

Green Energy Committee (GEC)

Meeting Minutes

February 16, 2022, 9:30am

Remote Participation Protocols:

Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitation on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting will be conducted via remote participation to the greatest extent possible. Specific information and the general guidelines for remote participation by members of the public and/or parties with a right and/or requirement to attend this meeting can be found on the www.lincolntown.org. For this meeting, members of the public who wish to listen or watch the meeting may do so in the following manner:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/94235388880?pwd=bkFNN0hY2NMRllldnlWdHNzMVFIOT09>

Meeting ID: 942 3538 8880

Password: 460113

Dial by your location: 646- 876- 9923

No in-person attendance by members of the public will be permitted, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings in real time, via technological means. Minutes of the meeting will be posted on the Town's website as soon as possible after the meeting.

Members Present: Roy Harvey, Jim Hutchinson, Ed Kern, Sue Klem, Ed Lang, Paul Shorb (chair).

Others Present: Belinda Gingrich, Jennifer Glass (Select Board liaison), Emily Haslett, Staci Montori, Michael Moodie, Patricia O'Hagan, Scott Rodman, Collette Sizer.

Call to Order

Paul Shorb called the meeting to order at 9:37 a.m. and noted this meeting was intended to focus solely on addressing questions that had been raised at the February 10, 2022 monthly meeting regarding the draft motion that had been proposed for Town Meeting, to restrict new gas hookups for new construction and major modifications, He outlined four questions that were discussed in the order summarized below.

Cost to install and operate

- Shorb presented evidence, collected by Harvey and Moodie and summarized in the attached document, that the cost to install during new construction a heating system based on ductless air-source heat pumps is not more than a system based on a gas furnace.
- He argued that the costs of building a very well-insulated house should be viewed as a separate issue, since although that may be mandated by upcoming changes to building codes and it may be a good idea for other reasons, it would not be mandated by this warrant article.
- He presented evidence that, at the current gas and electricity prices applicable in Lincoln, it is less expensive to heat a house using ductless air-source heat pumps than with a gas furnace. That conclusion was based primarily on inputting current prices (\$1.79/therm for gas from NStar

versus \$0.2541/kwh for electricity though the Lincoln Standard Green option) to a model provided online created by Efficiency Maine.

- There was extensive discussion of the above and of the related need to build a highly insulated house, although the latter would not be mandated by the draft motion.
- Those attending also discussed the general policy question of whether or to what extent the GEC should consider the cost of things it proposes, such as this warrant article.
 - After discussion, Shorb attempted to define a consensus view that the GEC (A) should consider costs; (B) should be transparent with the Town about cost issues; (C) should recognize that in some cases, cost may limit what it is possible or appropriate for the Town to mandate; and (D) within that framework, the GEC should be willing to take a leadership role that in some cases will involve proposing things that have increased costs.
 - A straw poll showed broad support across GEC members for the above formulation.
- After discussion, a straw poll found no members objecting to the draft warrant article based on cost concerns.

Reliability and need for fossil fuel backup

- Shorb presented information previously compiled by Harvey and Moodie indicating that electric air-source heat pumps can function well even in very cold temperatures.
- Shorb pointed out that (A) the draft bylaw exempts emergency generators from its restrictions; (B) they could be powered, for example, by natural gas from the local utility (Nstar) or a stand-alone propane tank; and (C) that should resolve concerns about what happens when & if the local electric power supply is interrupted.
- After discussion, a straw poll found no members objecting to the draft warrant article based on such concerns.

Major modifications

The GEC discussed whether to include major modifications, as defined in the draft warrant article.

- Shorb noted that of the four other towns that have voted for such gas hookup restrictions, three included major modifications and only Concord did not. Shorb noted that this draft uses the same definition as did the last two towns to act.
- Several attending asked questions about the rationale for the 75% and 50% aspects of the definition; Shorb said he did not know. Shorb confirmed that Tim Higgins has already asked the Planning Board to review this draft, which may provide some comfort.
- Several attending noted that it may be prudent to come to Town Meeting with an amendment ready to delete the major modification component, if discussion at the Town Meeting and/or in our public education process prior to Town Meeting suggests such deletion may be necessary to pass the rest.
- After discussion, a straw poll found all members in favor of including the major modification aspect in the warrant article.

When to seek Town Meeting vote

The GEC discussed whether, instead of asking the upcoming Town Meeting to vote on the detailed provisions in the draft warrant, it would be more prudent to either (A) vote on only a general request for home rule power and wait until a subsequent Town Meeting to vote on a specific bylaw or (B) avoid this topic altogether until a subsequent Town Meeting.

After discussion, a straw poll found Klem in favor of waiting and the other members inclined to go ahead.

Vote by GEC

Shorb asked whether anyone wanted to propose any other amendments to the draft before a GEC vote today on whether to endorse. None were proposed.

Moved by Shorb and seconded by Harvey: The GEC supports the draft warrant article as written for the upcoming Town Meeting, subject to minor edits that may arise from legal review. VOTE:

Harvey	aye
Hutchinson	aye
Kern	aye
Klem	nay
Lang	aye
Shorb	aye

Motion to adjourn by Hutchinson, seconded by Kern:

Harvey	aye
Hutchinson	aye
Kern	aye
Klem	aye
Lang	aye
Shorb	aye

Meeting adjourned at 11:05 a.m.

Attachment