

TOWN OF STAMFORD
PUBLIC HEARING ON REVISION OF CHAPTER 10 OF THE TOWN PLAN
TO INCLUDE STATE ENERGY STANDARDS
PLANNING COMMISSION
March 25, 2019
(UNAPPROVED)

Present: Planning Commission: Aaron Malachuk, Daniel J. Potvin, Helen Fields, Jenifer Hughs, Stephen Bechtel, and Sheila Lawrence.

Kurt Gamari, Steven Denault, and David Saldo were not present.

Visitors: Jim Sullivan, Bennington County Regional Commission.

Nancy Bushika, Eleanor Derby-Kilfoyle, Joan Levine, William Levine, Lori Shepard, and James Stimpson.

Aaron Malachuk opened the public hearing at 7:00 p.m. Copies of the old Chapter 10 and new Chapter 10 were available.

Jim Sullivan from the Bennington County Regional Commission was introduced. He explained the direction of the state to improve renewable energy resources. He stated that the revised Chapter 10 meets the Act 174 Energy Standards set by the state. It contains current usage data in town as well as goals and strategies to reach those goals in order to be compliant with the new law.

The projections in the revised Chapter 10 are a reflection of regional energy plans as per the state goals. Many towns in the county have already implemented the new law or are taking steps to revise their town plans to include the energy standards.

Jim Sullivan discussed the map which was prepared by the BCRC showing preferred sites and how the decisions were made. The map shows general places amenable or prohibitive of wind or solar upgrades. There is room to consider other areas if citizens come forward interested in having their property considered as a preferred site. He stated that the map could be updated at any time as more information is available and technology improves. The maps contain several layers.

Nancy Bushika asked if people wanted their property noted as a preferred site, would the Planning Commission have to amend the map and amend the town plan. Jim Sullivan explained that amending the plan was one option. The other would be to obtain letters from the Selectboard, the local Planning Commission and the Bennington County Regional Commission classifying the area as a preferred site. Jim Sullivan encouraged town officials and developers to work together through the planning process, and hopes towns can be proactive rather than reactive, when stating the location is a statutory preferred site. The areas noted as agricultural types are from a BCRC analysis of the soil type, not whether or not the land is currently being farmed.

Questions were asked why wood and wood pellets are considered a renewable energy source, but the projected future use table showed wood decreasing. Jim Sullivan explained that the projections anticipate weatherization improvements to homes which would allow more BTUs to be generated using less wood. Typical shell improvement weatherization can reduce energy consumption by 30%. He also suggested the use of heat pumps as a more energy efficient source. By 2050 the state's goal is to use much less oil and propane. Jim Sullivan referred people to Efficiency Vermont and Green Mountain Power websites for information, home energy audits and incentives. Low interest loans are also

available through the Vermont State Employees Credit Union. Jenifer Hughs asked if there were pamphlets available to inform residents of energy efficiency options.

Jim Sullivan noted three schools in Bennington have converted to wood chip boilers. He offered to set up a tour of Applegate for town and school representatives to see their heating systems. The boilers are very efficient and produce very little smoke and mostly steam.

Helen Fields was interested in electric car incentives.

Jim Sullivan advised that once the town plan is adopted by the Selectboard, it should be forward to the Bennington County Regional Commission to be certified.

MOTION by Jenifer Hughs to accept the town plan as written with the revised Chapter 10 Energy Plan and to send same to the Selectboard. SECONDED by Dan Potvin. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

MOTION by Jenifer Hughs to adjourn the public hearing. SECONDED by Dan Potvin. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The public hearing was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Helen Fields,
Planning Commission Clerk

HF/las