

MINUTES
ST. ALBANS CITY CLIMATE & ENERGY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
ST. ALBANS CITY HALL, 100 NORTH MAIN STREET
6:00 PM TUESDAY MAY 20TH, 2025

DRAFT

Commission Members Present: IN PERSON: Laura Isham, Co-Chair; Alex Furst; Janet Johnson; Jenna Pacitto

Commission Members Absent: Jim Stiles, Chair; Zach Scheffler; Elizabeth (Ael) Spier; Susan Knightes, Alternate

City Staff present: IN PERSON: Katie Haseltine (Minute-Taker)

Members of the public present: Beebe Potter

1. Begin recording and call to order

a. L. Isham calls meeting to order at 6:04 pm.

2. Brief Public Comment on non-agenda Items (limit 2 min. per person) - None.

3. Review and approve meeting minutes (D&V)

a. L. Isham opens discussion on meeting minutes. A. Furst motions to approve the minutes with the amendments noted. J. Pacitto seconds. Motion passes with all in favor.

i. E. Spier (Ael nickname) & Jenna Pacitto's names are spelled wrong. Jenna was in attendance and should be removed from the absent list.

4. Reports on Plan Priorities communications and activities

a. Resilience in extreme weather

i. A. Furst thinks it is worth highlighting that the heavy rainfall this weekend might warrant the continuation of keeping this item at the forefront of discussions.

b. Geothermal/Thermal networks

i. Geothermal Workshop

1. A. Furst explains that there were about 30 people who attended. It was down in Williston. Shelburne had a representative of their Climate committee as well as a couple of state representatives. Overall, it was well attended.

2. The event provided an overview of geothermal systems. It was focused on the Williston area and their ability to tap into this resource. Other discussions around thermal energy networks and the limiting ability to pursue due to cost were had. However, it was noted that low interest loans or grants to help with cost are still available to get. Past successful projects were also discussed.

3. B. Potter wonders what came of the potential of some networks down at the Industrial Park, noting that she had discussed this with Tim Smith and Jim Stiles a while back. A. Furst is not sure, but was also not aware of this, so they can look into this.

4. J. Pacitto wonders about the grants and low interest loans that A. Furst mentioned. A. Furst knows that St. Johnsbury has accessed some of this and might be a resource to determining if something similar is feasible in St.

- Albans. J. Johnson would like to keep looking into this and seeing how it could be brought into our community.
5. J. Johnson and A. Furst met with Debbie New about geothermal networks and J. Johnson would be happy to ask her about doing the presentation for this group. J. Johnson would also like to include some potential sites in the committee's action plan to keep that on the radar as progress is made.
- c. Climate-resilient/energy-efficient buildings and infrastructure
- i. L. Isham wonders if the geothermal networks should be moved to this agenda item.
 - ii. J. Johnson wonders if we know when the next window dressing or weatherization efforts might be happening.
 - iii. L. Isham explains that it is typically in the fall but isn't sure if it is a yearly occurrence or if they switch up locations. L. Isham would be happy to reach out to Marlana (who organized last year) and see if that is happening again this year and if so, where those will be held. B. Potter adds that CVOEO might also be doing something similar.
 - iv. J. Johnson would love to see progress made on weatherization efforts. A. Furst believes weatherization in St. Albans is probably one of the most important cost savings opportunity because of the amount of historical/older built homes. J. Johnson could reach out to CVOEO about potential partnerships and opportunities.
 - v. B. Potter notes she was on a group for thermal energy and could re-join to learn more about opportunities with this. She recalls that needing to get assessments done and insurance requirements are often a barrier. She will report back with any findings.
- d. Transportation innovations
- i. EV owner survey
 1. A. Furst put together the survey for the committee to review. J. Stiles had replied in email with concern around the question, "Would you ever go back to a gas vehicle?". J. Pacitto understands J. Stiles view, but also thinks it could be interesting data to gather.
 2. J. Johnson asks if we know how many EV owners are in St. Albans. A. Furst explains that the information is publicly available, but is by county.
 3. A. Furst asks if putting this into Google Forms would be the best way to go. J. Johnson thinks whatever is easiest for the public to take is best. J. Pacitto agrees, and notes that a link can be put in the newsletter.
 4. J. Johnson asks what the goal of this is. A. Furst believes the goal is to improve the EV infrastructure in St. Albans and this survey will help to prioritize what that will look like. J. Johnson wonders if the City might help with advertising this survey, either in the Mayor's quarterly letter, or on the website.
 5. J. Pacitto wonders about would-be EV owners or hybrid owners. A. Furst believes that this survey is focused on EV owners only. L. Isham thinks it could relate to plug-in hybrid vehicles.
 6. B. Potter wonders if landlords would be open to installing EV charging stations if financial assistance was available. L. Isham asks about grants available. A. Furst knows that there are some companies that are working to help fund the installation of EV chargers, but then partial revenue from that goes to them to offset the cost.

7. J. Johnson motions to have A. Furst finalize the survey in Google Forms, share the link with the committee to post on social media, as well as a script for consistent messaging. J. Johnson would like to know how many people have EV's. J. Pacitto seconds. Motion passes with all in favor.
- ii. J. Pacitto did a quick search on window dressers and sees St. Albans on the list, so believes it would be good to reach out to them. L. Isham will touch base with Marlena.
- iii. Sidewalks - A. Furst
 1. A. Furst had seen some potential proposed work in the Town of St. Albans to create more sidewalks and is curious what communication is being had to create more walkable areas. J. Johnson shares that there is a group called "Walk/Bike St. Albans" and he could look into that for more information.
- e. Natural solutions - None.
- f. Climate-conscious community and governance
 - i. VT Climate Action Plan
 1. L. Isham, J. Pacitto, and B. Potter went. L. Isham thought it was a good event, but seemed more around. J. Pacitto shared that they presented the update to the plan and structured discussion around action items. J. Pacitto felt that the meeting highlighted lack of funding as a barrier to making progress. B. Potter adds that the political climate of this topic also plays into securing funding.
 2. B. Potter shares that the Act on Climate Coalition discussed this at their most recent meeting. They were very happy with the turnout and highlighted solar and renewable energy. Meetings will be held Monday, through June, for anyone who might want to drop-in and attend one of those meetings.
 3. J. Pacitto noticed that the comments from the meeting were posted publicly and indicates where the individual is from. She can filter out the St. Albans responses and share with the committee.
 - ii. St. Albans City Energy Action Plan
 1. L. Isham wonders if the committee wants to hold off on next steps with this until new members are brought onto the committee.
 2. J. Pacitto has not had a chance to look at this second draft and could try and look at it for next meeting.
 3. A. Furst does not know how imperative detailed edits are at this time. Rather, an overall sense of how the Plan flows and if there are pockets of it to improve.
 4. J. Johnson suggests that all edits be sent in the next couple of weeks so then the Action Plan sub-committee can meet to finalize a draft for review at the next committee meeting. L. Isham is hopeful that if the draft is ready for the next meeting, they could discuss posting for public review and feedback.

5. Other Business - None

- A. Furst wanted to share that he saw that clean electricity surpassed 40% of global generation in 2024, which made him happy to read.
- J. Johnson wonders if something is going to be done about J. Stiles vacating the co-chair seat. L. Isham explains that A. Furst has generously offered to run the zoom piece of the meeting, which was a responsibility of the co-chair. L. Isham thinks the committee will wait until more membership interest comes in before solidifying any committee roles.

6. Adjourn and end recording (D&V).

- a. J. Pacitto motions to adjourn. A. Furst seconds. Motion passes with all in favor. L. Isham adjourns meeting at 7:20 PM.

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