

**Brandon Energy Committee Meeting
October 1, 2019**

Committee Members Present: Michael Shank, Edna Sutton. Jack Schneider, Matt Orchard

Others Present: Brent Buehler, Tim Guiles

1. Call to order

Michael Shank, Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:03PM.

2. Agenda Approval

A motion was made by Edna Sutton to approve the agenda. **The motion passed.**

3. Approval of Minutes

September 3, 2019 Meeting:

A motion was made by Edna Sutton to approve the minutes of the September 3, 2019 Energy Committee meeting. **The motion passed.**

4. Update on Energy Plan and Public Hearing Process

Jack Schneider and Lowell Rasmussen of the Energy Committee attended the Select Board's second public hearing regarding the proposed Energy Plan. Mr. Rasmussen provided an overview of the PowerPoint presentation that Michael Shank given at the first public hearing. Due to technical difficulties, Mr. Rasmussen was unable to provide the full presentation. Barbara Noyes-Pulling of the Rutland Regional Planning Commission was also present to answer questions.

Tim Guiles reported there were more people in attendance for the second hearing and noted that Robert Black, an attendee of the hearing, was interested in having the viewsheds completed. The next step in the approval process is for the Select Board to vote on the Plan. Michael Shank will contact Dave Atherton and Seth Hopkins regarding the timeframe for the Select Board's voting to approve the Energy Plan.

5. Planning for October Workshop by Grassroots Solar and Efficiency Vermont

Michael Shank advised that the Grassroots Solar and Efficiency Vermont workshops are scheduled for October 19th at the Brandon Library. The Grassroots Solar workshop will be held at 10AM and will be geared towards working Vermonters. The Efficiency Vermont workshop is scheduled for 1PM concerning the topic of weatherization. Mr. Shank will announce the workshops on Front Porch Forum and will provide information on the workshops to Bill Moore.

6. Review of Responses to Community Wide Survey

This agenda item was postponed.

7. Discussion of Waste Workshop

On Monday October 7th, a meeting is scheduled with Carl Diethelm of Rutland County Solid Waste. Matt Orchard, Tim Guiles and members of the Brandon Chamber will be present for the informational meeting. Suggested topics of discussion will include the transfer station and a food waste conversation. Mr. Shank questioned whether the community is aware of the new transfer station recycling plan. Tim Guiles stated the transfer station is first starting with the simplest option with an all-in-one recycling and trash. They have

already started accumulating some commodities, such as metals and are going to be growing into offering more services. Recycling will then be taken to the MRF recycling facility in Rutland. In terms of food waste, there is interest in discussing this topic. Mr. Guiles thought they intend to have composting and noted Mr. Wyman is amenable to the goals for the State. Edna Sutton stated there will be items that need to be clarified about composting the food waste, and perhaps the Energy Committee could be proactive in providing information that could assist Mr. Wyman with this process. Mr. Orchard will focus the conversation at the meeting on food waste. It was suggested to obtain the offerings from Mr. Wyman to advertise. Mr. Shank will schedule a meeting with Mr. Guiles, Mr. Wyman and Ms. Sutton to discuss Mr. Wyman's plans for the transfer station.

8. Old/New Business

Michael Shank has had conversations with Hannaford's and Walgreens regarding the possibility of using their locations for a community solar project. The manager at Hannaford's will flag this concept to their Corporate office. Mr. Shank also contacted Sun Commons to determine their interest in this concept and was advised there is an interest. Mr. Guiles noted the cost of solar is going down and was aware of a community solar project whose per kilowatt cost was the same as the cost of what he could install panels himself. Mr. Shank has asked GMP about the possibility of an EV Drive Day. Tim Guiles stated there are three people in Town that have a LEAF and suggested the Town could potentially do a workshop for the community on its own. Mr. Shank noted when Tesla provided a workshop, people were able to test drive a car.

Jack Schneider reported at the last Chamber meeting, there was discussion about an event to take place around the last week of May 2020 to celebrate the completion of Segment 6. The event will be from Noon to 6PM, with local merchants offering sales and groups, such as the Energy Committee, will be invited to participate in putting on demonstrations. Mr. Schneider questioned Bernie Carr about the status of the EV stations at the Mobil Station and was advised there will be two charging stations, plus a Tesla station, but it has not been determined when they will be set up. Michael Shank stated it is his understanding they will be Level 2 chargers. Mr. Shank has suggested to Hannaford's about the possibility of installing a high-speed charger. Tim Guiles stated the Level 2 charges are for shorter distances and are much less expensive, as the Level 1 chargers are for long distance charges. Mr. Shank would like to see Brandon have a high-speed charger for people passing through on Route 7 and noted the Level 2 chargers take four hours. Mr. Guiles sees the Level 2 chargers as an economic draw for the community and sees them as being sufficient. Mr. Shank noted having a Level 1 charger would send a message to those communities along Route 7 that other areas should have a high-speed charger for those traveling along an EV Route 7 highway. Mr. Shank noted the State was giving a lot of support for a while and if Hannaford's is interested, they could wait until the next cycle of support.

Tim Guiles is pleased with the Energy Plan and the numerical benchmarks to achieve the 2050 goal. One of the major hurdles will be to convert houses from oil to energy efficient methods, such as heat pumps. Mr. Guiles advised that he has rehabbed houses in the community last summer with a zero-carbon footprint and sold those houses at a zero percent interest loan. This provides the option for people who are renting to own a home that is less expensive than renting. Mr. Guiles suggested if there could be a quasi-investment Revolving Loan Fund in Town where the principal would come back to the investors and it would benefit the community in converting to energy efficient housing. If 9 houses were rehabbed in the first year and over the course of 5 to 10 years, it would be a way to rebuild the housing stock. Mr. Guiles noted every community needs to rebuild their housing stock, while at the same time making it more affordable.

Jack Schneider questioned how the houses are heated when it becomes 20 below zero. Mr. Guiles noted that there could be back-up heaters for the few nights where temperatures are that low. He noted it is important to have well-insulated homes and believes that heat pumps can be a solution for the homes in Vermont. Mr. Guiles stated, like Habitat for Humanity, he builds modest homes and the concept he envisions would be a way to bring the community together to do rehabbing of the homes. Edna Sutton suggested it could also provide an opportunity to get young people involved and provide training. Mr. Guiles stated the intent is to

keep the cost down. Michael Shank asked if the revolving fund would have an application and would only accept whole projects, or could the fund be discrete projects such as a solar projects or heat pumps.

Tim Guiles stated much like the Town's revolving loan fund, it would be local people applying that are committed to the community and should be a secure investment. Brent Buehler asked if suppliers would be engaged. Mr. Guiles is currently working with Brandon Lumber, who provides him with a discount for the projects. The houses that Mr. Guiles has rehabbed and sold have a zero percent interest mortgage that helps people get over the hurdle of obtaining a mortgage. Jeff Biasuzzi did not think one can obtain a zero percent interest rate if it is provided by a municipality. Mr. Guiles envisions a \$2 to \$5 million revolving loan fund, but he did not know what vehicle could be used for this program. Mr. Biasuzzi advised that there can be only so many transactions per year and after that one would be an investor and not a private loan. The government requires a licensed mortgage originator involved that is bonded to handle the paperwork required if there is Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac money involved. Mr. Guiles noted avoiding government money could be the way to avoid a lot of problems. Mr. Shank thought that members of the community could be asked, if the concept is right and has high integrity. Identifiable numbers could be determined to reach the State's 2050 goals.

Mr. Guiles advocates for do-it-yourself solar projects, as these projects are not a high hurdle and noted it would also be good to have a community solar option. Mr. Shank suggested the Energy Committee could host a "Do-It-Yourself" solar workshop with Mr. Guiles. Mr. Biasuzzi provided a source of information on an energy firm that focuses on energy efficiency, as well as the newest announcements on the Button-up programs. Mr. Guiles stated there would need to be a way to identify those properties that need rehabbing. Mr. Shank stated there will need to be an application that identifies the biggest needs. Brent Buehler noted the program will have to assure that people's investments are protected. Mr. Shank noted concern if there was a successful campaign in Town for the funding whether there would be enough human power to make the program successful. Mr. Guiles suggested there could potentially be 5 houses done in a summer if there were 10 to 15 volunteers. A crew of 6 would be the ideal number to be working on one job site.

Michael Shank questioned the next steps to move this concept forward. Mr. Guiles hopes to obtain the assistance of the Energy Committee in promoting the concept. Edna Sutton advised there is a nonprofit in Poughkeepsie that helps people remodel their homes and she volunteered to contact the person that she knows who is involved with the nonprofit. Mr. Guiles noted there should be simple direct ways to assure that people's investment is protected.

Michael Shank suggested transportation is the low hanging fruit in energy conservation and noted it would be helpful to offer the revolving loan fund to those who would like to switch to EVs. Mr. Guiles noted GMP and the government are providing discounts in this area. Mr. Shank stated the Energy Committee will need to do its homework, though there is support for the concept. Mr. Guiles will speak with Seth Hopkins to determine if the Town could be involved in the fund and will do some research regarding the next steps.

9. Next Meeting

Monday, November 4, 2019 @ 5:00PM at the Brandon Town Office

12. Adjournment

The Committee adjourned by consensus at 6:02PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Charlene Bryant
Recording Secretary

Brandon Energy Committee
October 1, 2019