo with deadline 6/16.
  - a) Conversation about various aspects of the goals of 174 legislations and the implications for the town, i.e., they must be presented to the public carefully.
  - b) Questions about the CCRPC document, i.e., what is the target for wind for the town?
  - c) Discuss draft response and comments on CCRPC's memo
  - d) Question of how all this relates to our Town Plan and the revisions that are happening now, and the broader question of how energy decisions get made in the town and a desire to improve the situation.
  - e) Many specifics about the document discussed that will be put into the draft memo for the planning commission.
- 3) Rebecca suggests a study group for the Town Plan to get better overall understanding of the Plan and how energy fits in, also to assure no contradictions in the Plan; we agree to divide up the chapters, take notes, and discuss together at the next meeting. Rebecca to follow up with the committee via email.
- 4) Matt raises the possibility of hosting a carbon pricing forum this fall organized by the EIV group. Everyone is favorable; Matt will investigate more.
- 5) Next meeting falls on July 4 so we need to change it; Rebecca will email the group.

Respectfully submitted,  
Rebecca Foster, co-chair

ADDENDUM – CCRPC 6/16/17 Memo

**To:** Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission

**From:** Charlotte Planning Commission; Charlotte Energy Committee

**Date:** 16 June 2017

**Re:** Feedback on CCRPC energy planning memorandum of 30 April 2017

In response to the memorandum sent to the Charlotte Planning Commission and Charlotte Select Board via Daryl Benoit, Charlotte Town Planner, on April 30, 2017, Charlotte's Energy Committee (EC) has reviewed the energy data packet at its June 6, 2017 monthly meeting. Specifically, the EC addressed the questions on which the CCRPC asked for feedback as listed on page 1 of the memo.

**1. Please let us know any comments or questions you have regarding your Municipal Energy Data Guide.**

- The targets should be made available in a variety of energy units, including kilowatt-hours and joules, in addition to percentages, and include per capita measures. Additionally, targets should be made understandable to the layperson by using indicators such as X numbers of household rooftops or acres for solar.
- GHG emissions and building efficiency targets should also be included.
- Maps might also include transmission/distribution infrastructure.
- More clarity is required on how the plans will be updated and progress measured and reported over time. Measuring and reporting should be included in the energy elements section, including strategies for public communication.
- It would be helpful to explicitly compare the targets to the resource potential available through preferred sites.
- Pathways should include an assessment of current capacity for town energy planning and strategies for increasing capacity and improving governance.
- Municipal targets require a finer granularity than statewide goals. Five-year benchmarks beginning in 2020 should be the minimum.
- Please provide the electricity usage and the total energy usage forecasts in the same table format as the transportation and thermal usage data. The town needs to understand clearly the assumptions behind the forecasted energy usage forecasts (transportation, thermal, and electricity) and connection between the forecasted usage and the goals of 25% by 2025 and 90% by 2050.
- The Nordic Farm biomass generator is not mentioned on the page 9 table—"1" should go in place of "0" sites.
- Table on page 7 says that in year 2015 there are 2% residences weatherized, but this figure most likely under-represents new buildings and renovations that were not channeled through the Efficiency Vermont Home Performance with Energy Star Program.
- What is the mechanism for verifying data that is included in the memo (see two previous points)?
- Do the renewable energy projections take into account storage, and how can the other assumptions that have been incorporated into the models that are used to develop the targets and projections be accessed and understood by the public?
- Please explain the decision-making process for areas considered "possible" and how much leverage towns have over setting the conditions for accepting a project, i.e., can a town decide that no mitigation is sufficient and refuse a project that is labeled "possible"?
- Headings in the tables: Make the headings consistent, i.e., choose "current" or "existing".

**2. Recently, you provided CCRPC with input on your local known and possible constraints to renewable energy development. Please review the maps and constraint table to ensure we are representing your input accurately.**

The focus of the maps is on the categorization of Charlotte resources for renewable energy development according to Act 174 as defined by “known” constraints (where no development is allowed), “possible” constraints (where some mitigation is needed for development to occur), and “preferred” sites (areas where development is allowed and possibly encouraged).

While state constraints to which Charlotte must abide have been identified (e.g., FEMA floodways, State significant natural communities), Charlotte has the power to identify its own locally preferred sites as well as “local” constraints in the two categories “known” or “possible” which will control and restrict renewable energy development resources if specified.

First and foremost, the EC thinks that this list should align with Charlotte’s resources as mapped and listed on the “Natural & Cultural Features with High Public Value” map. Moreover, the public values should be defined with the same terms as those listed on the map’s legend.

The list (bolded below) provided by Charlotte overlaps in part but not entirely with the Charlotte High Public Value map. The EC discussed this list with Jim Donovan as well as at the June meeting. Taking this list as a starting point, these “bolded” resources were reviewed on face value and the EC made the following suggestions for either the “possible” or “known” categorization.

- **Conserved Land** – Some are “Known” whilst others are “Possible”. There is need to review maps and regulations before making recommendations on specific lands. Some conserved land may allow for certain types of development, which could include solar or wind power generation. Nevertheless, Open Space Agreements (OSA) between landowners and the town should remain in force. Otherwise OSAs will not be honored in the Planning Commission development review processes and a poor precedent would be set with respect to their enforcement.
- **Shoreland Setback and Buffer Areas** – Known
- **Flood Hazard Areas** - Known
- **Special Natural Areas (SNA)** – Known – These areas of land or water that retain their natural character and contain unusual or significant flora, fauna, geological, or related features of ecological and educational interest and have been identified by the Charlotte Conservation Commission from the Vermont Natural Areas Inventory, the Vermont Natural Areas Map, the Nature Conservancy, the Vermont Non-Game and Natural Heritage Program, and citizens of the community. SNAs in the Town of Charlotte include; Barber Hill, the Burns Property, the Charlotte Road Cut, Cedar Island, Garden Island, Landfill, Lewis Creek, McNeil Cove, Monkton Cave, Mount Philo, Plouffe Lane, Scenic overlook, Thompson's Point, Wildflower Farm, Williams Woods, Whalley Woods, Railway site, and Pease Mountain).
- **Historic District, Sites, and Structure** – possible
- **Steep Slopes (15% or Greater)** - possible

- **Land in Active Agricultural Use** - possible
- **Surface Waters, Wetlands, and Buffers** – surface known constraint, wetlands – make distinction as to functionality and classification for known vs. possible distinction
- **Primary Agricultural Soils** - need to review soil maps before making recommendation
- **Water Supply Protection Areas** – possible, but state laws most likely define known constraints
- **Scenic View** – possible
- **Wildlife Habitats** – deer wintering habitat are “Possible”. However the 2008 iteration of the Charlotte Significant Wildlife Habitat ought to be relegated as “Known” for the four Level I classes of habitats; **1.** Forest Habitat, **2.** Persistent Shrubland Habitat, **3.** Aquatic Habitat, and **4.** Linkage Habitat. Further information on the Charlotte Significant Habitat Map may be found at this link: <https://is.gd/DNhIYW>

### **3. Are there local preferred sites that we should include?**

The preferred sites which the EC recommends are:

- Charlotte Central School
- Town owned land that already has paved areas
- Train depot and park & ride
- State-owned land west of the park & ride
- Commercial and residential roof areas

### **4. Do you want your regional plan (ECOS Plan) to prohibit energy generation in areas with state and local known constraints?**

According to Act 174, “the ECOS Plan will carry greater weight—substantial deference—in the Section 248 siting process for energy generation. The EC recommends that yes, we want our regional plan (ECOS Plan) to prohibit energy generation in areas that have “known” constraints.” If this were not the case, then making the distinction between “known” and “possible” constraints would be rendered meaningless and not have any weight or credibility. It’s crucial for public buy-in on the “possible” constraints to demonstrate a willingness to protect the “known” constraints.

### **5. Would you be interested in local energy planning assistance from CCRPC in FY18?**

Yes, the Town of Charlotte is interested in local energy planning assistance from CCRPC in FY18.