

**APPROVED**

# Minutes of the Peacham Energy Committee – 12 November, 2025

Zoom Meeting hosted in Peacham, VT

<b>Time</b>	November 12, 2025, 7:12 PM - 08:12 PM (EDT)
<b>Committee Members</b>	Charlie Byron (chair), Bevin Barber-Campbell, Tom Bryer, Bruce Courtot, Jock Gill
<b>Participants</b>	Tom Galinat

## Quick recap

The meeting began with discussions technical issues with accessing the Zoom meeting link. The group then focused on agenda items for an upcoming legislative forum and e-bike lending proposal, including plans for a community solar array project and energy assistance initiatives. The conversation ended with discussions about improving communication between town committees, exploring solar energy integration with agriculture, and planning for future energy committee meetings and forums.

## Next steps

### Bevin :

- Post the legislative forum announcement to Front Porch Forum
- Create a flyer for the legislative forum tonight or tomorrow morning. Send it to Tom to print and post, and to Jock for him to include in his email to the legislators, and to other Committee members.
- Bring hummus and cheese for the legislative forum
- Run the Zoom during the legislative forum meeting at the library
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**Bruce:** Bring crackers for the legislative forum

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### Charlie :

- Attend the NEK Energy Network online meeting of other energy committees on Wednesday morning Nov 19
- Write a blurb for the legislative forum announcement and send it to Jock Bruce:
- Create the Zoom link for the legislative forum meeting using the town's Zoom account, and provide it to Bevin.
- Send Bevin the Zoom login credentials for the Energy Committee
- Post the legislative forum as an Energy Committee meeting with Anna , noting a quorum will be present but no town business will be conducted and no minutes produced.
- Send out minutes from this meeting tomorrow with Next Steps
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### Jock:

- Send a message to Burt and Beck to refresh their memories about the legislative forum, as well as the meeting flyer

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- Send draft bullet points for the legislative forum discussion to committee members
- Add a picture to Charlie's blurb and post to the Facebook group For the Love of Peacham
- Send the forum announcement and picture to Allie Webster for distribution
- Send pictures to Bevin for the legislative forum flyer, tonight
- Moderate the legislative forum meeting
- Purchase cider and donuts from Burt's for the legislative forum refreshments
- Send Tom Galinat information about microgrids
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### **Tom:**

- Print and post flyers at the cafe and post office for the legislative forum
- Run over to town office tomorrow to find out the email address for the lending proposal and forward it to everyone

## **Summary**

*These summaries are not yet proofed...*

### **Republican Legislative Energy Forum**

The group discussed plans for an upcoming legislative forum featuring Republican legislators Bert and Beck. Jock will serve as moderator and has already contacted the legislators, who expressed some nervousness about the meeting. The group agreed to focus on energy-related questions and keep discussions civil, with Jock planning to post a draft announcement on For Love of Peacham for review. The forum will be held next week, with attendees bringing refreshments and discussing topics like community solar, microgrids, and permit reform, while keeping the focus on energy issues rather than political divides.

### **Community Solar Array Development**

The group discussed a potential community solar array project with Washington Electric Cooperative (WEC), aiming to bypass middlemen and have residents pay for a solar array that WEC would manage and profit from. They explored the possibility of using USDA Rural Development Grants for microgrids and capacity storage, with Peacham suggested as an ideal location for a microgrid. The conversation focused on finding a narrative and "crack" to get political support, particularly from Republican legislatures, and emphasized the need to rewrite the story rather than follow existing templates.

### **Peacham Solar Project Planning**

The group discussed a community-owned solar array project in Peacham, with Jonathan emphasizing the importance of keeping the project locally owned and operated by Vermonters. They explored financing options for making the solar energy affordable to all residents, with Tom suggesting the need for new approaches to solar financing. The group agreed to promote the upcoming Energy Committee meeting at the Peacham Library, with Bevan offering to create a flyer and post on the Front Porch Forum, while Jonathan will send photos to Bevan and Allie for promotional materials.

### **Energy Committee Meeting Planning**

The meeting focused on organizing an upcoming Energy Committee meeting with legislators. Charlie agreed to create and send the Zoom link using town credentials, while Bevin will handle Zoom technical support during the meeting. The group decided to simplify the meeting by

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treating it as an Energy Committee discussion rather than a formal town meeting, with Jonathan offering to pay for cider and donuts from Burt's, and Bruce volunteering to bring crackers. Charlie will distribute meeting minutes the next day for review.

### **Community Solar Forum Planning**

The group discussed plans for an upcoming community forum focused on energy initiatives, with Jonathan confirming legislators' attendance and agreeing to send them promotional materials. They decided to present a single project - a community solar array for Peacham's western half - while also touching on battery storage and vehicle-to-grid possibilities. The forum will be open to the public and moderated by Jonathan, with no formal presentations from Bert or Beck, though they will receive promotional materials to share with their constituents. The group also briefly discussed a potential three-way meeting involving the Select Board and Planning Commission, though they did not make a final decision on this.

### **Peacham Energy Planning Collaboration**

The group discussed improving communication and collaboration between the Planning Commission, Select Board, and Energy Committee in Peacham. They explored how zoning affects local energy generation and preservation of community character, referencing a successful solar array project that provided economic benefits to residents. Jonathan suggested using this example to guide future planning discussions, particularly in light of potential unused fields due to declining commodity milk production. Peacham raised concerns about potential pushback on solar development and the need for evidence to counter arguments against it.

### **Agrivoltaics: Challenges and Opportunities**

The group discussed the challenges and benefits of integrating solar energy with agriculture, highlighting the potential for agrivoltaics and addressing concerns about land use. Jonathan emphasized that solar installations can be designed for easy removal, allowing for future agricultural use, and noted the interest of the Agriculture Department in this approach. Tom raised issues with current zoning regulations, suggesting changes to allow for energy production in high-density areas, and warned against drafting policies based solely on the loudest opposition voices, urging a focus on community needs instead.

### **Solar Array Permit Reform Discussion**

The committee discussed solar array development, with Tom sharing his expertise on permit reform and regulatory processes. They explored ways to streamline solar project approvals through zoning bylaws and town plans, with Tom suggesting a potential 150-kilowatt array project near WEC's substation. The group agreed to form a relationship with the Planning Commission to define intelligent construction standards, and Jonathan offered to share microgrid information with Tom for future discussion. The conversation ended with approval of the minutes and plans for Tom to return for further discussions about potential solar projects.