

Brandon Energy Committee Meeting - Draft
May 2, 2022

Committee Members Present: Jim Emerson, Jack Schneider, Jeff Cohen, Lowell Rasmussen, Jeff Haylon, Robert Black

Others Present:

1. Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 5:02PM by Jim Emerson – Chair.

2. Inspirational Thoughts

The Committee members provided their thoughts on ways to improve the goal setting process.

Jim Emerson noted last year there were a number of sessions to discuss what is to be accomplished over the years. There will need to be an update on the progress to provide a report to the Select Board. Short-term and long-term goals were set and a discussion of the goals was held. There are around 30 goals and several viable goals that are to be pursued. Jeff Cohen suggested ranking the goals. Mr. Emerson would like each member to take ownership of a goal, possibly narrowing down to the top 15. Some of the short-term goals have been accomplished. Lowell Rasmussen stated the goals were set last year and it needs to be determined what has changed that has impacted the goals. Mr. Emerson has invited Barbara Noyes-Pulling to the next meeting to provide suggestion and guidance. Of the 27 towns in the region, only two have town plans with an energy section. There will be a brainstorming session and Mr. Emerson suggested the members research prior to the meeting what other energy committees are doing and review the current goals. Jack Schneider noted the Green Energy Times has a lot of good information. There is an open position on the Energy Committee and anyone interested in joining the Committee can send a letter of interest to Dave Atherton, Town Manager.

3. Agenda Adoption

A motion was made by Jeff Haylon and seconded by Jeff Cohen 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 April 19, 2022, Energy Committee meeting. **The motion passed unanimously.**

5. Welcome Jeff Haylon

Jim Emerson welcomed Jeff Haylon as a new member to the Energy Committee. Mr. Haylon moved to Brandon a year ago. He wants to both personally and socially do everything he can to assure the planet is habitable and to make Brandon better.

6. Report on Proposals for Select Board for Solar and EV Police Vehicle

Jim Emerson reported the Town has delayed the purchase of an EV police car. There is a strong commitment to go to an EV but they are not ready to take that lead. Jack Schneider stated it is nice the Select Board asked the Energy Committee's input and they are looking for the Energy Committee to do some of the legwork. Mr. Schneider had researched the police EV and attended a demonstration by the Richmond police department on the Tesla EV they own. He noted it is a tight fit for the police officers and would be the same for the Ford Mach-E which are the two best options currently. The Select Board thanked the Energy Committee for their work and the Brandon police chief pledged that the next cruiser purchase would be an EV. Robert Black stated the Energy Committee should continue to

build an alliance with the Select Board so that they will look to the Energy Committee in areas of energy. With regard to the proposed solar project as a possible use of ARPA funds, Mr. Emerson advised it would be a 150kW project and the most plausible location is on top of the old landfill. This project would more than meet the needs for the municipality. SolarFest is proposing to develop a community solar that perhaps could be on a more affordable scale. Mr. Schneider stated a significant portion of the Town's use is streetlights and is charged at a nightly rate. The Town takes about half of Green Lantern's output. It was noted GMP owns the streetlights and install low energy lights that are charged at a fixed rate. It is hopeful these energy-saving proposals will move forward in the future on both fronts. Mr. Schneider advised there are still ARPA funds available and if anyone has suggestions for its use, they can contact the Town Manager. Mr. Atherton would like to use the funding for projects that need to be done and there is a desire to benefit everyone in Town. Mr. Black stated if the Town Manager could start thinking of items the Energy Committee could help them with, it would provide some direction. During the Select Board meeting, it was suggested that solar could be researched for either the police station or the town garage. Mr. Schneider suggested the idea of a solar canopy as there are seven police vehicles. He will obtain a quote from Sun Commons for this type of project. Mr. Black also suggested contacting Kevin Birchmore of Green Earth Energy as they are local to potentially partner with them to turn this into a town project.

7. Survey Implementation Plans

Jim Emerson advised Tim Guiles has suggested setting up working groups within the Energy Committee on given project to alleviate quorum concerns.

Jack Schneider emailed the Committee members the survey to be sent out to the Chamber members and noted a link will be put into the Chamber newsletter. There is a complete email list of all Chamber members and it was the consensus to send to Brandon businesses only, as there are 40 or 50 individual members who are not businesses but are members of the Chamber. Robert Black stated the process will be to correlate the data points between the business and residential surveys, largely relating to building types and energy management types. Jack Schneider suggested Chamber individual members will receive the residential survey when that is ready. It was suggested to stay within the Brandon governance at this point. There was a discussion of whether it should be anonymous or not and the Energy Committee only wants data for Brandon in general, but not by address. Jeff Cohen suggested one question be how much fuel is used per year rather than the cost of fuel per year due to the fluctuating prices, or both units and costs could be requested. Mr. Schneider advised if Survey Monkey is used, it goes out anonymously and it is linked to a webpage and personal information is not provided to the Energy Committee. Survey Monkey will cost \$35/month and it was suggested the Town could have this service available for other groups if it is purchased by the Town. Jim Emerson noted concern with the timing and avenue for distributing a written version and suggested getting people to hand out surveys during the July 4th event. It was suggested to get the electronic survey out through FPF, Brandon Chamber, a link on the Town's website and an article in The Reporter with information on the survey. Jeff Cohen noted that a 20% response would be a great response from a survey. Robert Black, Jack Schneider, and Lowell Rasmussen will be the working group for the two surveys. Mr. Rasmussen will develop a draft article for The Reporter and distribute to the Committee members. Mr. Black will talk to Bill Moore and Bernie Carr about a subscription for Survey Monkey. It was suggested the hard copy surveys be completed for distribution during the July 4th event. A discussion will be held with the Town Office regarding the coordination for the return of the surveys.

8. Plans for July 4th Parade Float – Establish Working Group

Robert Black reported he has talked with Ethan Nelson and John Brodowski who are building a giant tricycle for the parade and another individual who has E-bikes. It was suggested there could be a banner with other peddle-powered means of transportation. Jeff Haylon volunteered to assist with the prep work. Jack Schneider reported SolarFest will have a float in the parade and it was suggested the Energy Committee be located near them. Jim Emerson will be driving his Tesla with a display of cost information for operating and statistics on repair costs. Mr. Black also suggested videoing the parade. Robert Black, Jeff Haylon and Jeff Cohen will be the working group for this event.

9. Info Displays

Robert Black provided a draft document with an overview of the Vermont and Brandon Energy goals. Mr. Black suggested a stronger mission statement and having easy bullet points to be a call for action. He would like to have a

simple statement that the Energy Committee is working together with the Planning Commission and Town and invite the community to participate in the meetings. Mr. Black and Mr. Schneider have discussed the options that Efficiency Vermont offers and suggested providing highlights for the community with possibly 2 or 3 items on the Energy Committee's website with QR codes.

10. SolarFest Update

Jim Emerson reported SolarFest will be meeting in Town on June 4th to discuss their intentions. Mr. Emerson is working with the RRPC to develop a banner that will have the RRPC and Town's logo. Robert Black suggested T-shirts could be purchased with the Energy Committee logo. It was noted there are issues with obtaining solar panels due to orders sourced from China. The US producers are only producing about ¼ of the panels that puts much on hold.

11. Other Business

There was no discussion held.

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

Two working groups were developed:

- 1) Lowell Rasmussen, Jack Schneider, and Robert Black – survey implementation
- 2) Robert Black, Jeff Cohen, and Jeff Haylon – July 4th float

Robert Black and Jack Schneider to research a police solar canopy

13. Next Meeting

June 6, 2022 @ 4:30PM at the Brandon Town Hall

14. Adjournment

The Committee adjourned by consensus at 5:59PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Charlene Bryant
Recording Secretary