

**Brandon Energy Committee Meeting - Draft
August 23, 2021**

Committee Members Present: Jim Emerson, Matt Orchard, Jack Schneider

Committee Members Via Zoom: Lowell Rasmussen

Others Present: Tim Guiles

1. Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 5:00PM by Jim Emerson - Chair.

2. Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Jack Schneider and seconded by Matt Orchard to approve the minutes of the July 20, 2021, Energy Committee meeting. **The motion passed unanimously.**

3. Update on Committee's ARPA Funds Request for Solar Project

A discussion was held concerning the request made to the Select Board for use of the ARPA funds for a proposed solar project for the Town.

4. Office Appointments and Meeting Protocols

. Meeting Protocols

A motion was made by Jim Emerson and seconded by Jack Schneider to adopt procedures for the Brandon Energy Committee based on those outlined by the Vermont Open Meeting Laws. **The motion passed unanimously.**

. Vice-Chair

A motion was made by Jack Schneider to appoint himself as Vice-Chair of the Energy Committee. **The motion passed unanimously.**

. Secretary

A motion was made by Matt Orchard to appoint himself as Secretary of the Energy Committee. **The motion passed unanimously.**

5. Update on Solarfest:

Jim Emerson has been in conversation with the Solarfest group regarding Brandon as a potential location for their events. Mr. Emerson reported they will be meeting in September and will be visiting Brandon in October. They have indicated that Brandon is the most desirable community they have heard from but will likely not decide until something is more solid regarding a location. Jack Schneider indicated he has discussed this event with Devon Fuller of the Downtown Alliance, and they would be glad to promote the event.

A discussion of potential sites for solar projects was held. Jack Schneider noted a goal of the Energy Plan is for the solar projects to not be visible. Jim Emerson stated there is State-owned property north of Town that could be a potential location for a project. Tim Guiles noted the 132 acres is almost hidden. Lowell Rasmussen asked if the Town has a capacity for solar or does it need to get in the queue with GMP. Mr.

Emerson noted GMP is aware they are way under capacity for many towns for what the demands for solar will be. It was implied by the GMP development officer they are developing a plan for the capacity of solar. Mr. Guiles stated the Town would have to apply to GMP for a project and they have the option to accept or not. The PUC has made a limit for what GMP must take and GMP could deny a project even if it provides local supply. If the Town were to have the capacity to store the energy, it would be more enticing to GMP. Mr. Schneider stated there are groups like Brandon Rescue that the Town provides a stipend for electricity and suggested a project could provide the energy rather than provide the funds. Because the Town is on a 3-phase line, Barbara Noyes-Pulling of the RRPC would likely support projects for the Town. Mr. Emerson stated this will be one of the Energy Committee's goals.

6. Municipal Energy Consumption/Conservation Goals Presentation (Matt Orchard)

Jim Emerson stated in order to set meaningful goals it is key to flesh out what 2050 will look like and to determine where the Town is currently. Matt Orchard is working on a plan to start determining what the Town's needs will be when we reach our goals. The Town needs to make progress on accessible land

Matt Orchard advised he has received data from Tim Guiles that he has been collecting. This information will help in making guestimates on the impacts if the Town converts to more sustainable items to have an impact on Town's energy use. Mr. Orchard has done basic information on some alternatives and will meet with Mr. Guiles to discuss. Mr. Orchard reported there is a lot of information available about police departments use of Tesla and suggested encouraging the Town to convert its departments. Mr. Guiles also recently read about other types of electric construction vehicles that are now available. Mr. Orchard suggested asking the Town, when considering purchase of new equipment, to look at converting to electric vehicles. Mr. Guiles suggested providing the Select Board with a summary of information from the Energy Committee for the Select Board meetings. It was suggested there could be a rotation development for Energy Committee members to be present at the Select Board meetings to provide information.

7. Initial Review of Goals for Committee

Jim Emerson provided the Committee a proposed Goal-setting worksheet for the Fall 2021 to Fall 2031 (See attached) to set a process for determining the top priorities. Mr. Emerson advised that he researched what other committees in other towns are doing and anticipates the Committee will rank the goals by priority, difficulty to promote and whether any options may be too costly to implement. Mr. Emerson requested the committee members provide a response to him within the next week with continued discussion at the next meeting. Any additional ideas can also be added to the proposed tasks. A review of the proposed overall goals was held that included a breakdown between educational and implementation goals.

In a review of the educational goals: Item 1 - Jack Schneider suggested the Committee could repurpose articles from other agencies to provide information to the public. Permission would be required prior to reprinting. Item 2 – Mr. Schneider noted Barbara Noyes-Pulling of the RRPC has indicated they have a template that could be used. Mr. Schneider stated there are other groups that link from the Brandon Town website and perhaps that could be done for the Energy Committee. A Facebook page could also be developed. Items 3 and 4 - Tim Guiles suggested there could be a real-time display of where the Town's energy goals are. Mr. Guiles also suggested promoting it in the Brandon Reporter. Mr. Emerson stated this requires knowing where the Town is as far as energy conservation. Item 5 – It was suggested there could be possible mailings to residents. Mr. Schneider suggested providing an update on the educational activities to the Select Board in the 6-month report the Energy Committee is required to provide. Mr. Emerson would like to find a way to have a promotional routine to provide energy information to the community. Mr. Schneider noted all residents receive an annual report and information could potentially be added during that mailing. Item 6 – Mr. Emerson noted Solarfest support will be in the hands of the Town for the development of the event and in finding possible locations. Item 7 - Jack Schneider reported Waterbury and Middlebury do EV festivals and asked if the Committee would want to make this a modest sized event. He noted the Committee has a prior to contact who was assisting with the organization of an EV Festival that was to take place in Brandon prior to the pandemic. It was also to be a Town festival and Bill Moore would have been

responsible for this festival in securing the location and getting police protection. The Energy Committee was to help coordinate the event. Item 8 – It was recommended an Energy Committee float for the July 4th parade could be about the development of the electric motor in Brandon. Lowell Rasmussen suggested coordinating with Efficiency Vermont for educational efforts and to continue to work with them on assisting community members with the funding of energy projects.

In a review of the implementation goals: Items 1 through 5 - Matt Orchard is continuing his work on the municipal part. For the business and residential areas, the Committee needs to research this information. Jack Schneider advised there are goals outlined in the Energy Plan that were developed with the assistance of RRPC. The recent information received from them was more specific for each town. It was noted that Ms. Noyes-Pulling did not know how to measure the greenhouse gas emissions piece by town and will investigate this. Mr. Schneider suggested if the Town increases solar, weatherizes houses and increases EV usage, those would be quantifiable items. Mr. Emerson noted the first four items are obtaining baseline data for the different sectors in Town and suggested getting high school or college students involved to survey residents. Items 6 through 8 - Mr. Emerson advised the VT Energy Dashboard is an important website that has a 12-page questionnaire that could be used to audit each of the departments in Town, or Efficiency VT would come and do this assessment. Mr. Schneider reported Efficiency Vermont's Heat Squad can give a bulk price for energy audits that provide pressure testing. Items 9 through 11 – Mr. Emerson suggested the Committee could create incentives to reach people of low income where the energy programs are unmet by Efficiency Vermont with the incentives also provided to renters. Mr. Schneider advised that BROCC has funds that come from the State for these efforts. Item 10 - There was also a suggestion of setting up a revolving loan fund for the purchase of EVs by residents. Items 12 through 18 – Mr. Schneider noted regarding the development of a community solar project, it would be good if low-income residents could be able to take advantage of this option. Regarding Item 15, Mr. Emerson advised that Tesla is moving for their battery systems being 100 kilowatt and instead of a 4-hour window of storage it could be days of storage. Mr. Schneider asked if there is large scale battery storage in Vermont. Mr. Guiles advised that Tesla has so many battery walls in Vermont that they have a large-scale capacity and can pull from them as if it were a power plant. Mr. Guiles suggested a Habitat for Humanity type volunteer group could be formed to bring expertise for upgrading buildings. Mr. Guiles noted it could be a group of people who spend 3 or 4 hours per weekend working on a specific home that would assist with upgrading the current housing stock.

8. Other Business

Jim Emerson stated there was a proposal for Robert Black to be added to the Energy Committee and potentially one other member. The Select Board will be looking to fill those positions. At the next Energy Committee meeting there will be a review of any agreements to be made. Mr. Orchard will continue with the review of the data usage for the Town.

9. Next Meeting

September 7, 2021 @ 6:00PM

7. Adjournment

The Committee adjourned by consensus at 6:18PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Charlene Bryant
Recording Secretary