

## MINUTES

### SUNDERLAND ENERGY COMMITTEE (SEC) MEETING

Wednesday, August 28, 2024 – 7pm ZOOM

- **Call to Order** - 7:15pm
- **Appoint Meeting Sec'y to take Minutes** – Jeff Dexter
- **Accept Last Meeting's Minutes:** Andrew made motion, Dixie seconded

(At Andrew's suggestion, this zoom meeting was recorded.)

The Committee discussed progress on filling our **two open SEC seats**. We are waiting to hear from some local residents...people who have said they were interested in being more involved either on the 2023 Town Meeting/SEC list, Green Up Day and the Survey Mailing (though most people answering the survey did not give any contact info).

We will hold an in-person meeting to discuss this Spring's **Survey** results. Jeff suggested we use Front Porch Forum to ask Sunderland residents to go to the website or use the QR code to fill it out AND to give us their contact info.

Our **Annual Forum** on Successful Transitions to Energy Efficiency (homes and businesses) was discussed. Since we have money available from our MERP grant (for outreach and education) and to follow up on last year's Forum on Exploring the Transition to Renewables, we decided to try and hold another one. Andrew will check with the Manchester Library for availability on Thursday evening, November 14, 2024. Jeff will check with Bill LaBerge and Karen Lee, former owners of solar panel companies, to see if they can provide us with "success story" families and businesses in the area. Dixie & Jeff both volunteered to be one such family participant if needed (due to all the energy efficiency work done on their homes). Andrew noted the Forum should discuss all sides (i.e. the "pluses and the minuses") of becoming energy efficient in our homes and businesses.

We discussed the SEC's participation in this year's Northshire **WindowDressers** build project on Oct. 18-23 at First Congregational Church in Manchester. All three Committee members have signed up or will sign up this week to work shifts. Jeff noted we were up to 171 inserts measured and paid for...our goal was 250-275. Jeff asked if the requested \$500 from our town Special Project's fund (formerly known as ARPA) was approved by the Select Board. Dixie said it would be voted on at their next meeting on Sept. 23<sup>rd</sup>. Jeff reiterated a good number of Sunderland family inserts had been made over the past 3 years at this annual event and that this \$\$ helps make free inserts available to lower-income residents. The project's fundraising goal for this is approx \$5,000.

The **MERP energy assessments (audits)** were discussed. Jeff mentioned the report should be given to us this coming month. Also, Jeff was just informed by Callie Fishburn (BCRC) that only "high energy burden" towns would now be eligible to receive MERP (Act 172) funding for energy

efficiency work on its buildings...and that Sunderland was rated as a Moderate Energy Burden town (based on the latest, 2019 Efficiency VT data....that MERP funding is based on). If the audits show there's room for energy-efficient improvements (as we suspect, especially for the Town Garage) we will have to pay for them or search for alternate funding (e.g. grant) sources.

New/Other Business: Jeff noted we have a new contact at ORVIS to help with gathering volunteers for our annual **Green Up Day** work in town. Final stats for our 2024 Green Up Day work: 85 volunteers (including ORVIS and GMP workers); 87 bags of debris/litter collected and disposed of; 25 tires disposed of; all main roads were cleaned up.

- **Set next month's meeting date/time: Thursday, Sept. 26, 2024 7pm Town Hall (if available)**
- **Adjourn Meeting:** 7:57pm – Jeff made the motion, Dixie seconded.