



**CITY OF PORTSMOUTH NH
Portsmouth Energy Advisory Committee**

Wednesday, February 4, 2026, 6:30 pm

City Hall Conference Room A

Members of the public may participate via Zoom. To register, go to:
https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/7Y-D72VDQ_KziqMfcPr60g

AGENDA

1. Call to order, roll call
2. Chairman's Remarks
3. Approval of Minutes from January 7, 2026
4. Discussion of the recommended zoning ordinance changes for solar
5. Window Dressers project -- WindowDressers.org
6. Goal setting for PEAC in 2026 -- Committee members are encouraged to bring ideas for action they care about
7. Public Comment



CITY OF PORTSMOUTH NH
Portsmouth Energy Advisory Committee

Wednesday, January 7, 2026

MINUTES

For the video recording of the meeting on Zoom:

<https://youtu.be/bh9DqnFIPQQ>

1. Roll call

Meeting called to order at 6:31 pm. Attending, Councilor Tabor, chair; Peter Somssich, Tom Rooney, Tracy Cameron, Kevin Charette, Ben D'Antonio, Sustainability Committee: Fred Calciniari. Excused: Betsy Blaisdell. Staff: Jillian Harris. Stephanie Seacord.

2. **Chairman's remarks** – Chair Tabor reported that the City Council approved the ordinance to make PEAC a permanent committee. He noted the Mayor thanked the committee members for their work. The Chair submitted **the year-end** report approved by the Committee at the December 22, 2025 City Council meeting.

The Chair invited Tracey Cameron to report on **NH Saves Button Up workshop**: while funding is not certain, they are accepting requests for programs. The Committee agreed that an April date (following winter season bills and with seasonal opportunities to make improvements before the next winter) would be ideal. PEAC will partner with Portsmouth Public Library (the session location) and publicize the event widely. PEAC recommended that Eversource be invited to participate again to speak to Portsmouth-specific programs. Peter Somssich noted that with Federal dollars and programs for greener energy and efficiencies disappearing, steps to increase energy efficiency are something we can each do ourselves. Tracey is also planning to participate in the **Window Dressers workshop** in Exeter and will report if that's a program PEAC should host in Portsmouth. Peter suggested looking at **energy programs being offered in York ME** to see if there are ideas for Portsmouth.

The Chair also invited Planner Jillian Harris to outline the **solar zoning ordinance changes** being presented to the City Council for First Reading at the January 20, 2026 meeting. Reviewed and approved by the Planning Board the revisions are designed to remove barriers to residential sola installation. Chair Tabor suggested PEAC review the recommendations for discussion at the February 4 meeting, preparatory to comment(s) from the committee or its members at the City Council Second Reading on February 9. Peter Somssich asked if the Planning Department and Planning Board would look at solar installation protection (preventing new construction from overshadowing existing solar arrays) as well as permitting.

3. **Approval of minutes (taken at the end of the meeting)**. On a motion by Peter Somssich seconded by Tom Rooney, the committee voted to approve the December 3, 2025 minutes.
4. **CPCNH rate announcement for February 1 – June 30, 2026 and draft Portsmouth Community Power press release and communications plan**

The majority of the meeting was spent discussing the new higher CPCNH rates starting February 1, 2026. PEAC still fully supports CPCNH and the benefits of choice, renewables and local control. Electric customers do better when they combine their buying power; but the current rate situation causes PEAC members to express several concerns:

- This is the third (and forecasted fourth as of Aug 1, 2026) rate period where the CPCNH rates are higher than the default Eversource. PEAC must serve Portsmouth customers by safeguarding low electricity costs for residents, which was easier when CPCNH rates were lower than Eversource. In the Feb-July rate period the CPCNH rate is 30% higher than Eversource.
- There is concern that CPCNH is not aggressively communicating the rate changes or what members can do – i.e. change from Portsmouth Community Power to Eversource and back – to address the challenge of higher rates. PUC requires the utilities to communicate clearly and extensively; CPCNH is not held to that standard. Although CPCNH says there's been little 'opt-out' migration so far that may be just because the average community power customer is not aware. CPCNH could push the PUC to require Eversource to notify all 200,000 customers when the rate changes.
- CPCNH communication to members is not as robust as was suggested: awareness of the direct notification is low and monthly (?) reporting specific to Portsmouth financials is not yet available. PEAC would like to know how many Portsmouth customers have signed up for the CPCNH notifications.
- While the need to 'take the hit' now to restore reserves, pay outstanding invoices and eliminate the line of credit and its interest costs is understandable and commendable, Committee members need further explanation on why CPCNH procurement is contracting energy supply at a cost higher than Eversource, cf. "Building the Rate" slide #4 in December 18 CPCNH presentation to Board.
<https://public.onboardmeetings.com/Meeting/vYUuabApLpjlwPC6A5tYdFyHs4hIdaJFS1xfURAecuAA/3GJvdHKwWwbKegHK4SZ8QraAbfYyuTmmLzRdKUwcZ6IA?ReturnUrl=%2FOrganization%2FvYUuabApLpjlwPC6A5tYdFyHs4hIdaJFS1xfURAecuAA>

On the communications issue, PEAC recommended edits to the draft press release that provide candid and transparent guidance to Portsmouth residents regarding the lower Eversource rate, the ability to switch service provider to Eversource and back without penalty, and the programs Eversource offers to help low income customers reduce their bills. A final draft of the press release was subsequently advanced to PEAC and the City Manager's office.

Tom Rooney noted that one direct source of information is the weekly "Office Hours" zoom on Fridays at 10 am. Link to join on Jan 9, 2026 and future meetings:
<https://www.communitypowernh.gov/members/office-hours>

On the energy supply procurement and costs, PEAC concluded it would be helpful for Ben D'Antonio to schedule a meeting with the Risk Committee/Ascend to understand how CPCNH is procuring the supply, and then report back to PEAC.

5. Old Business

- **House Bill Governing Portable Solar Installations**

Peter Somssich reported the bipartisan bill, Senate Bill 540, sponsored by State Senators David Watters, Rebecca Kwoka and Kevin Avard parallels legislation in Utah to remove hurdles (such as utility interconnection agreements) impeding the use of "balcony" plug-in solar. He is still tracking the record of his own unit but views it as a good, simple, easily-installed and operated option for renters. Legislation: <https://legiscan.com/NH/text/SB540/id/3285735>

- **Jones Avenue Solar Project**

At the December 3 PEAC meeting, DPW Director Peter Rice and DPW project manager Christine Sprovier reported that the City received quotes from five vendors to produce a feasibility study for a Jones Avenue solar array project and hired APEX based on their qualifications and price. APEX is also evaluating and will report on a comparison of bond-to-own, power purchase agreement, land lease, net metering and hybrid or community solar approaches and should have an update in March. Chair Tabor said he expects PEAC with the extensive expertise of its members to be heavily involved in shepherding the project as it develops.

6. New Business

Chair Tabor noted that PEAC meetings are scheduled for the first Wednesday of each month except August. **Agenda items for the February 4 meeting include:**

- Discussion of the recommended zoning ordinance changes for solar
- Goal setting for PEAC in 2026.

7. Public comment – None.

Adjourned on a motion by Tom Rooney seconded by Peter Somssich at 7:51 pm.

Next meeting, February 4, 2026 at 6:30 pm.

WindowDressers Strategic Plan 2025-2030

July 1, 2025–June 30, 2030

(FY 2026-FY 2030)

Approved by the Board of Directors on December 5, 2025



INSULATING WINDOW INSERTS

FY 2026 (7/1/25 - 6/30/26) Strategic Planning Review Committee:

Mary Ellen Eagan, Joe Patterson, Miriam Rubin, Jack Sumberg, Tatiana Tsay, Jessica Williams

Overview

This strategic plan provides a structured roadmap for WindowDressers' growth and impact over the next five years. Through careful planning, community collaboration, and a commitment to sustainability and inclusivity, we aim to broaden our reach and impact and enhance the quality of service to those in need.

This plan defines the strategic goals of the organization, the outcomes we hope to achieve by pursuing those strategic goals, and key metrics to help us measure progress towards those desired outcomes. WindowDressers has designed this plan to be a living and useful document that informs WindowDressers' work in both the short and long term.

Mission: WindowDressers brings community volunteers of all economic and social situations together to improve the warmth and comfort of interior spaces, lower heating costs, and reduce pollution associated with burning fossil fuels, by producing low-cost insulating window inserts that function as custom, interior-mounted storm windows.

Vision: Every community has access to affordably insulated windows.

Our Core Values Are:

- **Warming Homes** - increasing home comfort for all through affordable and accessible window weatherization.
- **Saving Energy** - increasing energy efficiency while reducing heating costs and pollution associated with burning fossil fuels.
- **Building Community** - a volunteer-driven approach to building resilience within communities where neighbors know and support their neighbors.

Commitment to Equity and Inclusion:

You are welcome at WindowDressers regardless of who you are and what you believe. We strive to help reduce the many inequities in our society by encouraging and empowering everyone who wishes to participate in our programs. We actively seek diversity, equity and inclusiveness (DEI) in our participants, volunteers, staff, and board members. Our procurement and investment policies reflect our commitment to DEI. We strive to reduce and ultimately eliminate inherent or implied bias in all WD practices and materials.

Acknowledgement of Indigenous Land and Culture

WindowDressers was founded in Rockland, Maine and operates throughout Maine and northern New England, on land previously inhabited by indigenous people who were

forced to leave in many cases. WindowDressers is committed to working with Indigenous people, including but not limited to the Wabanaki Nations that currently inhabit what is now called Maine, to honor the peoples that came before us and the rights their descendants are still fighting for.

Strategic Initiatives

Organizational Development

Goal: Develop a sustainable organizational framework with strong leadership, engaged volunteers, and a motivated workforce.

Outcomes:

- WindowDressers maintains a Board of Directors consisting of at least 12 members, with diverse expertise and experience related to WindowDressers's goals.
- Volunteers are supported by staff and a robust mentor network.
- Staff are well compensated and feel supported and valued by leadership.
- WindowDressers staff and Board seek to understand and address the unique and diverse needs of individuals within the organization and within the communities we serve.
- WindowDressers Board & key staff conduct periodic reviews of policies, by-laws and organizational goals.
- WindowDressers Board conducts an annual self assessment.
- WindowDressers has well-documented processes, procedures, and detailed job descriptions for all leadership & staff roles to ensure smooth transitions.
- WindowDressers invests financial and human resources necessary to meet our critical IT needs and improve IT infrastructure.
- WindowDressers has a capital fundraising plan as needed based on capital improvement needs.

Key Metrics:

- WindowDressers has 12+ Board members and is actively recruiting for additional members to meet important needs.
- Retain Community Build team volunteer leadership at a rate of at least 80% annually.
- Staff satisfaction score of 85% or higher in internal surveys.
- Review of policies, by-laws, and organizational goals completed by end of fiscal year.
- IT systems improvements implemented and a process created for ongoing IT system maintenance and evaluation.

Program Development

Goals:

- WindowDressers helps meet the basic human need of warm housing and helps reduce high household energy burden within our current service area.
- Support all existing Community Builds while expanding operations within our current service area of Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont.
- Improve and increase program accessibility for economically, racially, and culturally diverse participants.

Outcomes:

- Each Community Build provides at least 35% of inserts to socially vulnerable households or households with a high energy burden or high energy affordability gap through our Special Rate program.
- WindowDressers uses data and research and has established partnerships to identify geographic areas and households with high social vulnerability or with a high energy burden or high energy affordability gap.
- New volunteer leadership teams for new Community Builds are established in socially vulnerable communities and communities with high energy burden or high energy affordability gap.
- WindowDressers provides accessible outreach materials and actively supports volunteer teams to engage and include economically, racially, and culturally diverse community members—as well as businesses and apartment building managers—in all aspects of Community Build planning and execution.
- WindowDressers develops and tracks relationships with potential Community Build leaders and partners, and collaborates with individuals, organizations, and entities that share our mission and values.
- WindowDressers provides adequate staffing to meet all program development & expansion, IT and communications needs.

Metrics:

- Number of Community Build events conducted annually - overall and by state.
 - Number and percent change from previous year.
 - Number and percent of Builds that returned from previous year.

- Total number of inserts produced and distributed - overall and by state.
 - Number and percent increase from previous year or years.
 - Number & percent of Special, Residential & Commercial Rate inserts.
 - Number and percentage of pine and white inserts for each rate.
 - Number of rewraps for each rate.
 - Number of households served.
 - Number of households or organizations/businesses for each rate.
 - Number and percent of Community Builds that did and did not provide at least 35% Special Rate inserts.
 - Average number of inserts per Community Build.
 - Total number of communities served - overall and by state.
 - Number of communities served with a high social vulnerability index.
 - Number of communities or households served with high energy burden or high energy affordability gap as identified by data and research. ***See Appendix for more information.***
 - Number of partnerships established and/or maintained.
 - Quality and quantity of data and research organized and/or documented to support our mission and goals.
 - Number of new Community Builds established in socially vulnerable communities or communities with high energy burden or high energy affordability gap.
 - Number and quality of improvements to outreach materials to reach economically, racially, and culturally diverse people.
 - Program Manager to Community Build ratio not to exceed 1:30.
-

Program Expansion

Goal:

- Spread WindowDressers' unique model to increase access to affordable window weatherization and help build community resilience beyond our current service area.

Outcomes:

- WindowDressers has a Growth Management Plan that includes plans for expanding our model into states close to the current service area (e.g. Massachusetts & NY).
- A pilot, replicating our current fully supported and supplied CB model, has been established in Massachusetts.

- WindowDressers has a tiered menu of free and fee-based resources and support available to interested parties beyond Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont and our pilot in Massachusetts.
- WindowDressers has a marketing plan, developed from the Growth Management Plan, for the tiered menu offerings and has started implementing it.

Key Metrics:

- Growth Management Plan version 1 completed by June 30, 2026.
- WindowDressers has identified 4-5 Massachusetts communities in the northwest portion of the state for a pilot project.
- The number of Builds and inserts produced in Massachusetts offsets the cost of logistics and staffing needs in no more than 5 years.
- Number of inquiries made about our tiered offerings.
- Number of Community Builds supported outside our current service area.
- Number of inserts produced by groups using some level of support from our tiered menu.
- Revenue earned from tiered offerings.

Production Facility Development

Goal: Secure, maintain and optimize production facilities and operations to support growth and improve logistics, in an environmentally, economically, socially sustainable and justice-oriented way.

Outcomes:

- The production facility has adequate capacity to support mission delivery and future growth.
- Production staff have a safe and comfortable facility in which to work.
- WindowDressers invests financial and human resources necessary to meet our production operation needs and implement critical production improvements.
- Staff is aware of commercial real estate availability/opportunities and their benefits and costs relative to the current production facility.
- Production facility acquisition decisions and major operations changes will be made with consideration for impacts on the local economy, environment and people.

- Capital fundraising plan implemented if needed.

Key Metrics:

- End of season report completed by Production Manager including an evaluation of the production season, production facility capacity, staffing and recommended improvements for following year.
 - Actual insert production labor and materials costs versus budget.
 - Number of insert redos caused by production errors.
 - Number of problems at builds that originate from Production Facility, i.e. material shortages, defective materials, QC issues with jigs or inserts that result in extra work for volunteers.
 - Number of solutions production staff help build teams implement during the build season.
 - Recommended improvements completed by Production staff within budget and before the start of the next production season.
-

Process Optimization

Goal: Streamline program and production processes, including manufacturing, logistics, and volunteer coordination.

Outcomes:



- WindowDressers provides high quality materials to ensure a consistent and high quality end product.
- WindowDressers uses environmentally and socially sustainable materials and practices whenever possible.
- WindowDressers identifies and uses additional facilities such as donated space or rented storage units to improve logistics and reduce the environmental footprint of transportation.
- WindowDressers solicits and is open to feedback from economically, racially, and culturally diverse people - volunteers, participants, customers, Board members & staff - using feedback to inform ongoing operational improvements.

Key Metrics:

- Improved wood supply consistency and quality - decreased % of rejected material.
 - Sustainability ratings of materials.
 - Reduction in production and delivery lead times.
 - Average delivery costs per build measured over time.
 - Delivery miles traveled.
 - Cost savings achieved through process efficiencies.
 - Year over year comparisons.
 - Customer and Volunteer surveys implemented in a timely manner. Results analyzed/summarized within a month of the last Community Build.
-

Appendix

Program Development

-  Social Vulnerability Data (2024 Season)
-  Social Vulnerability Data (2025 Season)