

**Brandon Energy Committee Meeting - Draft
September 7, 2021**

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

Committee Members Via Zoom:

Others Present: Tim Guiles, Robert Black

1. Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 6:00PM by Jim Emerson - Chair.

. Inspirational Thoughts

2. Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Matt Orchard and seconded by Jack Schneider to approve the minutes of the August 23, 2021, Energy Committee meeting. **The motion passed unanimously.**

3. SolarFest Update

A discussion was held concerning inviting SolarFest to find a home for their activities here in Brandon.

A motion was made by Jim Emerson and seconded by Lowell Rasmussen to receive permission by the committee, for himself and Jack Schneider to reach out to SolarFest to continue formal discussions on bringing their business and activities to Brandon. **The motion passed unanimously.**

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

A motion was made by Jim Emerson and seconded by Jack Schneider to receive permission by the committee to continue learning and exploring the potential for solar projects here in Brandon. **The motion passed unanimously.**

5. Municipal Energy Consumption/Conservation Past and Goals

Matt Orchard continues to evaluate the municipal data for energy use that was provided by Tim Guiles. Robert Black encouraged the Committee to develop a data base of five to ten years and prioritize where the best investments are. There could also be conservation and management strategies done. Matt Orchard reported the baseline is from 2017 and more could be available but would require more work. Tim Guiles advised GMP can provide commercial and residential power use, but the fuel use is not known. Jim Emerson advised one of the Committee's goals is the reduction of greenhouse gases and a baseline needs to be determined.

A motion as made by Jim Emerson and seconded by Lowell Rasmussen to authorize Matt Orchard to continue the project of evaluating the municipal data on energy use and greenhouse gas consumption and to come up with recommendations for meeting the goals of the State. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Information on commercial and residential usage was provided to the membership. The RRPC looks at this information and can provide information on facilities that are changing to heat pumps and solar. It was noted the Committee should determine how to support the transition as this will push the electric consumption up.

6. Plans for Harvest Fest

Jack Schneider reported the Town's Harvest Fest is scheduled for October 3rd from 1PM to 3PM this year. Efficiency VT, BROCC and Neighborworks will be hosting a virtual event this year on October 21st. Mr. Schneider will be representing the Energy Committee at the event and Efficiency VT will be present to do a "Button-up" campaign for weatherization. Mr. Schneider has not heard back from BROCC, but he thinks it would be helpful to have one of their representatives present as they have not had a huge uptake from literature, and they do not have a backlog of projects now and are looking for sign-ups. BROCC has done some projects in Brandon over the years. They do up to \$9500 for low-income households that can include insulation, windows, doors and heat pumps. They have 14 people on staff. October is the button up month for Vermont. Mr. Schneider has asked Efficiency VT to announce they will be participating and noted that the Brandon Chamber and the Town will also be promoting the event. It is anticipated to have 200 to 300 people in attendance.

A motion was made by Jim Emerson and seconded by Matt Orchard to authorize Jack Schneider to spearhead the Energy Committee's participation in the Brandon Harvest Fest. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Matt Orchard asked if the Committee could potentially advertise the information for BROCC and volunteered to draft something for them. Mr. Schneider suggested there could be a mailer sent to all households and suggested talking to the post office about the cost.

7. Next Steps in Goal Setting

Jim Emerson reviewed the information received from the membership for the Energy Committee's goals ranked by priority, difficulty and the amount of time for completion. Mr. Emerson suggested each committee member choose at least one short-term of under 6 months and a long-term goal to champion the cause. Some goals could also be done by multiple members.

For the first goal of monthly articles for the Reporter and/or FPF, Mr. Emerson has drafted an article and suggested the draft be submitted to the Select Board for their approval. Information on the Harvest Fest will be included in the article. Mr. Emerson requested authorization from the Committee to submit articles over the next three months to the Reporter and prior to submission will distribute to the committee members for their feedback.

A motion was made by Lowell Rasmussen and seconded by Matt Orchard to authorize Jim Emerson to spearhead the submission of monthly articles to The Reporter. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Mr. Emerson suggested providing the Energy Committee's contact information to enable people to contact the members to discuss the energy saving measures that are offered through BROCC, Neighborworks and Efficiency VT. Mr. Schneider will create a document outlining the offerings from each of the entities for the committee members information.

With reference to the SolarFest goal, Jack Schneider said the Town would be the host of the event, but the Energy Committee would be the support group, with Bill Moore as the person to coordinate this effort. Mr. Schneider noted there are a lot of EV events around Vermont but working with Emily Eckert to get car dealers here would be helpful. Tim Guiles advised there was an EV event held in Middlebury that was well attended with around 100 attendees and 12 EV car owners.

Robert Black stated attendance in the 4th of July parade could be a creative and fun way to get the word out. Jim Emerson suggested it would be a good time to host an EV festival at the end of the parade as it brings a large crowd to the Town.

Jim Emerson stated the idea is to break down the goals for each sector of the Town and determine what it will look like in the future. The big thrust will be a large solar capacity that would feed businesses and residents. Mr. Emerson advised Mr. Orchard is working on Item 2 of the goals. Mr. Emerson stated

Efficiency Vermont would assist with Item 6 regarding an energy audit and there will need to be someone to coordinate that effort with the Town. For Item 9 relating to the creation of incentives, someone would need to determine how this could happen. For a waste reduction program, Mr. Emerson does not know what the Town does to monitor their waste, but this would be worth looking into to try to minimize that. Jack Schneider stated the food composting goal is out of the Energy Committee's mandate. The Select Board's direction for the Energy Committee to do the energy portion of the Town Plan and focus on education. There was a series of articles on how to do composting that would make sense to encourage people to view. Regarding the goal for community solar projects, Tim Guiles suggested doing some installation of the solar panels with volunteer labor or find investors who do not expect too much for their return. The maintenance garage conversion to green goal is being considered by the Town and they may seek funds to accomplish this. It is an important item to keep focus on. A large goal would be the installation of a mega-solar installation that would be a longer-term project. Mr. Emerson asked the membership to provide him information on any additional goals they would like added to the list. The intention is that the membership would think about which projects each person wants to spearhead with at least one short-term and one long-term for discussion at a subsequent meeting.

8. Other Business

It was the consensus of the Committee so set the regular committee meeting date to the 2nd Monday of the month beginning at 5:00PM.

Tim Guiles suggested the Committee consider a process, similar to BRAVO, where there could be several members who could participate on actions, without being voting members. It was suggested volunteers could assist with programs or projects like the EV Festival or a community solar project. Jack Schneider advised State statute dictates there could be up to 9 members on the Committee. Jim Emerson suggested asking the Select Board if there could be additional support for the Energy Committee.

9. Review of Committee Members Agreements for Follow-up Actions

Jack Schneider will work on the Harvest Fest event. Jim Emerson and Jack Schneider will continue work on SolarFest and Matt Orchard to continue his analysis on the municipal energy usage.

10. Next Meeting

October 11, 2021 @ 5:00PM

7. Adjournment

The Committee adjourned by consensus at 7:13PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Charlene Bryant
Recording Secretary