

GREEN/ENERGY COMMITTEE REPORT

February 17, 2026

Along with several other committees, the Green Committee was formed in the fall of 2023 after the final meeting and report of the Planning Board regarding their revision of Strafford's Master Plan. The Committee was tasked with exploring access to community power, the development of renewable/solar power, improved “energy /sustainability”, improved solid waste management, and the installation of EV charging. Proirities were listed as community power, solid waste management and EV charging.

The Committee enjoyed a fairly active start, with 5-6 active members and an early initiative on community power. We even had an information table at the March, 2024, Town Meeting, but townspeople showed little interest. We also suffered some loss of membership after the first few months.

Our primary initial impetus was the exploration of community power membership. We interviewed two providers--one for-profit and the non-profit CPCNH (Community Power Coalition of NH), and decided to pursue membeship with the latter. With CPCNH representatives, we made a presentation to the BoS in August, 2024. While the BoS appeared receptive, they demurred in favor of gauging the experience of other towns. While we were frustrated and disappointed, it turned out that there was some wisdom in the Board's hesitation: In June of 2025, due to what appears to have been financial mismanagement, CPCNH announced new contractual rates that

were actually higher than Eversource rates-- obviously contrary to everyone's objectives.

By myself, I made some initiatives to explore Strafford's solid waste management practices. I met with Chris Garcia of the BoS as the designated BoS member to oversee issues related to the Transfer Station. From him I got an overview of the management issues at our facility. Chris however was finishing his stint with the Board and had waning interest, it is fair to say. I also met with a gal at NRRA (Northeast Resource Recovery Association, now renamed), the non-profit organization that has a contractual relationship with Strafford to facilitate the recycling of our aluminum cans, mixed metals and electronics. This lady had the delegated purview of our facility and I had hoped she might get me a formal introduction to our facility manager, Dan Conway, by accompanying her on a site visit. However, Bonnie was also on her way out and retired before a site visit could be arranged.

So as you can see, regarding solid waste management, I made little headway by myself. As a result of this experience, I have concluded that **if the BoS really wants to come up with ideas for better solid waste/recycling management, they will need to appoint and empower a committee dedicated to that problem.**

At the same time, the Green Committee has been more focused on energy conservation and renewable resources. During the spring of last year, we began exploration into community solar and EV charging installation. Regarding community solar, we established contact with a fellow named Malcolm at

Kearsarge Energy, a Boston company that develops, builds, owns and operates large solar projects in New Hampshire and New England. Malcolm's assessment for community solar development in Strafford was grim due to the fact that our town is generally “grid resources desert”, meaning there is no Eversource wiring (3-stage) infrastructure capable of carrying generation capacities greater than 25 kW. Thus, a large community solar field or rooftop array would have no transmission access. (There is apparently 3-stage power running into Bow Lake village from Rt. 4 which was installed to service the printing company on Rt, 202A.)

Malcolm did have “good news”-- NH has a GNM (group net metering) program, which makes cash benefits available to town and municipalities based upon their electricity consumption. Once we were able to aggregate the electricity consumption of the Strafford School with the Town's other metered accounts, Malcolm estimated that this benefit to the Town would start at \$3,300 a year and grow to \$4,800 a year by year 20. The GNM agreement entails no outlay or changes in service to the Town. **If Strafford were to sign on to this agreement, it is our feeling that the funds should be deposited to a “Green Account” and dispensed at the discretion of the BoS, with the advice of the Gneen/Energy Committee, on public projects which enhance energy conservation or the development/utilization of renewable energy.**

As stated above, we have also begun to explore locations for EV charging in Stafford. It is slim pickins, to be sure. The most utile area would be Bow Lake village due to the proximity

of attractions and the 7 Cs Store, which people would patronize while charging their cars. But space limitations rule out the store as well as the Grange Hall. The Bow Lake Baptist Church is not amenable, but the Isinglass Store is open to consideration. We have not approached the Historical Society or the Independence Inn. “Remote” sites on Stafford Ridge (the School, Library and Town Hall) seem impractical. The School was approached and said no; the Hill Library lacks space, and the Town Hall is not an attraction. (Sorry guys!) **Obviously, if a new library/community center gets built, an EV should be installed at that site.** We also believe the School might become amenable as EVs become more numerous.

Along the way, we have learned that the State still has funds left over from the VW settlement monies which are to be dedicated to promoting EV charging as well as the **NH Clean Diesel Grant Program**. This program reimburses towns for approved grants for buying new, more fuel-efficient diesel vehicles or for retrofitting existing old vehicles to improve their fuel efficiency. We have made initial contact with the Town to obtain a list of town-owned diesel vehicles, and we would like to introduce the prospect of accessing these funds directly to the BoS. (We have Rick Cecchetti to thank for his research on this.)

Nate Aucella of our committee has a personal interest in promoting home energy efficiency, so we organized a public presentation by him on how to “Tighten Up Your Home”. This took place at the Hill Library on December 13th and attracted three gentlemen from town.

In my internet wanderings, I have come across information

about another program called **C-Pacer (Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy [R?])**. This program, enabled by State statute, helps with the commercial financing for private capital expenditures on energy efficiency, clean energy, water conservation and property resiliency improvements. Loans obtained under this program for energy improvements can be transferred to subsequent owners rather than burdening the applicant owner after sale of the property. While it is currently required that towns actually pass an ordinance to enable the participation of town commercial interests, it is likely that legislation this year will permit the adoption simply through a public hearing rather than a town meeting warrant article.

In a final note on our activity of late, the addition of two new members has brought new energy to our small cohort, and thus it came to our attention that “Infrastructure/Community Mobility” committee is not active, and that therefore the question of sidewalks is not being addressed. Granted you might think how could we want to take on an issue from another domain, but we have, thanks to Linda Cecchetti. While at a glance, the complications of developing sidewalks in Bow Lake Village seem insurmountable, there is another “village” on the ridge which we feel might be greatly enhanced by the development of a sidewalk-- to wit, that of the school and the library. Linda has done some what seems to be exhaustive research on the background of sidewalk development in NH, and she has developed a proposal for addressing what is the most obvious need: the need for improved pedestrian safety between the school and the library. Her research and proposal are attached. **We present this proposal to the Planning Board to garner your support for bringing it to the Board of Selectmen, along**

with several other items.

**OUR VISIONS FOR STRAFFORD'S
ENERGY RESILLIANT FUTURE
(We may be dreaming large)**

We see enhanced electricity infrastructure (3-stage power) extended by Eversource from its current terminus just past the Bow Lake Fire Station on Rt. 202A all the way along the Rollercoaster Road to the Strafford School. This extension would allow for the next dream.

We see the installation of a pedestal based solar array (maybe trackers) on school property behind the school, funding to be accessed through grants if possible (perhaps when brighter days come back to the political landscape in Washington). The benefits of this renewable resource should accrue exclusively to the School. Short of this, we see the School being open to considering a rooftop solar array on the gymnasium roof, which appears to be relatively free of obstructions.

We see the Town's acquisition of a ROW on property abutting the School property but not immediately on the corner of the intersection, which would enable to construction of a pedestrian path from the school to the Hill Library (obviously entailing a crosswalk) so that students and staff who walk to the library frequently can do so safely regardless of conditions.

We see the installation of two community EV charging stations-- a Level 3/fast charger at the Isinglass Store and a

Level 2/slow charger SOMEWHERE in Bow Lake Village. VW monies should help here if we act soon enough, We also in the the longer range see an EV charging station at the School and/or at the new library/community center, when it gets built.

We see upgraded building code standards for improved energy efficiency in new construction.

We see the Town adopting a property tax discount to encourage homeowners to install solar panels. (In some good news last week, Len Turcotte's bill to deprive towns of this option was tabled in the House.)

We see Middle School students getting involved in sustainability education with help from the **NHEEP-- the NH Energy Education Program.**