

PLYMOUTH AREA DEMOCRATS
General Membership Meeting
April 26th, 2023

Attendees

Joyce Weston, Chair
Val Scarborough, Vice Chair
Jane Helfrich, Secretary
John Richards, Treasurer
Jay Scarborough, Communications Officer
Gunnar Baldwin, Technology Officer

Heather Baldwin
Jerry Beck
Bill Bolton
Fran Chevalier
Brian Eisenhauer
Gigi Estes
Sallie Fellows
Tom Helfrich
Tommy Hoyt
Sherrill Howard
Irene Grace Garvey

Sandra Jones
Marilyn Lieto
Lou Lieto
Janet Lucas
Carolyn Fleury-Lobban
Richard Lobban
Gary Mc Cool
Neil McIver
Bill Nesheim
Melanie Nesheim

Richard Osborne
Stephanie Osborne
Jennifer Painter
Phil Preston
Deb Reynolds
Martha Richards
Sheryl Shirley
Jackie Wolff
Ken Wolff

AGENDA

Welcome. Joyce opened the meeting and welcomed the membership and newcomers. Joyce recognized Deb Reynolds, who previously served in the NH State Senate as well as several members serving currently serving in the NH State House: Bill Bolton, Sallie Fellows, Heather Baldwin, Tommy Hoyt, and Jerry Stringham.

Approval of Minutes. A motion to approve the March 22nd general meeting minutes, posted previously on the PAD website, was seconded and the minutes were approved.

Call for Donations and Volunteers. Joyce reminded the attendees that PAD has bills to pay, such as the rental fee for the use of the Senior Center for PAD meetings and asked for donations to help cover the expenses. Joyce also reminded the group that there is still a need for volunteers, for our Visibility efforts and other summer events soon to be underway, as well as a Programming Committee. Please see Joyce if you would like to help!

Communications Officer Election. Joyce called on Stefanie Osborne, our Nominating Committee member, to step up and introduce Jay Scarborough, candidate for Communications Officer. Jay spoke briefly about his background in journalism, public policy, and job experience. Joyce called for a second to the Executive Committee's motion to approve Jay's candidacy and asked for a vote. Jay was elected to be PAD Communications Officer by voice vote.

Upcoming Events. Joyce gave a short overview of the next PAD meeting on May 24th. Casey Neal, from the New Hampshire School Funding Fairness Project will be the guest speaker. Casey will provide an hour plus presentation on how the New Hampshire "downshifts the funding for schools to property owners' taxes". Joyce then asked Deb Reynolds to say a few

words. Deb thanked the representatives present for their work. Deb then explained that the Grafton County Democrats, a regional committee of the NHDP, holds its caucus tomorrow (April 27th) night at 6pm. The GCD raised lots of money for candidate support in the 2022 elections. Sheryl Shirley has been nominated to be a GCD representative at large, and Deb is nominated to (continue to) serve as GCD Secretary. Go to the NHDP website and register to participate in the Zoom call.

Certificate of Appreciation. Jane Helfrich and Gunnar Baldwin presented a certificate of appreciation to Bill Nesheim for his leadership last year as the Plymouth Town Chair.

Elected Representatives Reports. Joyce asked for the NH House representatives to come up and briefly report out on what's going on in Concord. Each representative told the audience what committee assignments they had and what they would be working on.

Jerry Stringham described successful bipartisan efforts of the Finance Committee's work on developing a formula for how to distribute money to cover Medicaid rate increases which overwhelmingly passed in the NH House.

Bill Bolton described his work on the Ways and Means Committee, and asked the audience if they were aware of the extent of gambling in the state. He focused some remarks on the charitable aspects of gambling and how organizations can apply for some of the money derived from gambling.

Heather Baldwin is assigned to the Resources, Recreation and Development Committee and primarily works issues with water recreation, off-road vehicles, and boating.

Tommy Hoyt shared his perspective on being a member of the NH House, and thanked PAD members for helping him during the election. His focus to continue to work with his colleagues to best help our state.

Sallie Fellows was elected to a 3rd term in the NH House. She is on the Ways and Means Committee and the Education Committee. The initial budget submitted by the Governor initially provided more funds to schools, but after 2 years, significant cuts would occur. Sallie worked on a bill that made its way into the budget, and the Republican chair went along with her recommendation. Although there will be some funding cuts, they are not as severe as what the Governor proposed.

Panel Discussion. Joyce introduced each panelist to the audience:

Grace Garvey. Ms. Garvey is the chair of the Plymouth Energy Commission and has served on the Commission since 2017. Ms. Garvey lives in Plymouth and is also mediator and consultant on land conservation issues.

Dr. Brian Eisenhauer. Dr. Eisenhauer is a Professor of Social Science and the Director of the Office of Environmental Sustainability at Plymouth State University.

Jerry Beck. Mr. Beck has been on the Holderness Climate Task Force has been a climate change advocate for many years.

Sandra Jones is the founder and director of the Plymouth Area Renewable Energy Initiative (PAREI). PAREI provides community based and professional services to reduce energy use.

Joyce moderated the panel discussion and began by asking each panelist to answer previously submitted questions. Each panelist had the opportunity to respond to all the

questions posed by the moderator and comment on replies provided by their fellow panelists. The following questions were posed to each panelist:

1. *What renewable energy technology do you think holds the most promise for our region and why?* Abbreviated answers: Solar Energy/ Electrify Everything/Solar market makes sense/ is Scalable/Hydroelectric/ Maybe BioMass on a small scale/Solar is more efficient than fossil fuels.
 2. *What do you think the Plymouth Town Meeting vote of 159 YES and 19 NO in support of solar panel arrays says about citizen support for investing in renewables?* Abbreviated answers: Solar energy makes good sense; the market is good. The vote shows that research and education worked.
 3. *Recently the New Hampshire public utilities commission influence and scope was reduced when Governor Sununu formed the New Hampshire Department of Energy. How has this affected your work and in turn the lives of our citizens?* Abbreviated answers: New Hampshire Department of Energy is more accessible and helpful. It's easier to apply for grants. It's better organized. Clean energy advocates seem to like it and that it brings better focus on the issues.
 4. *What economic opportunities do you see in renewable energy and how can we convince people who work in the fossil fuels industry that there is a future in renewables?* Abbreviated answer: There are tons of opportunities. Funding is out there. Financial assistance and retraining for new jobs. Change is hard. Think about Henry Ford and the assembly line for cars. Anytime there is a major shift, in the economic base, we need to think about retraining at the federal and state levels, but there shouldn't be barriers to change. There will be a demand for electricians to join the work force! Training programs needed.
 5. *What can NHEC members be doing to encourage more investment in renewable power?* Abbreviated answers: Reach out, your vote counts. You are a member and can go to the board meetings. There needs to be a carbon emissions program. They need to buy more clean energy.
 6. *How do we make renewable energy affordable for low-income people?* Abbreviated answers: There is tons of money in the Inflation Reduction Act, for so many opportunities. There are grants, and municipalities can use the money to do things for families. Solar shares to low-income families. All in the Inflation Reduction Act.
 7. *Recommend one action PAD members can take to reduce their energy footprint.* Abbreviated answers: Energy conservation, don't use any energy at all. Don't drive your car 2-3 days a month. Wash clothes in cold water, it works. Reduce consumerism. Think about what you are buying and why. Don't buy so much "stuff". Recognize when you use energy you contribute to the climate crisis.
-

Meeting Adjourned. At approximately 7:40pm

Jane Helfrich PAD Secretary

Secretary note :Questions "from the floor" largely inaudible and were not transcribed. Panel Discussion available to view on YouTube via the PAD website
