

**Brandon Energy Committee Meeting
October 1, 2018**

Committee Members Present: Michael Shank, Lowell Rasmussen, Edna Sutton, Jack Schneider

Also in Attendance: Barbara Noyes-Pulling, Stephanie Jerome

1. Call to order

Michael Shank, Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:05PM.

2. Agenda Approval

A motion was made by Lowell Rasmussen and seconded by Jack Schneider to approve the agenda, as amended. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Add Questions to Candidates under New Business

3. Approval of Minutes

September 10, 2018 Meeting:

A motion was made by Edna Sutton and seconded by Lowell Rasmussen to approve the minutes of the September 10, 2018 Energy Committee meeting. **The motion passed unanimously.**

4. Review Questionnaire Document for Renewable Energy Development

Michael Shank requested the Committee members review the questionnaire document for renewable energy development. Mr. Shank noted he had removed the permit language from the questionnaire, with the review language remaining. Edna Sutton asked how the process for reviewing the questionnaire will work and suggested there be a checklist developed. Ms. Sutton thought there would need to be something to weigh the information received from the applicants against. Mr. Shank noted if a checklist were developed, it would have to be done across the board for all applications. Lowell Rasmussen noted this is more of an information-gathering and disseminating document. From the information received, the Planning Commission would then write a letter to the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) indicating support or non-support of a project and to request party status. Mr. Shank stated the Select Board and Planning Commission can submit letters requesting party status to the PUC regarding projects. Barbara Noyes-Pulling suggested recommendations should be sent through the Town Manager's office. Stephanie Jerome stated the Development Review Board reviews applications to determine if they meet the land use policies. Mr. Shank noted the statement of compliance with constraints will be the most valuable piece of information. Mr. Rasmussen views the document as a template, as there cannot be too many specifics due to the variations with each application. There are some secondary questions that would be developed based on the individual project. Barbara Noyes-Pulling stated there has to be consideration if a project is a good match. The only way to take it further is to indicate a project does not meet the Town Plan or Energy Plan. Ms. Noyes-Pulling noted one important part of the questionnaire process is determining when the Planning Commission is going to request the completion of the document and suggested the questionnaire be completed prior to the projects applying for any permits. Michael Shank asked if a solar company can go to the PUC without coming to a town first. Ms. Noyes-Pulling stated that is not usually the case, but the standard offer is generally between the property owner and the contractor. Ms. Noyes-Pulling will provide the Energy Committee information on the application and approval process. Jack Schneider asked if the same criteria would be used for projects developed on public land. All were in agreement there should be consistency. Mr. Rasmussen will ask Johanna Miller of the Energy Committee Network and Ms. Noyes-Pulling to review the document again. Stephanie Jerome asked if there will be a

question regarding tax impact. Mr. Shank noted that would open up the conversation of how a project will benefit the Town. Mr. Rasmussen advised that Ms. Miller had indicated municipalities can consider ways that projects could benefit their communities, but did not advocate a tax. Ms. Noyes-Pulling advised language of this type is generally in the MOU's that are developed between the towns and project contractors. Mr. Shank stated once the questionnaire is in use, it will be determined if any additional information is required. Mr. Shank proposed a final review of the questionnaire for approval at the next meeting, followed by submission to the Planning Commission for their approval. Mr. Rasmussen requested Committee members send him edits or make changes on the google doc.

5. Outreach Plan for Preferred Renewable Energy Sites

Michael Shank advised he has been reaching out to property owners with regard to preferred sites for renewable energy. Mr. Shank suggested in terms of outreach that an ad could be placed in The Reporter to request property owners' interest in being a solar site. Mr. Shank stated the ad could indicate Brandon's commitment to new forms of energy that are pro-solar and include information on the State energy mandate. It was also suggested to provide the type of sites the Town is seeking such as quarries, gravel pits and disturbed sites. Mr. Rasmussen noted the message could advise the community that the Energy Committee is developing a planning process that assures good locations that will be beneficial to investors and the community. Barbara Noyes-Pulling suggested a news story could also be included in the local papers. Mr. Shank will develop an ad and place on a shared drive for the committee members to review prior to the next meeting. Mr. Shank noted any responses to the advertisement will be invited to a subsequent meeting for discussion.

6. Workshop on Energy Conservation, Efficiency

Michael Shank reported he has reserved the Town Hall for the November 3rd workshop that is co-sponsored by the Town and Efficiency Vermont. It was suggested an ad be placed in The Reporter, Rutland Herald and Addison Independent. Mr. Shank will contact the Brandon Chamber and Front Porch Forum to provide information on the event. Edna Sutton will work with the Events Calendar and Mr. Shank will place ads around town two weeks prior to the event. Stephanie Jerome will contact the Town Manager to determine if the Planning Commission and subcommittee have a budget for events.

10. Old/New Business

Jack Schneider developed a list of questions to obtain the candidates opinions regarding renewable energy, with the main focus on solar. Some of the potential questions discussed include whether there is support for the State's energy goals and whether there is support for the bill that has been introduced in the House regarding community solar arrays. It was noted there will be a Candidate Forum on October 16th at OVUHS and it was suggested the questions could be provided to Bernie Carr, moderator of the event, to pose questions to the candidates. Michael Shank noted the candidates would be under no obligation to complete the questionnaire.

Stephanie Jerome reported she has had a discussion with Seth Hopkins and Dave Atherton considering the Conti Solar project. In line with the conversation, it was noted this siting is very important and it is obvious there will be other projects being proposed and it is important to get the mapping completed and a more definitive energy plan in place. Michael Shank advised he would like to revisit the work on the energy plan to fine-tune it for submission to the Planning Commission. Barbara Noyes-Pulling noted the Town has a lot of information in its energy plan already and it would be possible to merge the information with the current information. Ms. Noyes-Pulling suggested an article be placed in The Reporter about this subject. Michael Shank reported Sue Gage had forwarded him an email from a resident regarding the Conti Solar Project. Edna Sutton advised there is a meeting of the residents in the area of the project and she has reached out to this resident. Ms. Jerome advised there will be a letter submitted by the local Water District with regard to the Conti Solar project due to the water main located on the property.

11. Next Meeting

Next Meeting will be Monday, November 5, 2018 @ 5PM in the Brandon Town Hall

12. Adjournment

The Committee Chair adjourned the meeting at 6:13PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Charlene Bryant
Recording Secretary