

Here is the Planning Commission's **PROPOSED DRAFT REVISION** of the 'Energy' section of the **Bethel Town Plan**. By State Statute, the Town Plan is revised every five years. The Planning Commission will hold a duly warned public hearing in mid-June on this and, depending on comments received then, will transmit it to the Select Board, which will hold a hearing at the end of July. Public comments are appreciated. Formal adoption by the Select Board is anticipated by August 13, 2006.

VIII. ENERGY

A. BACKGROUND

A large segment of Bethel's residential, commercial, and municipal buildings are heated with fuel oil and kerosene (66.7% - 2000 Census). Many residential homes are heated extensively with wood or use wood as a back-up (16.9% - 2000 Census). Propane use has increased in recent years. Currently there are no plans to bring natural gas pipelines into this part of the state.

The Town lies within the service area of Central Vermont Public Service (CVPS) which supplies electrical power to all sections of town. At present, the Town receives its power from a substation located in Royalton. A new 12 kv line has been constructed parallel to Route 12 north of the town center. Eventually, this will connect into the Pleasant Street Randolph sub-station. Two benefits will be derived from this. Line serviceability will be greatly enhanced and a second source of power will be available to the Town in times of power outages.

CVPS presently has a good mix of power sources – hydro, nuclear, fossil (purchased – Merrimack Power Company) and purchases from sources such as New York Power Authority, Hydro Quebec and other sources within the New England Power grid. Within the Town, Bethel Mills owns a hydro-power plant whose power is purchased by CVPS. There are concerns on the state level as to how Vermont will replace power from Hydro Quebec and Vermont Yankee – about 70% of Vermont's current energy portfolio – when both sources go off-line within the next 15 years.

In the past, the Town has received grant monies for energy conservation for low-income housing. This involved insulating and weatherizing homes. The school complex has an ongoing program for conserving energy. The Town garage utilizes used oil from its vehicles as a fuel for heating. Energy conservation programs are ongoing by the CVPS. One program encourages the use of energy efficient light bulbs by issuing discount coupons. Another program promotes the use of more efficient heating and cooling systems. There is also a residential new construction program that promotes the inclusion of energy efficient systems that will insure long-term energy savings.

[See Appendices A, B & C for 'Goals,' 'Planning Principles,' and 'Recommendations for Action,' respectively, specific to Energy and other sections of this Town Plan.]
