

Town of Kennebunk

**NOTES** (Summary Highlights & Decisions)

**Energy Efficiency Committee Meeting – via ZOOM**

July 14, 2021: 3:30 – 6:00 PM

Present: Staz, M&N Bartenhagen, Dater.

Attendee: Blake Baldwin, Chair Selectboard

**EEAC’S ROLE, PURPOSE, TASKS.** A wide ranging discussion ensued on the current and future role and responsibilities of EEAC vis-à-vis the Selectboard and town staff.

Stazz:

- How to cooperate between EEAC and the KLPD to go forward?
- EEAC’s revised draft mission statement submitted to SB Chair and Town Manager (TM), but no response yet.
- Two grants possible on carbon footprint. EEAC needs to talk to town staff on these.
- Climate Action Plan. TM said no to a VISTA volunteer to do it. Kennebunk is one of eighteen towns picked to do one by ICLEI.
- EEAC wants to learn town expectations of the Committee going forward.

M. Bartenhagen:

- EEAC as a volunteer committee would like to include climate change in its mission.
- EEAC is frustrated – beyond free collaboration with TNS, Committee seems blocked. EEAC’s message not getting to the town; problem of perception on the Committee’s role and responsibilities.
- Issues on energy efficiency and the climate crises is bigger than the town, region, state, country.
- TNS data collection for the town’s GHG inventory has ended. This inventory should be a living document but the TM would not pursue it. Town needs a person designated to continue it.

N. Bartenhagen:

- LED streetlights conversion is an example that would save the town \$30,000 per year, but the town is not getting it done. Town needs to change; too much inertia.

Baldwin:

- SB Chair is experiencing frustration, e.g. three committee meeting in one day. While some committees are doing well the overall (volunteer) committee system is broken.
- There is a lack of town staff for climate change due to lack of resources to keep the (property tax) mil-rate low.
- Lower Village will be under water (sea-level rise) soon, but TM needs to balance with other town needs. Need to control committees, e.g. what if EEAC runs amuck? But EEAC should become the climate action committee.
- Town could kill all volunteer committees, but why does the town have such groups? Town government has an illusion of control, has concern of relinquishing control to volunteer groups.

tazz:

- All town committees are advisory. EEAC needs to be told by the town to work with x, y or z; so the Town Development Director, for example, should meet with EEAC before the KLPD Director (on the LED conversion project).
- Volunteer committees should be seen as extensions of the town staff’s jobs. But town staff feel that committees are a separate job from their usual workload; feel threatened.
- Saco is an example; its energy committee has the power of RFP’s and review with town staff on its projects. If EEAC were similarly empowered then there would have been a Kennebunk RFP (on the LED conversion) right after the town vote authorizing and funding the project.

Bartenhagens:

- Town staff have anxiety over volunteer committees, so resistance to them. What can the SB, staff and committees do to fix this?
- For example, there is a consortium in southern Maine on (energy reduction) but KLPD does not want to participate.

- LED conversion project was worked-on by EEAC, but the town staff took it over.  
Baldwin:
- Right now all projects go through the Development Director – projects get stopped there. How to make it right? Read the Town Annual Report by Baldwin. EEAC needs persistence in the face of being blocked. EEAC should go to the KLPD Board meetings and get cooperation.
- There are three parties (to the LED conversion): EEAC, town staff and the SB. EEAC should experiment with continuing to include climate change (in its mission) and break through staff need to control.

M. Bartenhagen:

- What should EEAC do? Lisa Pratt, new SB member, could fix issues by encouraging SB interest in EEAC issues, even while some staff and committees interact. If there were an assistant town manager, then this position could be responsible for town committees.

Baldwin:

- Town decides where (in town) streetlights are installed and how bright. EEAC decides where (on which poles) streetlights are placed and what type of lights. But KLPD Director gets to choose light fixtures he says.

Staz:

- KLPD Director said the Town gets to choose the light fixtures.
- Town Street Light Committee was founded by the SB to lessen small jobs for the SB, but KLPD Director says he gets rules only from town staff, but Baldwin got the shield purchased for the problem light on Fletcher Street (he said). Town needs to respond the EEAC's January 13, 2021 letter on the Fletcher street problem light – let EEAC deal with the minutiae (of street lighting matters).
- KLPD needs to listen to EEAC which represents (1) rate payers, (2) commission over KLPD on street lights, and (3) is an extension of the town.
- EEAC's history is one of being logical not a renegade. It needs a concept of agency: autonomy, authority and responsibility.
- But for a TM assistant? Baldwin is not in favor on labor (and cost) to oversee volunteer committees.

Review EEAC tasks:

- (1) Fix it (current town relation with volunteer committees). Get new people; get higher mil-rate. Town could do this.
- (2) get group to go to KLPD meetings.
- (3) Request an agenda spot at KLPD Board meeting for EEAC. Or, go to a KLPD meeting with a block of people to present EEAC concerns

Talk with TNS staff on energy auditing of town buildings and RSU buildings. Get Kwh energy consumption per month from KLPD. Ask TNS if they would continue energy data collection: list of energy consumption – (town & RSU) vehicle gas; town + RSU buildings oil, etc. consumption. Then do an energy audit by an outside firm.

Two major issues: (1) town staff cooperation with EEAC that may be solved; Lisa Pratt as EEAC Liaison can go to Town Development Director on EEAC's behalf; (2) KLPD blockage (of LED conversion and other energy efficiency matters) that needs continuing EEAC pressure.

Michele Sopher, Rye NH's lighting expert, has been contacted by Staz on impending RFQ for town LED conversion. There are listening sessions in KPort on what the public wants for climate change and mitigation.

#### **NEXT STEPS.**

- (1) Staz, EEAC Chair to go to Budget Committee meeting on EEAC's report on LED conversion and other projects.
- (2) M. Bartenhagen will arrange follow-up meeting with KCI Director to further discuss listening session on climate change for Kennebunk in collaboration with Wells Reserve and SMPD.

- (3) Attend SMRPC/Laudholm meetings on community education on climate change mitigation – how to do it.
- (4) Talk with TNS on students doing more GHG data collection. Rist collect data on town/RSU gasoline consumption.
- (5) Energy Audit – with question to Town Manager and SB agenda on EEAC recommendation for an outside auditor: town buildings; fire stations; Police building; Dorothy Stevens building.
- (6) KLPD – N. Bartenhagen contact KLPD for a meeting date with Board and then decide to get on a meeting agenda; or go in person to meet with Board members.
- (7) Change EEAC name to include “Global Warming/Climate Change” – M. Bartenhagen to ask SB Chair.

Next Meeting. August 4th, 3:30 PM at Town Hall. Election of Officers for 2021/22 tabled until the August 4th meeting.