**Minutes of Bethlehem Energy Commission – November 12, 2024**

Present:  Dan Crosby, Scott Caisse, Mary Lou Krambeer, Chuck Phillips, Bruce Caplain (Select Board Liaison), Josh Lieberman

Excused: David Van Houten

Also attending:  Marni Hoyle, Fred Wheeler, Melissa Elander (CENH), Jim Fitzpatrick

Mission:  The Bethlehem Energy Commission encourages and supports economically and environmentally sensible energy practices in Bethlehem, NH.

AGENDA

Introductions

-October minutes moved by Dan Crosby and second by Josh Lieberman

-Mowing maintenance plan for BES solar array: Dan Crosby looked at the array and there are saplings at the back of the fence, they will grow fast.  He will suggest the Town mow all four sides of the array each year.  Dan will talk to Mary Moritz.

-Main Street Solar Initiative: Mai Papaya is finishing paperwork.  Super Secret Ice Cream has signed a contract and put down deposit and waiting to hear on their installation date (it may not be until Spring).  Rosa Flamingo is also interested.

-BEC should become a member of Clean Energy New Hampshire -- $300 a year.  CENH has given us thousands of dollars of free advice and grant writing assistance each year since our founding in 2019.

To Do:  Mary Lou will send a statement to Bruce to take to the Selectboard.

-PUC and net metering:  PUC Commissioners have not yet decided next steps related to net metering.  They have proposed lowering the net metering formula, but have run into a lot of resistance during the public input process over the last few months.

-Village District – waste water treatment facility solar array went live on 10/29/24!!!!

-Village District drinking water facility – we are in the queue for a facility assessment, which may suggest a PV array to lower electricity cost and open up some funding possibilities.

-CENH 2025 Local Energy Conference well attended

-Conservation Commission request of planning board to support:

Updated that will have the potential to improve public safety; to preserve Bethlehem’s dark skies which complement the rural and historic character of the town; and to reduce the cost and waste of unnecessary energy consumption. It also provides guidelines for the installation and operation of outdoor lighting.

BEC – statement of support:  The Bethlehem Energy Commission is always in favor of reducing the cost and waste of unnecessary lighting and energy consumption as our mission says, BEC encourages and supports economically and environmentally sensible energy practices in Bethlehem, NH.  We applaud the Conservation Commission for advancing such practices with the Planning Board.

-Rambling Woods – Fred discussed the ongoing work to solarize Rambling Woods.  Rambling Woods has 29 lots (of which 7 lots are currently vacant). Because some of our residents don’t want to participate in this project, we are considering how to involve other LMI (low moderate income) members of our community.  Participation means other residents may now join the group -- this offer means part of their electric load would be covered by solar.  This will not cost participants any money – but they will need to, once a year, present their electric usage figure and fill-out an income reports (to demonstrate they are eligible according to LMI requirements). The funding for the project apparently requires a certain percentage of the production to be used by LMI participants, so finding/encouraging eligible account holders beyond the Rambling Woods community is necessary so that the project size doesn’t need to be reduced. Ideas regarding what organizations could effectively shepherd the administration of these additional participants were discussed.

-Eversource has approved underwriting 50% of the cost of battery storage for municipal building up to $200,000.  Participants will still be able to apply for an additional 30% tax credit from the federal government.

Meeting adjourned at 7:10.

Next Meetings:

Dec 3

January 7