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## Four Policy Steps to Becoming an Energy Forward Town in NH

Charlie Forcey | Energy Committee | 2 May 2016

At the state level, New Hampshire sometimes lags its New England neighbors in the adoption of the latest IECC Energy Codes and other energy related policies. And yet, New Hampshire has a powerful tradition of local control that allows individual towns to take the initiative and exceed state standards in many important areas of zoning, code enforcement, and tax policy. Durham, NH has explored a number of ways it can **collaborate with its planning department** to encourage energy efficiency and reduce environmental impacts. The following four focus areas hold promise for accelerating our transition to a clean, secure, and affordable energy system for our state, region, nation, and world. Comments and improvements welcome.

### Step 1: Energy Planning: Energy Chapter of the Master Plan, Solar Site Planning, and an Energy Considerations Check List

- ❑ Complete or update your energy master plan to include integration of energy considerations into building, transportation, and energy procurement processes of your town or city. ([Durham Energy Chapter pdf](#))
- ❑ Update zoning regulations to follow solar siting best practices according to [OEP guidelines](#).
- ❑ Create an energy considerations checklist that can remind home owners, developers, and municipal building teams of energy related considerations as they plan projects and renovations. ([Energy Checklist pdf](#))

### Step 2: Raise the Bar with Code: Exercise Local Option for Latest IECC Energy Code, Climate Zone, Code Enforcement

- ❑ Pass an ordinance or local warrant article (perhaps relevant to NH only) to adopt the latest printed IECC Energy code, as of this writing the 2015 code (vs NH's 2009 state-wide code). (Durham Ordinance #2011-01 [word pdf](#))
- ❑ Confirm your Climate Zone and declare a more restrictive zone if you are on close to the border – see Durham Ordinance #2011-01 above for our move into Climate Zone 6.
- ❑ Code enforcement officers (perhaps shared with other towns) may be required for implementing more restrictive codes than the state standard.

### Step 3: Energy and the Planning Process: Include Energy Committees and Code Officers

- ❑ Provide the Energy Considerations Checklist and Energy Committee contact information with all building permits.
- ❑ Require completion of the Energy Considerations Checklist and a meeting with the Energy Committee for all projects requiring planning or zoning approvals
- ❑ Establish and/or add an Energy Committee Representative to a Technical Review Group (TRG) that combines representatives from public works, fire, police, and other relevant bodies to review major purchases, upgrades, and development projects.

### Step 4: Expedited Permits and Tax Exemptions: Lower the Costs of Advanced Energy for Residents

- ❑ Develop dedicated solar building permits, optionally lower fees, and if possible use all or most of the [NH OEP](#) provided solar permitting and structural checklists to lower Solar installer soft costs of meeting requirements across multiple towns.
- ❑ Pass and or expand tax exemptions for renewable energy systems including wind, solar, and biomass according to the [NH OEP](#) guides.

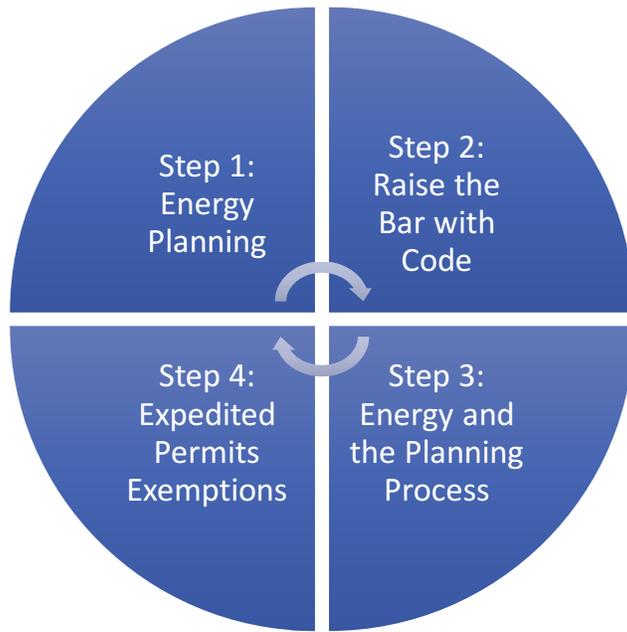


FIGURE 1: FOUR STEPS TO ENERGY FORWARD PLANNING FOR YOUR TOWN

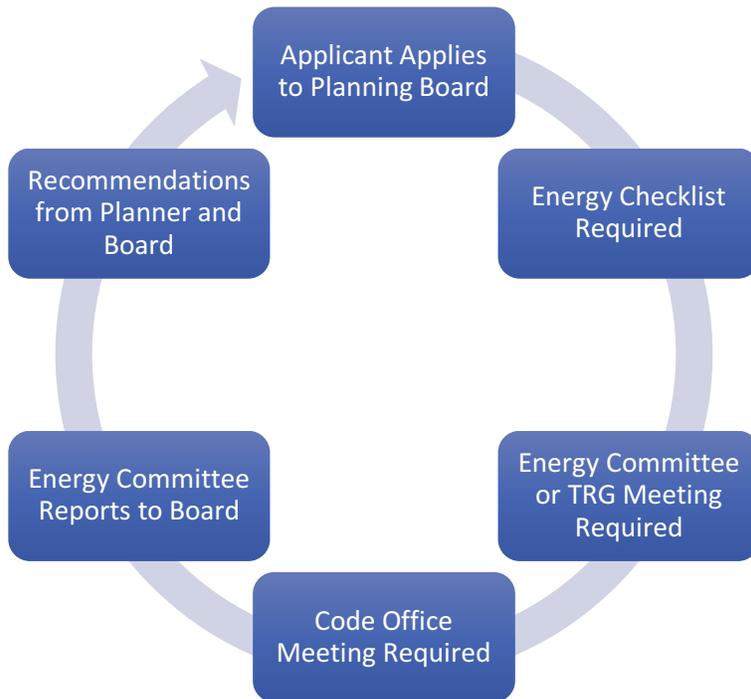


FIGURE 2: INCLUDING ENERGY COMMITTEES IN THE PLANNING PROCESS