

MINUTES
ST. ALBANS CLIMATE AND ENERGY COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
ST. ALBANS CITY HALL, 100 NORTH MAIN STREET
6:00 PM TUESDAY, APRIL 15, 2025

DRAFT

Committee Members Present: Co-Chair; Jim Stiles; Co-Chair Laura Isham; Zach Scheffler; Elle Spier; Alex Furst; Jenna Pacito

Committee Members Absent: Jenna Pacito; Michael Saunders; Janet Johnson;

City Staff present: Paul Olshan, Minute Taker (Via Zoom)

Members of the public present: Grace Pier

1. L. Isham started the meeting at 6:00.

- Public comment. G. Pier introduced herself and why she was there.
- The committee members introduced themselves.

2. Approval of Minutes

- **L. Isham motioned to approve the minutes from February. Seconded by A. Furst. The motion passed with all in favor. No additional discussion.**
- **Z. Scheffler motioned to approve the march minutes. Seconded by J. Stiles. The motion passed with all in favor. No additional discussion.**

3. J. Stiles talked about the email he circulated in relation to the topic of extreme weather. The committee discussed what a “neighborhood hub” for weather related emergencies would look like.

- E. Spier asked for specifics on flood data in St. Albans.

4. Discussions for topics not on the agenda.

- A. Furst brought up a geothermal workshop that he was interested in attending. He also brought up requesting through the committee for numbers on EV ownership in the city of St. Albans. The committee agreed on this request. A. Furst would draft a survey for the next meeting to send out to residents of the city who own an EV. This survey would help the committee find out what EV owners need throughout the city, specifically the level of chargers.
- **Z. Scheffler motioned to empower one of the co-chairs to request information on EV ownership data for the city from Marty Manahan. Seconded by E. Spier. The motion passed with all in favor.**
- There was a conversation about possible locations for EV chargers.

5. Biochar event update

- Z. Scheffler updated the committee on the successful biochar event, how many people showed up and what information was given out. The first hour was very busy and the food was very appreciated. They ran out of biochar right before the end of the event. This was despite the rainy weather. The committee thanked Marty Manahan and the St. Albans Public Works crew for helping the event stay safe from traffic hazards.
- J. Pacito asked if they would do another event in the future and whether the committee should purchase more biochar. This was briefly discussed by the committee. The committee would continue to try and get rid of the last amount of biochar. There was then a conversation as to whether residents could make biochar on their own, but the city might want this to be permitted before it's encouraged by the committee.
- **E. Spier motioned to include the biochar in the next newsletter to get rid of it. Seconded by A. Furst. There was a conversation about whether the organization of this event would be considered a “public event.” Z. Scheffler recommended doing this individually, first come first serve, and not making it a public event. The motion passed with all in favor.**
- L. Isham updated the committee on the \$25 left on a price chopper gift card for future events.
- E. Spier mentioned that there was genuine interest in the city planting new trees and shrubs. G. Pier gave more details on the tree planting as well as a few contacts that the committee members could get in touch with.
- L. Isham gave a brief overview of what the “Natural Solutions” category of the agenda was about.

6. Climate Conscious Community and Governance

- E. Spier gave an update on the two climate action plan events tomorrow (4/16/25) including sections for public comment.
- The committee discussed their goals for the event, other than just being there. J. Pacito would be there. J. Stiles gave his thoughts on the local shortcomings for preparedness when it comes to extreme weather and climate trends. A. Furst believed that Vermonters need to focus more on weatherization and preventing so much energy and heat loss, especially for older homes.
- E. Spier asked the committee members to look at public comments online about the events to be prepared. St. Albans has a higher level of people without access to vehicles, their own property, and a higher instance of single-parent families, disabilities, and higher instance of low income compared to the Vermont average. These need to be considered when drafting an internal climate plan. **This event would be 4:30 to 5:30 at the library, and the climate action plan discussion would be from 6-8 at City Hall.**
- J. Pacito asked about how the committee should present itself at the event. The

- committee agreed that they need to present themselves as individuals, not as a committee members. But they can still get public input for action items in the future.
- G. Pier brought up nuclear energy and how this has come up in the state legislature and governor's office. She asked if the committee had considered this. Z. Scheffler specified that the committee had not discussed any topics on nuclear energy.
 - Z. Scheffler would get in touch with city staff to find out the correct times for the events on 4/16/25.

7. The St. Albans City Energy Action Plan

- A. Furst was collecting comments on the plan. The committee had not finished reviewing it yet. E. Spier gave an update on her review process of the Vermont State plan since this could be used to influence the St. Albans City Energy Action Plan. J. Pacito offered to help as well.
- E. Spier thought there were a lot of good things already in the plan that she reviewed. But she'd like to get more input from the community during these recent events to focus the plan.

8. Membership updates

- Z. Scheffler would be stepping back from the committee. He would remain on the committee only if needed, and he can resign when a new member is found.
- J. Stiles would be moving out of the state and would only be able to help remotely. He would be joining a committee in New York that is the same exact date and time, so he might not be able to attend these meetings anymore.
- Sue Knightes is also no longer an alternate member of the committee.
- There was a conversation on difficulties joining at this time but it would remain at 6:00PM until further notice.
- G. Pier would like to be a recipient of the newsletter.

9. No other business

10. L. Isham motioned to adjourn. Seconded by Z. Scheffler. The motion passed with all in favor. No additional discussion.