

**Brandon Energy Committee Meeting - Draft
December 6, 2021**

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

1. Call to order

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

2. Inspirational Thoughts

Each Board member provided their comments on how they would like to be supported in accomplishing their goals. Jim Emerson would like the Committee to call on each other with honesty and willingness to share differing points of view, noting his own enthusiasm got him on a poor path. Jack Schneider noted enthusiasm is a positive and helps to push people in the direction they need to go. Lowell Rasmussen also noted enthusiasm is not a bad thing. Being in uncharted territory, he feels comfortable with the Energy Committee and encouraged collaboration. Mr. Emerson encouraged the Board to respond to correspondences that he sends out. Matt Orchard also enjoys collaboration and felt well supported. Mr. Schneider noted each of the members has different knowledge and as a group can share and make a more effective committee.

3. Agenda Adoption

A motion was made by Lowell Rasmussen and seconded by Jack Schneider to approve the agenda as presented. **The motion passed unanimously.**

4. Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Jack Schneider and seconded by Lowell Rasmussen to approve the minutes of the November 1, 2021, Energy Committee meeting as amended. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Mr. Emerson provided the following edits:

Item 4 – Mr. Emerson acknowledged the excellent clarity of Lowell Rasmussen and Matt Orchard’s goal planning processes.

Item 6 – Addition of NeighborWorks to the motion.

Item 7 – Mr. Emerson reported the BEC is looking at supporting interest in a community solar project.

Item 10 – Jim Emerson will call Mike Bailey about the timing of their visit and include Bill Moore.

3. Brandon Energy Committee (BEC) Logo and Byline

Jim Emerson reported he has not connected with Robert Black on this subject from the previous meeting. Matt Orchard volunteered to assist with the design of a BEC logo and by-line and will prepare something for the next meeting.

4. Member Update on Goals Progress

Mr. Emerson reviewed the updates on the members’ goals progress.

A goal of developing a BEC budget for submission to the Town’s Budget Committee was added to the list of goals. Mr. Emerson advised the Budget Committee was meeting this evening and he provided budget information based on information he received from Matt Orchard and Lowell Rasmussen. Mr. Schneider recommended funds be included

for signage that could be used at festivals and for the July 4th float. Funding for website design was also suggested. Mr. Schneider will sketch out some steps on his goals. He noted the BEC should have a link through the Town's website to enable the BEC to provide links to rebates and incentives and information from Neighborworks, Efficiency VT and other groups. Mr. Schneider reported Bill Moore has engaged someone for website maintenance and suggested they may be able to create a subsite for the BEC. Mr. Schneider will discuss this possibility with Robert Black and Bill Moore.

Jack Schneider reported the first Davenport Festival will be held at Estabrook Park on July 9th from 10AM to 6PM and will include all things electric. This is a Town initiative the BEC will support and any costs associated will be paid by the Town. Matt Orchard has volunteered to help with food truck vendors. There will be a meeting this Thursday at 5PM to discuss details of the event. The preliminary planning will determine a list to contact and it is hoped some of the contacts will assist with sponsoring the event. Stephane Jerome will put through a proclamation in the Legislature that it will be Thomas Davenport Day and Kevin Thornton will assist with drafting the proclamation.

Lowell Rasmussen is to get input from BEC for the proposed energy survey. Mr. Rasmussen provided a copy of the draft survey. Mr. Rasmussen noted one issue with the survey is the State guideline targets. He does not think anyone knows data on greenhouse gas emissions in 1995 or how the Town used energy at that time. Mr. Rasmussen suggested the survey could assist with a baseline in determining what Brandon is doing and what the trends are. The first section of the survey would provide the reason for the survey and indicate this is not a sprint, but a marathon stretched over 20 years. The Town needs to think about what is being done now, and 10 years and 20 years out. Mr. Rasmussen requested suggestions of how to strengthen that section. Mr. Rasmussen thought this area will do well with renewable energy, but the question is how to get a handle on residential greenhouse gases. Mr. Rasmussen is trying to make the survey as easy as possible and keep a format that would easily transfer into a spreadsheet-type format. Jim Emerson suggested it could be done through a program like SurveyMonkey. Mr. Rasmussen reported he has had a discussion with the Town about adding the survey to the Annual Report, however, it is not certain how the logistics would work with the return of the surveys to the BEC. Mr. Rasmussen will speak with the Town to determine if additional labels could be run. It was suggested there could be a drawing for a gift card for completing the survey. Jack Schneider noted privacy is important but it would be good to have demographics and perhaps a demographic question could be included. Mr. Rasmussen will ask Barbara Noyes-Pulling and Dave Atherton what type of information they would like to obtain from the survey. Mr. Rasmussen will continue to work with Rutland Printing to obtain a quote and would like to have a final draft of the survey completed by January for the Committee's review. It was also suggested to have surveys available at Town Meeting. Jim Emerson requested BEC members have their suggestions to Mr. Rasmussen by December 20th. Mr. Rasmussen requested concept suggestions, what information is missing and should be added, and suggestions on the format for the survey.

Jim Emerson reported he submitted the weatherization article to the newspaper and drafted the BEC report for the Town's Annual Report.

Other goals outlined to work on included:

- . Creating an energy savings display by Robert Black
- . Converting the goal of developing an energy resource binder to developing a website presence associated with the Town's website.
- . Support Solarfest coming to Brandon.

Jim Emerson reported SolarFest Board voted to make an offer on a property. They are looking to be an on-going training program for workforce development and are hoping to team up with Heat Squad and Efficiency Vermont to have a shared site for providing these trainings. They are also committed to providing community solar.

. Jack Schneider to continue to assist the Town in spearheading the EV Festival and create a BEC float for the July 4th parade with an electric motor theme. Mr. Schneider noted the EV Festival will be the following week from the parade and it is hoped to have an electric tractor to pull the flatbed for the parade.

. Jim Emerson will begin drafting a survey on best practices among other energy committees starting in January.

. Matt Orchard is working on annual total savings for energy-saving conversions for the Town. Mr. Orchard suggested meeting with Mr. Emerson to go over the information. Mr. Orchard also suggested obtaining information other municipal departments such as the wastewater treatment plant.

. Robert Black to talk with other municipality groups to do a survey of what their status is on energy conservation.

. Support a community solar project for residents. Mr. Emerson noted it is hopeful to work with SolarFest on this.

. Jim Emerson to do an article on community solar. Jack Schneider suggested one of the questions for the survey should be if people would be interested in community solar.

. Robert Black is working on the possibility of solar at the Town Garage. It is hoped the State will come through with funds for solar programs.

. Matt Orchard is ongoingly working on a monthly electric vehicle summary.

. Jack Schneider to recruit volunteers for the EV Festival and will try to get someone to do the residential piece.

. Jim Emerson is looking for funds for added incentives for Brandon residents to take up Heat Squad audits and Efficiency VT purchases. He noted Seth Hopkins had indicated the Town will not be making any decisions on ARPA funds for this until all constraints on the funds are determined. Mr. Schneider has reviewed recent incentives and advised the best rebates are in terms of heating and cooling.

. Jim Emerson requested any additional feedback for the Annual Report should be sent to him by tomorrow.

9. Other Business

The Vermont Climate Action website has an update on the Climate Action Plan. It was also noted the State has a comprehensive Energy Plan that Barbara Noyes-Pulling sent to the BEC. VCANs has several seminars with one on how to engage communities to have strong energy support. There is a Vermont grassroots environmental program that provides grants for energy efficiency efforts. Matt Orchard stated the process for the grants is a quick turnaround and could potentially be used for the survey costs.

It was reported Tim Guiles sent the BEC information on the federal funding for climate structure for projects to make rural communities more energy independent. This was announced and it is hoped this funding will provide assistance for community solar.

Mr. Schneider reported the BEC is not required to make updates to the Energy section of the Town Plan at this time but noted there are a limited number of preferred solar sites listed in the Plan. The Elemental Partners site is not one of them, but Smoke Rise and Kimball Road are included, but there could be more sites that qualify. Mr. Schneider advised that in 2019 the BEC was going to conduct a viewshed survey but that got held up by COVID. Mr. Schneider suggested doing a review of the viewsheds that would not be good locations for solar projects.

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

. BEC members to provide Mr. Rasmussen thoughts and additions for the survey.

. Jack Schneider to contact Bill Moore to discuss website design and offer the lead on this goal to Robert Black.

. Matt Orchard to prepare ideas for a BEC logo and byline.

. Lowell Rasmussen to contact Dave Atherton and Barbara Noyes-Pulling of the RRPC regarding the proposed survey and obtain a cost estimate from Rutland Printers on the survey.

. Jim Emerson to follow-up with the SolarFest group and draft the next BEC newspaper article on community solar.

11. Next Meeting

Brandon Energy Committee
December 6, 2021

January 3, 2021 @ 5:00PM at the Brandon Town Hall

7. Adjournment

A motion was made by Lowell Rasmussen and seconded by Jack Schneider to adjourn the meeting at 5:58PM. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,

Charlene Bryant
Recording Secretary