

## **Hyde Park Energy Committee 2017 Annual Report**

Despite only having 3 members, the Hyde Park Energy Committee had a very active 2017. Our primary focus this year was getting information on how to save money and energy out to Hyde Park citizens.

We started the year off with a co-operative project with Hyde Park Electric to perform informal home energy audits. The utility notified ratepayers of this program and many responded with interest in having an audit performed. These audits included an in-home review with the participant of multiple aspects of their energy efficiency such as checking the age of their appliances (newer ones are a lot more energy efficient), sealing their homes against air leakage (a significant source of heat loss and hence higher fuel bills), whether solar makes financial sense for their home, recommending use of LED lighting and other ways to save money by being more energy efficient.

Under the direction and great enthusiasm of Denise Greene we began work on Energy Efficiency Tip Sheets which may be included in paper electric bills at the convenience of Hyde Park Electric and on a regular basis when billing changes over to electronic billing at some point in the future.

The committee worked together to hold an Energy Education Event at GMTCC on April 25<sup>th</sup> which included speakers from the Hyde Park Energy Committee, Efficiency VT, SunCommon and Bourne's Energy who educated attendees on new technologies (such as mini-split heat pump systems for home heating and air conditioning); when solar photovoltaic systems make sense to consider and available low or no interest ways for homeowners to afford them; and other ways to save money.

Marilyn Zophar spearheaded our effort to sponsor a table at the Hyde Park Home Day at which resources and pamphlets on how to achieve money and energy savings were handed out.

The committee chose to commemorate Efficiency Vermont's "Button Up" campaign with a table at the Morrisville Aubuchon where we gave out information pamphlets to anyone interested as well as energy efficient LED bulbs to Hyde Park residents.

The committee worked with Amy Olsen of Lanpher Memorial Library via email to provide technical assistance to the Library's board on its plan to update its heating and air conditioning system. The Library received bids from several vendors which differed in their technical specifications and costs. We worked with Amy to help understand the Library's needs and explain the differences between the bids so that the Library's board could make an informed choice. Subsequent to the board's finalizing its plans, Amy Olsen was kind enough to provide the committee with the following feedback:

"The Library received three bids to have heat pumps installed in the main level of the library to keep our building cool in the summer and for light

heating in the early winter and spring seasons. All three bids were quite different and ranged in cost as well. In order to make sure we chose the right units for the space, we asked the Hyde Park Energy Committee for assistance. Jay Hersh visited the Library, looked at the bids and the space and helped us decide which units would make the most sense to suit the Library for efficiency, unobtrusiveness, and be cost effective for the money the Lanpher Memorial Library Trustees raised for this purpose. We were grateful to be able to call upon local experts who are stakeholders in the Library and the Hyde Park community to help us make the Lanpher Memorial Library even cooler.”

Finally, on November 5<sup>th</sup> committee member Jay Hersh hosted an open house tour of his Efficiency VT Certified energy efficient home. Attendees included members of the Hyde Park Selectboard, representatives from Hyde Park Electric and individuals looking for ideas on how to build or modify their home to save money and be more energy efficient. Jay spoke about the many challenges he faced in designing and building his home whose annual energy costs (all heat, hot water and electric) are under \$1000 (inclusive of monthly billing costs which total 17.5% of that!). He reviewed the design aspects which allow the home to derive 1/3 its annual heating passively from the sun such that on a sunny winter day, even down to 0F the home requires no other heating. He demonstrated other features like drain water heat recovery and a solar thermal hot water system which significantly reduces (and on many days eliminates) the need to use fossil fuels to heat water for domestic use.

Energy conservation and local generation is evolving, and the future looks very exciting for Vermont! The Committee continues to be active and already has plans for several events in 2018 including a screening of the movie “An Inconvenient Sequel” (featuring former VP Al Gore) and cooperation with energy committees or representatives from the towns of Craftsbury and Morrisville on ways to jointly improve our outreach including the possibility of staging a Lamoille County Energy Fair.

We continue to seek new members and we hope you will join us to help chart the course for our town and state. Anyone interested may contact us individually or you may attend a meeting. Meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month at the lower level of the municipal offices on Route 15.

Jay Hersh

Marilyn Zophar

Denise Green