

**Brandon Energy Committee Meeting - Draft
March 21, 2022**

Committee Members Present: Jim Emerson, Jack Schneider, Robert Black

Others Present: Jeff Cohen, Jeff Haylon

1. Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 4:36PM by Jim Emerson – Chair.

2. Inspirational Thoughts

The Committee members provided their thoughts on what they felt is the urgency of their work.

3. Agenda Adoption

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

4. Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Jack Schneider and seconded by Robert Black to approve the minutes of the February 7, 2022, Energy Committee meeting. **The motion passed unanimously.**

5. Honoring Matthew Orchard – Suggestions for Filling Vacant Seat

Jim Emerson advised a letter of interest is required from anyone who is interested in joining the Energy Committee, though individuals are invited to participate in the meetings. Mr. Emerson provided Mr. Haylon and Mr. Cohen information on the goals the Energy Committee is working on. It was suggested the membership could possibly be expanded for the Energy Committee.

6. Plans for July 4th Parade Float

Jack Schneider talked with Mike Bailey of SolarFest and they have signed up for their own float for the parade. They have red, white, and blue EVs that will be in the parade and will have children in costume from Theatre in the Woods. In terms of the Energy Committee, a banner is needed announcing the Davenport Festival the following weekend. Jim Emerson advised he will be creating an entry for the parade using a Chevy Bolt and providing information about cost per mile to operate and the total maintenance costs. With regard to an Energy Committee float, Robert Black suggested creating a bicycle-powered and hand-pulled float. He will work with the Neshobe School art teacher and Ethan Nelson to create the float. He also suggested using other modes of transportation such as foot, pedal, etc. Mr. Black suggested having other information about Thomas Davenport and someone could play the part to personalize the concept. Mr. Schneider will contact the Antique Auto Club to also have antique cars in the parade. Mr. Emerson will request handouts for the parade from Efficiency Vermont. Mr. Emerson will develop a design for the sign boards and talk to Tim Guiles about doing something similar. In terms of the EV fest, Mr. Schneider stated there needs to be a background for photo ops and suggested creating something that could be used for the parade, EV Fest, and the Brandon Museum for their Thomas Davenport display. Mr. Schneider stated the Energy Committee will have a small budget beginning in July. Mr. Black suggested the DBA may be able to provide funding. Mr. Schneider suggested with regard to graphics, a banner be developed to hang over Center Street a week or two before the event.

7. Update on Survey

Jim Emerson advised a written version of the survey will be done in July, but there has been discussion of an electronic version be done prior to that time. Jack Schneider stated Barbara Noyes-Pulling has indicated the Energy Committee

will not be able to use the RRPC's license for Survey Monkey due to restrictions. Mr. Schneider talked to Survey Monkey and one can sign up for an annual plan. He will format the electronic version into Survey Monkey and route to the Committee members for comments and will request an email list from the Brandon Chamber. The survey will be for the local businesses only. Robert Black will put together the residential draft to be able to collate the residential and business versions together from Google. It needs to be determined the target market. The residential survey is a yes/no type of version and a similar thing will be done for the businesses. Jeff Cohen suggested a method for getting information out regarding the survey could be to place it in a municipal-type bill, like the sewer billing. Mr. Schneider will look into placing the survey on the Town's website. Mr. Schneider noted one of the questions in the survey will be asking if people would be interested in participating in a community solar array. Details on the survey will be completed by the next meeting.

8. Electric Fest Update and Brandon Museum Grant Hopes

Jack Schneider reported there is a bi-weekly meeting for this festival that is a town-sponsored event scheduled for July 9th, which is the birthday of Thomas Davenport. There will be a proclamation done by the Legislature. The Town will be funding this event and will have many things electric. The Energy Committee will partner with the Brandon Museum. Steven Jupiter has put together with the Select Board's input a \$500,000 request for funds for the museum that will include taking over the EV Festival. This year they will participate with the Energy Committee. Bill Moore has obtained a tent and there will be musical acts and food trucks. Some sponsors are hesitant to participate due to the pandemic. It is hoped to get Drive Electric and Efficiency Vermont to participate in the event. Jim Emerson stated many businesses do not have staff for the day and it is hoped that next year there will be many more businesses involved. Car dealers can schedule test drives in their show rooms but test drives will not be available at the Festival. Mr. Schneider sent a letter of the support from the Energy Committee for the pursuit of the grant for the Brandon Museum and the Select Board also provided a similar letter of support. Robert Black suggested enlisting many people who have EVs to attend the festival and designate an area in the parking lot for EVs. This event will be advertised in the July 4th parade.

9. SolarFest Update

Jack Schneider has talked with Mike Bailey of SolarFest and all contracts were to be signed last week. The Planning Commission endorsed MHG Solar to place a 2.2-megawatt project in Brandon and MHG will donate half of the land that they purchase for this project to SolarFest. Mr. Bailey provided photos of the barns on site that will be used for training. Jeff Cohen asked where the power will go. It was noted MHG Solar has to win a bid with the PUC and all power will go into the grid and will be apportioned to all utilities in the State based on their size. Mr. Emerson stated MHG has participated in this process and have had a 50% success rate. Mr. Schneider stated as soon as the contracts are signed, they will officially announce it. Mr. Emerson noted SolarFest hopes to do on-site training and create community solar.

10. Info Displays

Robert Black stated the cross over articles for The Reporter is good outreach. He suggested working on the mission statement. The Committee needs to let people know about the Energy Committee and its mission, that also ties into the mission of the State. There could also be information provided about what can be done right now. The Committee's presence on the Town's website should be stronger. Conservation efficiencies should be a concentration for the Committee. Jack Schneider stated the Town is thinking about rebranding Brandon as the birthplace of the electric motor. Mr. Black suggested the logo could be revised to a brand identity and be consistent with the brand year after year. The Town office window is a good spot for one or two posters and there are several other windows in Town that could have graphic posters. Mr. Black stressed the Committee should let people know about the Committee and its overarching goals for energy and what actions they can do to get involved. Jeff Haylon noted his sister is a graphic designer and she could potentially assist in this effort. Mr. Black would like to get the logo resolved and put a tag line in for the birthplace of the electric motor. Jim Emerson will produce some bullet points to help and Mr. Black will be in contact with Jeff Haylon to discuss the logo.

11. Revisit Town Energy Plan Visibility Limits

Jack Schneider reported the Town had the first solar developer contact the Town regarding a proposed project since the Energy Plan was created. There was to be a section on viewsheds that changed. It was the intent to do a viewshed analysis of the Town, but that has not been done yet. The Energy Committee should think about what they would like to see changed prior to the next renewal of the Town Plan. It was suggested this could be integrated with the Greenways Committee. Robert Black will research the prior work that had been done with the Planning Commission. Jack Schneider will be in contact with MHG Solar and SolarFest to discuss their input on the Town Plan. Jim Emerson stated another project would be to do an analysis on the feasibility of solar on residential homes and businesses, and determine the sites that would be good for solar. Mr. Emerson will contact Middlebury College to see if they would like to participate in the EV Festival. Mr. Emerson advised there is information from Efficiency Vermont that Brandon is in the top half for density of solar in the State and with the MHG project, it would put the Town in the top quarter.

12. New Possibility for ARPA Funds for Solar

Jim Emerson stated Ben Marks from Acorn Solar had confirmed that ARPA Funds could be used for solar. It was suggested requesting the Select Board pursue a town solar project. Mr. Emerson will attend the next Select Board meeting to discuss the possibility of using some of the ARPA funds for solar. Robert Black had contacted Bill Moore about energy audits for municipal entities. It was noted the Town has committed ARPA funds for sewer. Seth Hopkins wants to be sure the ARPA funds benefit the majority of residents. Mr. Black stated the USDA has several grant funds and suggested working in coordination with the Town and Planning Commission. Mr. Emerson stated there needs to be someone to research the grant funding for energy conservation as there will be decisions made for this funding in the coming months. Bill Moore is on the Prudential Board for the Fire District and they have a piece of property that they could build a solar project to meet their needs. Mr. Emerson noted Efficiency Vermont could be contacted to do audits for the groups like the Fire Department, Sewer Department, Rescue Squad, and schools. Mr. Black noted an interesting graphic could be where Brandon gets its energy.

13. Other Business

Jim Emerson suggested members of the Energy Committee have a conversation with Brandon's new Police Chief about electric cars.

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

- . Jim Emerson to send card to Matthew Orchard
- . Robert Black to create graphics and inquiring if funds could be provided by the DBA for the July 4th parade
- . Jim Emerson to design an entry for the July 4th parade and contact Efficiency Vermont regarding handouts
- . Jim Emerson and Robert Black to work on the residential and business versions of the survey
- . Jim Emerson to contact Sue Gage about including a notice in the water bills about the survey and contact Bill Moore about placing a link to the Survey Monkey on the Town's website
- . For EV Fest – create a VIP parking area for EV owners
- . Jim Emerson will follow-up with SolarFest group on energy education and discuss reciprocal volunteer assistance with the EV Fest and SolarFest Events
- . Robert Black to fine tune graphics and mission statement
- . Jim Emerson to create bullet points on how people can help
- . Jack Schneider to talk with MHG Solar to obtain their input on the Energy section of the Town Plan
- . Jim Emerson to discuss with Tim Guiles what will be presented to the Select Board regarding ARPA funds for energy projects
- . Jim Emerson and Jack Schneider to have a conversation with the Police Chief
- . Jim Emerson to talk with Middlebury College about the EV Fest

15. Next Meeting

April 19, 2022 @ 4:30PM at the Brandon Town Hall

16. Adjournment

The Committee adjourned by consensus at 6:00PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Charlene Bryant
Recording Secretary