

Ad Hoc Energy Efficiency Group Finds Many Resources

By Larry Chase
Ad hoc Energy Efficiency Group

Several local folks got together last summer to talk about what we could do – as individuals, as organizations, as town government – to reduce our energy bills. The previous winter had been especially severe, gas prices had hovered around the \$4 per gallon mark before dropping somewhat, and troubles in the Middle East were continuing to cause worry about future oil supply. What could we do to keep fuel and electric bills from overwhelming us in the future?

A lot of things, it turns out. Indeed, northern New England appears to be a breeding ground for the development of programs and projects to help control energy costs. The local folks who started to look around last summer – we came to call ourselves the ad hoc energy efficiency group – found a whole lot of local resources.

For example:

- We found a state-run program that funds energy audits of municipal buildings across New Hampshire. Andover applied for, and received, a grant to cover the costs of auditing the building that houses the Town Offices and the Andover Public Library.

The audit, which identifies ways to lessen heat loss and improve energy efficiency, was conducted in December. Results should be available later this winter or by early spring. More: NHLocalEnergyAudits.com.

- Button Up New Hampshire, another state-run program, offers home-weatherization workshops around the state. Workshops are designed to show “how to undertake basic air sealing, insulation, and conservation measures to reduce fuel and electricity use that will save money and make homes more comfortable throughout the year.”

The two- to three-hour presentations by experienced home energy auditors, are open to the public at no cost. In Andover, a Button Up workshop has been scheduled for Tuesday, February 21. (See the article on page 1.) Both this and the municipal-building audit program are funded by the New Hampshire Office of Energy and Planning. More: MyEnergyPlan.net/buttonup.

- New Hampshire Electric Co-op, Andover’s electricity supplier, is beginning to install “smart meters” at local homes and businesses. The new meters “will make it easy for you to see and track your electric usage by providing more detailed information about your unique consumption habits,” according to a brochure mailed to co-op members. Look for additional information in mailings and with bills, or call 800 698-2007.

- The Plymouth Area Renewable Energy Initiative (PAREI), based in Plymouth, has an “energy-raiser” proj-

ect that has installed nearly 170 passive solar hot-water systems in area homes since 2005. Similar to the “barn-raisers” in New Hampshire’s past, energy-raisers rely on local volunteers coming together in their spare time to do the installations. More: PlymouthEnergy.org.

- The Sustainable Energy Resource Group (SERG, pronounced “surge”), is a ten-year-old non-profit based in Thetford, Vermont. According to its Web site (SERG-info.org), it “helps Vermont and New Hampshire homeowners and towns use less energy, save money, and protect the environment through education, outreach, and community organizing.”

Among its projects and programs: home visitations, where trained volunteers discuss energy-saving steps with individual homeowners; “energy expos,” which bring together energy experts, vendors, government officials, and local residents for learning and discussion; and “movie nights,” featuring films on energy-related issues.

- The New Hampshire Residential Energy Performance Association, at REPA-NH.org, “is an organization made up of individual residential energy auditors and weatherization professionals providing energy efficiency services in New Hampshire.” Go to the “Consumer Guide” page for a listing of professional energy auditors or for a variety of other services.

- Lakes Region Community College, in Laconia, is offering a number of short-term energy-analyst and weatherization-installer training classes for local builders, through its Efficiency Training Programs. More: LRCC.edu/Energy/Training.

- Clean Air – Cool Planet, a voluntary organization based in Portsmouth, is hosting its fourth annual Local Energy Solutions Conference on Saturday, March 31, at Merrimack Valley High School in Penacook. Aimed at members of local energy and conservation committees, municipal and school staff and board members, businesses, legislators, and community volunteers, the day-long event will include workshops, facility tours, dozens of energy-related exhibitors, networking opportunities, and “great food.” More: CleanAir-CoolPlanet.org/les2012.

That’s just a small sampling of what’s out there. The little band of Andover volunteers will be exploring these and other local resources in the coming months with the aim of bringing some of what we learn into our own community. If you’d like to join the exploration, or if you have experience in becoming more energy-efficient that you’d like to share, please contact Larry Chase at LBChase@aol.com or 735-5135.



Class 6 Roads: Public Benefit Or Burden?

By Arch Weathers
For the Beacon

The following article is the first of a two-part series to explain the purpose of a petitioned warrant article to appear on the 2012 Andover Town Warrant to formally discontinue a section of Class 6 road beyond the current end of Beech Hill Road.

Part 1 (below) provides essential background about our Class 6 roads. Part 2 will appear in the March issue of the Beacon and will address the warrant article, the reasons for discontinuance, and the opportunity for the residents of Andover to benefit from such an action, avoid unnecessary increases in road maintenance budgets, preserve a scenic corridor, and create a recreational asset.

Questions About Roads

Road questions are rarely a matter of importance to the average citizen. State and federal roads are well designed, safely maintained thoroughfares. At the municipal level, the safety of our passage is entrusted to skilled road crews using innovative methods that stretch our maintenance dollars without compromising safety. This is the surface, however, of a highly complex and confusing public asset discussion.

What is a highway? How are local roads created? Who owns the soil un-

derneath? What is a Class 6 road? Why do we need to know?

In *A Hard Road to Travel*, H. Bernard Waugh Esq. exposes the essential ingredients that provide the answers.

As Waugh points out in his opening chapter, the leading misconception by local officials is that roads are on town-owned land. Although this may be a possibility, it is a rare instance indeed. A road is simply a particular type of easement, “held in trust by the government for the use of the public.”

The rights of the public are limited to viatic use—a legal term that means “any use reasonably incidental to the purpose of traveling.” Less obvious but permitted uses under this definition include children playing in the streets (Dow v Latham, 1922 ruled children had the same right to roll hoops in the street), roadside car parking, and parades.

Because they are held in the public trust, a road easement cannot be dissolved by such ploys as adverse possession (squatters rights). Only a vote by the local legislative body can remove such an easement.

The peculiarities of a road easement, because of its public nature, have less to do with purpose than with paradox. Private easements clearly spell out the terms between landowners, and the

See Class 6 on page 9

Political ad paid for by Andover Democrats, 275 Elbow Pond Rd, 03216

ARE YOU ALARMED
by recent bills from the Republican supermajority in Concord to allow guns on college campuses and put warning signs on the state border?

ARE YOU WONDERING
what happened to the focus on jobs and middle class families?

THE ANDOVER DEMOCRATS
would love for you to join our efforts in electing a Common Sense Coalition next November.

Topics at our next meeting will include:

- Election Kick-off gathering in May
- Redistricting news for Andover's State House and Senate representation.

YOU ARE INVITED!

WHEN: Tuesday, February 14, at 7 PM

WHERE: The community room of the Andover Firehouse

Find us on Facebook: search for "Andover NH Democrats"