

**Draft MINUTES**  
**ST. ALBANS CLIMATE & ENERGY COMMITTEE**  
**SPECIAL MEETING**  
**ST. ALBANS CITY HALL, 100 NORTH MAIN STREET**  
**3 PM SATURDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2023**

**Committee members present:** Jim Stiles, Chair; Mary Harbaugh; Laura Isham; Michael Saunders; Zach Scheffler (arrived 3:20 pm);

**Committee members absent:** Susan Knightes (Alternate), Rachel Ledoux, Student Liaison

**Members of the public present:** None

**Minutes-taker:** Mary Harbaugh

**1. Call to Order:** J. Stiles called the meeting to order.

**2. Brief public comment on non-agenda items:** None

**3. Discussion of rough outline and notes for Climate & Energy Plan:**

- J. Stiles introduced the topic. M. Harbaugh mentioned that, in the short-term, the committee can continue working on projects, with notification to the City Manager and City Council, under the direction of the committee charter. J. Stiles encouraged committee members to propose projects within the charter guidelines. M. Harbaugh said work should continue on the larger, longer-term Plan, with a goal of completing a good draft in time for a newly-scheduled public meeting, currently called Climate Planning Day, on March 2 (snow date March 3).
- The committee briefly reviewed the rough outline for the Plan. Proposed headings include: Executive Summary, Climate Assessment, Vision and Goals, Current Energy Analysis and Trends, Energy Transition, Climate Resilience and Adaptation, Community Engagement and Education, Regulatory and Policy Framework, Funding and Financing, Implementation Plan, Evaluation and Monitoring, Conclusion, Appendices, and References. Each of these headings includes sub-categories, and notes and reminders are listed as work continues.
- J. Stiles described the idea of multi-solving, that is, designing one approach to solve multiple problems and offer multiple benefits. Examples of systemic benefits involve building insulation with low greenhouse-gas content, as well as healthy soil.
- The committee began discussion of elements of the Plan, including compliance with Act 174. M. Harbaugh noted that Marlena Valenta of the Northwest Regional Planning Commission expects to have regionalized data in the future, so help the committee best evaluate how to respond to state energy targets.
- In a discussion about solar energy, several members suggested existing solar arrays or potential roof-top solar-array locations in St. Albans Town, which might offer shared-regional opportunities for partial compliance with state energy targets. J. Stiles mentioned the VOR site. M. Saunders mentioned the battery plant in the Town and buildings in the industrial park and the creamery, as well as the City-located abandoned Federal service center near Houghton Park. Z. Scheffler mentioned the City School. M. Harbaugh mentioned an L.A. Times article describing “community solar” issues in California, which allow renters to participate.
- The committee discussed possibilities for geothermal energy, also known as ground-source heat (and air conditioning) pumps. J. Stiles explained how it works, noting that installations are less

expensive (per amount of energy) when they are networked to serve multiple buildings. Networked geothermal installations require management, such as by a utility.

- J. Stiles discussed additional options for rooftop development. These include not only solar arrays, but also greenhouses and building-tenant recreational spaces. Multi-solving benefits include roof insulation, food production, reduced requirements for transportation, and more, depending on the exact approach.
- J. Stiles described the benefits of battery storage, including placing storage in the building in which it will be used, which enhances efficiency. Z. Scheffler noted that these batteries are also known as Powerwalls.
- In the brief discussion of other, various rough-outline Plan elements, L. Isham mentioned her knowledge of invasive species and pests, which relates to resilience and public health. M. Harbaugh noted that parks, streets, and parking areas are locations to consider for adaptation opportunities. M. Saunders mentioned an effort to provide train service from St. Albans City to Burlington.
- As the time allocated for Plan discussion was ending, M. Harbaugh said she would integrate notes from the meeting discussion into the rough-draft Plan and encouraged members to volunteer to help with graphics, photography, or a topic of particular interest.

**4. Other business:** M. Harbaugh reminded the committee that rough budgets for events are due at the November 6 meeting, so that work can begin on the MERP (Municipal Energy Resilience Program) Mini-Grant.

**5. Adjourn:** M. Harbaugh motioned to adjourn the meeting at about 4 pm. Seconded by M. Saunders. The motion passed with all in favor.