

**Brandon Energy Committee Meeting - Draft  
July 20, 2021**

**Committee Members Present:** Lowell Rasmussen, Matt Orchard, Jack Schneider, Jim Emerson

**Others Present:** Tim Guiles

**1. Call to order**

The meeting was called to order at 5:00PM.

**2. Agenda Approval**

A motion was made by Lowell Rasmussen to approve the agenda. **The motion passed unanimously.**

**3. Introductions**

Jack Schneider advised the last time the Energy Committee had met was in January. The Planning Commission members provided introductions for Jim Emerson, the newly appointed member of the Commission.

Jack Schneider has been on the Energy Committee since its inception and has lived in Brandon for 6 years. Matt Orchard joined the Energy Committee at the time when the Energy Plan was being approved for the Town. Lowell Rasmussen was also a member from the beginning of the Energy Committee and has lived in Brandon for 5 years. Jim Emerson has lived in Brandon for 11 years. Edna Sutton is the 5<sup>th</sup> member Energy Committee and it was noted that she owns the Compass Center and Brandon Music and has been a committee member since it was formed in September 2018.

The Energy Committee was formed due to the requirement to add an Energy Plan in the Town Plan. This was completed with the help of Barbara Noyes-Pulling of the RRPC. There have been other initiatives for the Energy Committee and there has been recent discussions with the Select Board as to what the mandate would be for this Committee. Select Board member Tim Guiles helped draft a mission statement that the Select Board has approved. The Select Board also recently appointed Jim Emerson to the Committee. The Energy Committee is a subcommittee of the Planning Commission and the overall mission is to help the Town to achieve its energy goals for renewable energy in gathering data for thermal energy use, transportation energy use, and electric energy use. The Committee will assist the Town in organizing outreach activities and act as an advisory committee to the Select Board for the types of choices they make to reduce the Town's carbon footprint. This is a five member committee that will report to the Select Board every 6 months. The Committee does not have authority to spend funds but can request funding of items they feel would be worthy projects.

A motion was made by Lowell Rasmussen to adopt the mission statement as presented by Mr. Guiles. **The motion passed unanimously.**

**4. Selection of New Chairperson**

Jack Schneider asked if anyone would like to volunteer to be the Chairperson of the Energy Committee as the prior Chair had resigned in March. Jim Emerson volunteered to be the Chairperson.

A motion was made by Lowell Rasmussen to appoint Jim Emerson as Chair of the Energy Committee. **The motion passed unanimously.**

**5. Old/New Business**

Jack Schneider advised one item that had been in the development stages prior to the pandemic was a Solarfest. Tim Guiles thought this would be a positive event and reported he reached out to Mike Bailey of the Solarfest group to discuss. The Solarfest group is aware of Davenport's electric motor connection to Brandon. Mr. Bailey had told Mr. Guiles there were 7,000 attendees at the last Solarfest that was held. Mr. Guiles noted this group is looking for a potential permanent set-up for this annual event. Mr. Guiles suggested Tracy Wyman has a location that is a large enough venue or potentially the area near Wood's Market would provide good visibility for the event. Mr. Guiles thought this is a prime example of where the Energy Committee can do some great things. Mr. Guiles stated Bill Moore should also be looped into the conversations. Mr. Guiles noted this year's Solarfest is a virtual event and suggested conversations with Mr. Bailey should begin in early August and include Dave Atherton and Bill Moore. Mr. Guiles stated the Solarfest group has a committee that is working on the possibility of a permanent site. For a while they were at the former Green Mountain College. Jack Schneider agreed the Wyman property would be a great location as there is a lot of open space, availability for camping and has hosted many events. Mr. Guiles noted Mr. Wyman has the only food composting facility in this region. It was suggested the Energy Committee members participate in this year's virtual event. Mr. Emerson will follow-up with Mike Bailey, Tracy Wyman, and Bill Moore with Mr. Guiles assistance.

Matt Orchard reported the Energy Committee was also trying to put together an EV Festival at the high school prior to the pandemic. Jim Emerson stated ACORN Energy would be a good source to involve in an event. Jack Schneider noted the Committee was working with a contact from Green Mountain Power regarding this festival and the Committee may want to revisit potentially hosting this event.

Jim Emerson questioned how the Committee would measure cutting greenhouse emissions as one of the goals in terms of the Committee's mission statement for gathering data. Tim Guiles reported the Town has a GreenFleet Policy relating to the Town's carbon footprint and Elaine Smith has recently provided him this year's data. He would suggest the Energy Committee take over the collection of this information. He noted it is not a big project as the report has been developed and the information on diesel usage, gas usage, heating oil and propane usage is provided by Elaine Smith each year. The Committee will have to massage the data so that it shows up as energy usage in a more coherent way. Lowell Rasmussen requested Mr. Guiles provide a presentation on the report at the next meeting. Jim Emerson noted it would be important to obtain residential and business usage in the Town. Mr. Guiles noted Michael Shank had advised there is data available and also thought it would be reasonable ask to GMP what our community's usage is. Similarly, it would be interesting to find out information from the local energy suppliers. It was noted that Barbara Noyes-Pulling of the RRPC had provided numbers for the Energy Plan by taking the county numbers and dividing by the number of towns. They are working at trying to break it out by town and figure the potential for renewable in each town. Due to the 3-phase line, Brandon has more potential than some towns so there could be an increase in the amount of renewable energy from solar, but it is unknown how to make reductions in the area of transportation. Jack Schneider suggested reaching out to Barbara Noyes-Pulling. Mr. Guiles stated for a town like Brandon, due to its size there could be potential for organic growth to get individuals in neighborhoods to assist with gathering the information. Mr. Guiles advised that at the next Select Board meeting, there will a discussion of how to spend the ARPA funds. Jim Emerson suggested it would be helpful to have some resources reserved for the Energy Committee with these funds. Mr. Guiles noted the ARPA webinar he attended talked about how the funds should be targeted towards the harm that had been done by COVID. Mr. Guiles thinks that everyone in the Town would benefit and it would represent an economic investment to do an energy audit. Mr. Emerson stated if the goal is to be met, it needs two things: a lot of education and a lot of inspiration and the Committee's job should be to find the vehicles for inspiration. Mr. Guiles stated in addition, the Town needs to be ready to put material resources together either through a revolving loan fund or another way of helping people. Jack Schneider noted the Town's current revolving loan fund provides for low-cost funds that could be used for energy enhancements for businesses. Mr. Rasmussen noted one of the first things to do is figure out how to do the audits. Mr. Schneider noted that it would be good to show what the Town has done to reduce energy use. It was suggested the next Energy Committee meeting would concentrate on planning. Tim Guiles will provide the GreenFleet numbers at the next meeting. Matt Orchard volunteered to take over the data collection for the GreenFleet. Jim Emerson will also contact Michael Shank.

## **6. Next Meeting**

August 16, 2021 @ 5:00PM

## **7. Adjournment**

A motion was made by Jack Schneider to adjourn the meeting at 5:48PM. **The motion passed.**

Respectfully submitted,

Charlene Bryant  
Recording Secretary