

## Rockland Energy Policy

by Nathan Davis

The City of Rockland recently was named the winner of the Efficiency Maine Trust's 2018 Philip C. Hastings Award for leadership in energy efficiency initiatives including Weatherize Rockland, PACE home energy loan financing, and downtown streetlight replacement. This award is a significant recognition of Rockland's commitment to efficiency and sustainability as demonstrated by past projects. How can we continue this work into the future?

One way might be to develop a community energy policy: a policy adopted by the City of Rockland to guide energy development and efficiency in both public and private sectors. Other municipalities around the country and world have adopted community energy policies, and some are already reaching their goals. One of the most inspiring and ambitious is Net Zero Montpelier, which aims to make Montpelier, Vermont the first state capital to produce or offset all of its energy needs from renewable energy sources by 2030. Another example is that of Madison, Wisconsin, which has become the first city in Wisconsin to make a community-wide 100% commitment to clean energy.

I am a member of the City of Rockland's Energy Advisory Committee, and we are about to begin the process of developing a community energy policy for Rockland, which we intend to eventually present to the City Council for adoption. This process will begin with a community energy forum on September 26 at 7pm at City Hall. Please attend, hear expert panelists discuss energy opportunities and challenges locally and throughout Maine, and offer comments and questions! The process of developing this policy will be long and complex, and we expect it to take at least 10 months, per federal Department of Energy guidance.

Astute readers will notice that the two examples I offered focus on renewable and clean energy. A community energy policy need not focus primarily on renewables, but I certainly hope that Rockland's will. Our federal government's shameful abdication of leadership on climate change and environmental protection has left smaller units of government — states, counties, and municipalities — to forge a path ahead. Climate change is inflicting and will inflict grave suffering on millions or billions of the world's poorest people. Will a community energy policy in Rockland save the world? Of course not. But a policy that focuses on renewables would be part of a global effort towards sustainability that is a necessary condition for the continuation of our civilization in something like its present form.

Does this mean that we want Rockland to set pie-in-the-sky goals and then expect other people to figure out how to meet them? No! Our goals will be accompanied by plans, including plans for financing. The goals may be aggressive in date and extent, but they are not going to rely on magical thinking. We are also going to invite the businesses of Rockland (especially the industrial businesses) to participate closely in the process of developing a community energy policy so that we are aware and respectful of their needs and constraints. No one group, individual, or business will take primary consideration or importance in this process, but we want to hear from everyone about their goals and concerns.

So please attend the forum on September 26 at 7pm at City Hall! Come and be part of a process to shape the future of energy production and conservation in Rockland. Be part of a global conversation about the costs and benefits of different approaches to energy policy. Snacks will be provided.



'little wing' by Kirk Gentelen

*Don't forget!*

## Community Picnic at MacDougal Park

There will be a Rockland community picnic on Saturday, September 8, at Rockland's MacDougal Community Park. The park entrance is at the corner of Gay Street and Broadway in Rockland.

The event starts at 10 am for those who willing to help. Picnic lunch will start at 11. Everything at the picnic, including raffle tickets, will be free for children. The food and the prizes have been donated by area businesses.

At noon the games will begin.

For more information, and to offer to help, call Mike Grondin, 596-2448



Ron Tesler



Ron Tesler

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