

**Brandon Energy Committee Meeting
November 4, 2019**

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

Others Present: Brent Buehler, Tim Guiles

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 to approve the agenda. **The motion passed.**

3. Approval of Minutes

October 1, 2019 Meeting:

A motion was made by Matt Orchard to approve the minutes of the October 1, 2019 Energy Committee meeting. **The motion passed.**

4. Update on Energy Plan

Michael Shank reported the Select Board approved the Energy Plan. It has now been forwarded to the Rutland Regional Planning Commission for their approval. Mr. Shank extended a note of appreciation to the Select Board for its approval of the Plan. The Energy Plan has been integrated into the Town Plan and will be reviewed by the RRPC at their meeting on November 19th. Once approved, the Plan will then be forward to the PUC.

5. Review of October Workshop by Efficiency Vermont

Michael Shank reported the Efficiency Vermont workshop was well attended with around 30 to 40 people present. Mr. Shank thanked all who participated, noting there were good questions. Mr. Shank suggested the Committee should encourage the community to take advantage of the match of up to \$4,000.00 offered by Efficiency Vermont for energy retrofits up to \$8,000.00, as well as the free appliance offer for households in a certain income bracket. The offer is calculated based on the percentage of energy costs to income. Mr. Shank will provide the Committee members additional information on these programs. Mr. Shank was pleased with the Brandon Library as an event space.

6. Review of October EV Drive Day by GMP

Michael Shank reported there was also good attendance at the EV Drive Day, that was sponsored by Green Mountain Power and Garvey Nissan. Mr. Shank had a discussion with Emily Eckert of GMP about the possibility of Brandon hosting an EV festival. There have not been any of these festivals hosted in the area and it was thought that Brandon would be a good location due to the invention of the battery-powered electric motor by Thomas Davenport here. Mr. Shank will have a discussion with Bill Moore and the Administrators at OVUHS, as it was thought that the high school would make a good location for the event. Mr. Shank suggested Leilani Munter, race car driver and advocate for Tesla would be a good spokesperson to invite for the event. The event could include models from all area dealerships to include test-driving ability, technology, other services such as solar and possibly a workshop on this subject. The festival could also have food trucks and music. Lowell Rasmussen asked if there are other EV car companies that have their own charging stations. It was noted that Tesla has blanketed all of the driving distances in the country that makes

places very accessible and there is an effort to blanket the country with other charging stations. GMP is involved in having charging stations installed around Vermont. There are also apps that will map out where charging stations are located. Tim Guiles stated Tesla gets power from the grid and are not all solar powered. Mr. Rasmussen suggested it would be good consumer information to provide to people about the charging stations. With regard to battery life, Mr. Guiles stated it is longer than he had expected with his first Tesla going 130,000 miles. Mr. Shank stated Tesla indicates a battery will last 10 years. Mr. Guiles advised there is the ability to access the battery pack to allow for specific replacements rather than having to replace the entire battery. Mr. Guiles stated there is a misconception that there needs to be a charging station wherever there is a gas station. The only place to see lots of chargers would be on highways for those people that are traveling, as people will be charging at home. Mr. Shank summarized that he would move this subject forward and will have discussions with Bill Moore, the Administrators at OV and Emily Eckert of GMP.

7. Update on Waste Workshop

Matt Orchard had a good meeting with Carl Diethelm and Mr. Diethelm agreed to host a waste workshop to review composting and general recycling for both consumers and businesses before the new laws go into effect June 2020. It was suggested this event could be done in collaboration with the “End of Segment 6” celebration on May 29th and 30th. The Chamber will be sponsoring that event and are agreeable to setting up an Energy Committee booth near the Mobil station, which is where the new charging stations will be located. Mr. Orchard will be meeting with Tracy Wyman this evening to discuss the transfer station. Mr. Wyman is well set up as far as food waste management to move forward in a positive way and is the only composting recycling center in Rutland County. Mr. Orchard would like to get a sense of how the Energy Committee can assist Mr. Wyman in educating the population about food composting. There was a discussion of having a local award to recognize achievement in waste management in the Town. It was suggested there could be a zero-waste competition. It was also suggested to have an article in The Reporter on waste management near the time of the workshop. It was thought that a spring event would be best time to host the workshop. Michael Shank suggested winter composting would be a good topic to initially begin discussion about waste and asked if anyone was interested in writing a piece for The Reporter. Mr. Orchard volunteered to write an article for The Reporter. Lowell Rasmussen noted there has been discussion of when Vermont packaging laws come into effect that consumers need to be sure they are buying something that is not poorly packaged. Mr. Rasmussen stated it would be interesting to see how a large company, such as Hannaford’s, is looking at the new food laws. Mr. Shank noted he has been in contact with Ellen Bowen, Store Manager of the local Hannaford’s regarding solar and suggested contacting Ms. Bowen on this subject. He also noted that Gabe McGuigan, the Town’s Rutland County Solid Waste District Representative is very active and a very good resource. Mr. McGuigan has more information about recycling, and it makes sense to include him in the conversations.

8. Old/New Business

Tim Guiles received a call from Keith Whitcomb of the Rutland Herald regarding the possibility of an energy revolving loan fund. Mr. Guiles reported there is a healthy interest in this subject and Mr. Whitcomb will be in contact with Michael Shank. Stephanie Jerome had suggested Efficiency Vermont be contacted to discuss the possibility of providing funds as a start-up. Mr. Guiles noted Efficiency Vermont also has agreements with banks for zero percent loans for energy projects. Michael Shank asked if Mr. Guiles would consider a workshop on do-your-own solar, as he thought it would be a great service to the community. Mr. Guiles confirmed he would be interested and would also be willing to assist homeowners who want to self-install solar. He noted if someone has a straightforward roof, a self-installation would be half the cost of the solar vendors. Mr. Shank will email Mr. Guiles to arrange some dates. Mr. Guiles noted he did three solar installations this summer.

Edna Sutton and Michael Shank met with Sun Common to look at the Compass roof as a potential site for a community solar project. Mr. Shank stated there is 12,000 square feet of workable space and Sun Common will be providing some figures. Mr. Shank will reach out to the people that expressed an interest in community solar on the survey. Ms. Sutton stated there is a community at Park Village that could use the

solar. This would be a public/private partnership. Ms. Sutton asked if Efficiency Vermont could invest in the project at a zero percent loan. Mr. Shank stated the only other roof in the area as a potential site would be the Walgreens roof. Ms. Sutton noted that she has heard the solar vendors are not interested in ground sites for commercial projects due to the permitting process. It was noted that each community consumer would also get tax credits for this type of a project.

Michael Shank reported he recently took a tour of the City of Detroit, as a member of the USDN, an Urban Sustainability Directors Network, noting there are some terrible sites in the city. Mr. Shank would like to know what Vermont's stand is on environmental justice and thought it would be appropriate for the Energy Committee to explore this topic. Mr. Shank reported he co-wrote an article on climate refugees and noted that there will be many Americans that will become climate refugees.

With regard to the topic of an emergency declaration for climate, Michael Shank suggested one item would be the funding that is received for emergencies. There could be forecasting done concerning what the threats are in Vermont in the next 10 to 20 years. The statement could be a recognition of the trends and could be a larger conversation about these threats that are real. Edna Sutton suggested information about grade levels would be important, noting the ground on her property is sinking and she thinks there is a real threat. Ms. Sutton noted the power lines are also an issue and thought they should be placed underground. Mr. Shank stated information about flooding would also be of interest. Brent Buehler stated there was an article in the paper about how much more sustainable Vermont was, prior to the State going to a regulatory standpoint, as the towns do not have the autonomy that they used to have. Mr. Buehler distributed an article about Vermont regulators signing off on an ownership deal for a pipeline. Matt Orchard stated the climate declaration is relevant as Vermont is the only state that is behind on its energy plan.

Lowell Rasmussen noted he does not want to lose site of the residential obligations and hoped the Committee would continue to provide workshops. Mr. Rasmussen spoke with Fisher Electric about the type of heat pumps they are installing and was advised that they now have a pump that operates at an efficiency to -18. Mr. Rasmussen suggested the Committee host a workshop next spring/summer with Fisher Electric on heat pumps as a viable option. Mr. Shank suggested also inviting Green Earth Energy to be part of the workshop. Matt Orchard suggested the Energy Committee could schedule a monthly workshop. Brent Buehler suggested some of the workshops could be geared towards high school students. Mr. Shank advised he will be visiting the high school to discuss the energy video competition. There is also discussion of offering a course on sustainability.

Lowell Rasmussen advised that he still has the research on end of life of solar panels to do. Mr. Rasmussen will be unable to attend the January and February Committee meetings.

9. Next Meeting

December Regular Committee meeting has been cancelled.

Next meeting – January 6, 2020 at 5:00PM at the Town Office.

12. Adjournment

The Committee adjourned by consensus at 6:01PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Charlene Bryant
Recording Secretary