**Report to the Community on the SPARHAWK Level II Energy Audit of Georgetown’s Municipal Buildings**

**August 20, 2024**

**At the Georgetown Historical Society**

The program last night was well-attended and there was some good discussion during the Q and A.  The consultant’s report provides a firm basis for understanding Georgetown’s municipal energy usage as we consider future community needs and building usage and try to factor in increased resiliency.

There were about 17 people zooming in and 10 people present at GHS - a total of over 25.  The Town's consultant Joe Boyd of Sparhawk presented the Audit in person and answered questions. The Conservation Commission was represented by Cheryl Swift and me.  Also present were Bronwen Tudor, Jon Collins, and Aria Eee (Select Board), Brian Whalen (Fire Chief), Katelynn Miller (Georgetown Center School principal), Mary MacDonald and Tyler Washburn (Town Office), Terry and Susan Taylor, Bob and Sharon Trabona, Jon Heintz, John Swift, Susie Wren, Mary Swain, Mike (Emergency Operations) and Meg McDiarmid, and Susannah Place and David Faye (two members of the Town's earlier Municipal Energy Working Group).  Maybe others on Zoom......

There were the usual frustrations with Zoom:  difficulty for those on Zoom to see or hear participants in the room, difficulty for those in the room to identify everyone on Zoom. The connection died briefly during the presentation ("technical difficulties"), however, Zoom participants stuck with it, and it was recorded for future viewing.

Some of the interesting discussion, in my view was as follows:

* This was an energy audit and not a resiliency study which meant less focus on future impacts of climate change on Georgetown.
* In general, the Town buildings are using energy efficiently, and have already made many of the small cost-saving adaptations.  Changing the buildings' uses could change the need for more efficient energy adaptations.
* Splitting the heating system for the Town Office away from the system for the School would not likely be a problem. Using heat pumps for heating and cooling in the office portion of the building would not have a negative impact on the existing systems elsewhere,because of the size of the boiler and the controls on it.  So from an energy and feasibility perspective, there's no down side to separating Office from School
* Annual energy use for the School seemed unexpectedly low, according to Joe.
* There was much discussion of the recommendation in the Audit to consider installing heat pumps.  The discussion re eventual disposal of heat pumps and especially the refrigerants in them, was driven by questions from the audience and the answers were pretty complicated.  However, it seems manufacturers are required to replace freon as of 2026.  Joe said that the refrigerant used in heat pumps is being phased out in the next few years; disposal of used heat pumps may be problematic, and that if a heat pump is going to be occasionally running off a generator the contractor should consider "power conditioning" or other protective devices.
* Tax credits are constantly changing.

Tyler Washburn invited everyone to come into the Town Office to review a hard copy of the Energy Audit, or to contact the Town Office and he'll email it to them.

Submitted by Kathy Gravino