

Meeting Minutes

Saco Energy & Sustainability Committee

September 1, 2020

Present: Howard Carter, Jackie McDonough, Ted Gagnon, Pat Fox, Rick Milliard, Jodi MacPhail, Don Roth, Glenys Salas, Emily Cole-Prescott, Ryan Sommer, Andrew Goldberg, Alan Minthorn, Glenn Baker, Andrew Fersch, Zakary Aresnault, Gabrielle Price, Gianna Poleski, Abigail Lizotte

Introductions

- Andrew Fersch is a seventh & eighth grade humanities teacher at the Saco Middle School (SMS), his students have put forth a climate resolution for the City of Saco which they will discuss with the Energy and Sustainability Committee
- Gabrielle Price is a SMS student that enjoys nature, she said this is the reason why she is so passionate about climate resolution
- Abigail Lizotte is a SMS student that adores wildlife and keeping the Maine lobster economy thriving, these are her reasons why we need climate resolution
- Gianna Poleski is a SMS student that enjoys working on climate resolution because it is positive for the environment
- Zakary Aresnault is a SMS student that has become more aware of the need for climate change and saving the environment since working on the climate resolution

History of the Energy and Sustainability Committee

- The Energy and Sustainability Committee was formed in 2006 by Howard Carter, City Councilor Eric Cote and a Water Resource Recovery staff member
- Energy efficiency was and still is the driving force for the committee

Current Projects and Past Successes

- Update given by Pat Fox, Don Roth and Emily Cole-Prescott
- Over the years the city has looked for ways to introduce energy conservation and help the environment where we can, always with the limiting factor of cost
- There are over 1,600 streetlights throughout the city and so far 300-400 have been changed to LED
- Most of the lights in the city facilities and parking lots are LED
- The city has been adding hybrid and electric vehicles to its fleet
- Recently changed the lighting system at the Transportation Center to save on electricity
- Any new heating systems installed in facilities are all energy efficient, many have been switched over to natural gas
- Two mini splits have been installed at the Police Department, one in the dispatch center and one on the first floor
- Currently in the process of implementing ENGIE, a utility billing software that detects irregularities in utility usage and billing

- The city comp plan update includes a chapter on sea level rise and policies have been adopted in the zoning ordinance as far as how tall structures need to be built to be protected from rising sea levels
- There are many preservation and conservation initiatives that are ongoing throughout the city, even historic preservation is looking at how we can build energy efficiency initiatives to protect historical structures

Discussions Regarding the Climate Resolution

- Emily Cole-Prescott reviewed all of the notes that came in from the Conservation Commission and the Energy Committee back in March, she then highlighted all of the sections in the Climate Resolution that everyone seemed to be in general agreement with and will be covering the non-highlighted sections with the Energy Committee
- On the topic of reaching zero greenhouse gas emissions, the city has limited resources when it comes to budgeting for expenses, at this point the City of Saco doesn't have a baseline for greenhouse gas emissions but would like to move towards reducing emissions
- Rick Milliard said reducing greenhouse gas emissions is a multiple layer issue that cannot be addressed in its entirety by the city, would need state and federal support as well
- Pat Fox thinks the target date in the Climate Resolution should be changed from 2030 to 2050
- Abigail Lizotte said climate change is happening now and if we don't make changes to slow it down the effects could be irreversible; this is why we need to create a sense of urgency
- City Councilor Alan Minthorn said with everything that is ongoing in the city and COVID-19 it would be more realistic to have a report of climate resolution goals from each of the departments by December 1st, just in time for council goal setting, after that a task force may be implemented in 2021 with work to be done to impact council goal setting for 2022
- Gabrielle Price said she agrees that, in the short-term, resolutions may not be as strong as some would hope for so if the timeline is expanded the outcome may be more effective in the long run
- City Councilor Jodi MacPhail said she agrees with Councilor Alan Minthorn that the timeframes on the Climate Resolution document are of some concern especially now with COVID -19 but she does fully support the initiative
- Andrew Goldberg thinks there should be two goals: reaching zero greenhouse gas emissions and draw down and remove all excess carbon
- Glenys Salas said she thinks it's important to incentivize the purchase of energy efficient goods (solar panels, appliances, etc.), instead of the City of Saco implementing tax incentives the city could encourage existing incentives, for example, incentives through Efficiency Maine

Next meeting October 6, 2020