

ENERGY COMMITTEE

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The Plainfield Energy Committee's mission is to encourage energy conservation, energy efficiency practices and to promote the use of renewable energy in homes, businesses and public buildings through education and community outreach.

The Plainfield Energy Committee teamed up with the Cornish Energy Committee once again to run a second **Weatherize Plainfield/Cornish** campaign. These measures help residents implement effective insulation and air sealing measures to reduce the energy cost to heat and cool their homes. Nine homeowners qualified for NHSaves' increased rebates of up to \$8,000 which covered up to 90% of the certified building contractors' costs. Despite the pandemic, almost all the work was safely completed this year. We followed up with two **Button Up** presentations tailored for the DIY homeowner, with tips and instructions on how to do simple, low-cost weatherization and later followed up with more advanced techniques and projects.

The Plainfield and Cornish Energy Committees in partnership with the Upper Valley E-Bike Lending Library ran a two-week **E-Bike Loaner Program** this past summer with glowing results. Two days were devoted to 1-hour test drives and all the slots for the 3-day rentals were filled! We've seen a few more E-Bikes around town because of this! We hope to be able to have the rentals available again in 2021.

Also, in conjunction with the Cornish Energy Committee, we provided and/or co-sponsored many educational events in our **Renewable Energy Educational Series** via online webinars and created a **Did You Know?** series of short articles for Connect Cornish and for our website to help residents understand the short-term costs and long-term benefits of reaching our town's commitment of using 100% Renewable Energy by 2050.

Brad Atwater, Plainfield's Facilities Manager, commissioned **Energy Audits** for four of our town buildings in 2020: the Meriden Town Hall, Philip Read Memorial Library and our two Fire Stations. These audits were deemed necessary as a prerequisite for planning how best to replace the aging heating systems in all seven of our municipal buildings over the next 10-15 years. The audits also enabled us to better understand our town's energy profile, to determine how well our energy efficiency updates are working, and informed us as to the best path forward as we transition from fossil fuels to renewable sources of energy. The Energy Committee has identified cold-climate heat pumps capable of using renewable electricity as the most cost-effective long term replacement option and is investigating possible sources of grant funding to assist with up-front costs.

The Energy Committee continues to work on the Town's Renewable Energy Plan and we anticipate having a preliminary document available in time for the upcoming town meeting.

Key features of the Renewable Energy Plan:

1. Reduce overall energy use by improving the efficiency of our buildings, vehicles and appliances.
2. Phase out the use of fossil fuels as town equipment ages and requires replacement.
3. Preferentially invest in and utilize cost-effective local renewable energy sources.
4. Purchase electricity generated from renewable sources from third party suppliers.
5. Replace fossil fuel powered equipment by switching from oil furnaces, boilers, and gas-powered vehicles to electrical equipment such as cold climate heat pumps and battery electric vehicles.
6. Educate and promote ways for town residents to move into the renewable energy future.

We are already taking steps to meet our **Ready for 100 goals**. As but one example, Community Aggregation, also known as Community Power, provides a realistic near-term mechanism through which to obtain renewably generated electricity at prices below those the utilities charge. To this end, the Plainfield Energy Committee is participating in a Local Government Community Power committee, with representatives of eleven other local towns. We are looking to provide cost-effective renewably generated electricity to our towns by pooling our combined electricity load and purchasing in bulk. By working together, we can spread out the relatively minor administrative costs and reap the major economic benefits for residents across the eleven participating towns.

We are always looking for new recruits to serve on our **Ready for 100% transition and implementation team**. If interested, you will help: finalize our Ready for 100 plan, devise strategies for realization, and build a local coalition to support the 100% renewable energy transition. It's a great opportunity to work with our town administrator, the select board, and members of other town committees as we work toward implementing our plan. You will also help continue our educational seminars and workshops and maintain and expand our relationship with other local communities and organizations. Please contact any committee member if you'd like to get involved.

Respectfully submitted,
Evan Oxenham and Steve Ladd Co-chairs
Plainfield Energy Committee