

Brandon Energy Committee (BEC) Meeting - Draft
July 5, 2022

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

Others Present: Tim Guiles, Barbara Noyes-Pulling

1. Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 4:30PM by Jim Emerson – Chair.

2. Inspirational Thoughts

Jim Emerson posed the question of whether the BEC's actions should be more local or outside the community. Barbara Noyes-Pulling had sent information about the master plan that was done for Addison County of well thought out strategies. Tim Guiles suggested working with Rutland County to have this type of plan. Mr. Emerson asked how much beyond Brandon should the Energy Committee currently focus. Lollie Hoxie stated it should be a smaller portion of the actions with the main focus to be on Brandon. Erin Ballantine stated there is value to pulling resources from outside the community but noted differences between the cities and towns. Robert Black suggested the BEC could have a liaison, but due to the Committee being in its early stages, it should build a foundation and move forward from that. There needs to be alliances with the Town and focus until the Committee has groundwork. Jack Schneider advised there are resources like BROCC, Neighborworks and Efficiency Vermont that are outside the area that could be used locally to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and drive electric rebates. There is also VECAN that has 100 energy committees around the State that can be used as a source. Mr. Emerson concurred there is a foundation started, but the Committee needs to produce additional results before putting energy into other outreach. It is hoped the Committee members will have an interest in connecting with VECAN and RRPC to share what the Committee is doing.

3. Agenda Adoption

A motion was made by Jeff Haylon and seconded by Robert Black to approve the agenda as amended. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Remove BROCC Program Introduction with Darrell Green; to be rescheduled to the next meeting.

4. Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Jeff Haylon and seconded by Robert Black to approve the minutes of the June 6, 2022, BEC meeting. **The motion passed unanimously.**

5. Welcome Lollie Hoxie

Jim Emerson welcomed Lollie Hoxie as a new member of the BEC. Ms. Hoxie moved to Vermont a year ago. Her interest in Vermont is that it is her native habitat and her agenda is to be an active part of the community.

6. Election of Officers

a) Chair

A motion was made by Jack Schneider and seconded by Robert Black to nominate Jim Emerson as Chair of the BEC. **The motion passed unanimously.**

b) Vice-Chair

A motion was made by Jeff Haylon and seconded by Robert Black to nominate Jeff Haylon as Vice-Chair of the BEC. **The motion passed unanimously.**

c) Secretary

A motion was made by Jim Emerson and seconded by Jeff Haylon to nominate Robert Black as the Secretary of the BEC. **The motion passed unanimously.**

6. July 4th Parade Review

Jim Emerson reported the BEC parade entry was a success and thanked all who were involved. It was noted there was a lot of effort put into the float. Robert Black stated it was a good cooperative effort and he received unsolicited comments about the BEC. Jeff Haylon stated several people were asking about the specs of the lawnmower which could get people to move toward electric. Mr. Black suggested sending a note of thanks from the BEC to Taylor Rental for the use of the lawnmower.

7. Survey implementation Plans

Jim Emerson advised that different locations for distribution of the survey will need to be determined as Hannafords and Walgreens are not an option. There was discussion of distributing through Front Porch Forum, the Chamber, and possibly distribution with the municipal water or tax bills. Erin Ballantine suggested the Brandon Library could be a place to distribute the surveys. Mr. Emerson stated there will be an article in The Reporter. Robert Black advised both residential and commercial surveys will be sent out. Jeff Cohen suggested providing information about the link for the virtual survey. Jeff Haylon suggested the Farmer's Market as a distribution location. Mr. Emerson stated there is also an option to canvas door to door. It is planned to have the Town Office as a drop location for completed surveys, but it is hoped that most will be virtual. Barbara Noyes-Pulling reported the RRPC has gone to Google Forms that the BEC could use and a QR code would need to be done separately. Mr. Emerson noted a communication system will also need to be developed. It was suggested to contact Bill Moore to request a Town email address be created for the BEC. Tim Guiles stated the door to door canvassing would be a good option. Mr. Emerson suggested a sub-committee for the survey planning could be Tim Guiles, Jeff Cohen, and Jeff Haylon. Mr. Black advised the survey is one page double-sided that could be printed. Erin Ballantine and Robert Black will work on finalizing the electronic version. Lollie Hoxie suggested having a buddy system for canvassing and Mr. Guiles suggested if canvassing, the BEC should complete the surveys at that time. Jack Schneider noted it needs to be assured the survey is anonymous. Mr. Haylon suggested announcing the canvassing for the survey in hopes that people would have information for the survey available. Mr. Black will speak with Matt Clouser about a block in The Reporter and will work on a lead-in for the survey.

9. Update on Davenport Festival

Jack Schneider advised there will be a general-purpose tent at the Davenport Event where the BEC table will be located. Senator Sanders will be unable to attend, but his Vermont coordinator will be present, as well as other candidates. Governor Scott will be present to read the proclamation. There will be a variety of vendors, and various electric vehicles that will include a Ford F150 Lightning and possibly a police car. The Brandon Police Chief has purchased an electric motorcycle that may be delivered in time for the Event. There will be children activities, food trucks and a DJ. David Hammond from UVM will be present to demonstrate the Davenport motor that he has built that will ultimately be on display at the Brandon Museum. A special parking section will be available for EV owners. Solar Fest representatives will also be present. The event will be Saturday, July 9th from 11AM to 6PM.

10. Update of Existing Goals and Suggestions for Next Year's Goals

Jim Emerson stated the BEC had developed a list of goals with some goals having been accomplished this year. He would like to develop working groups to focus on solar installation for the community and individual homes, acquisition of EVs and heat pumps for businesses and residents, and work on weatherization. Mr. Emerson advised a representative from BROOC will be meeting with the BEC next month. Jeff Haylon suggested the working groups could

be termed as 1) Generation - primarily solar, 2) Transportation – Evs, electric bikes and increased public transit, and 3) Preservation or conservation - heat pumps and weatherization.

Mr. Emerson provided an overview of the current goals. 1) Creation of a team for next year's July 4th Committee has been completed. 2) Establish a Harvest Fest booth – Jack Schneider advised Efficiency Vermont, BROCC and Neighborworks were invited last year, and a person from Heat Squad was also present. Mr. Schneider will ask the partners to provide brochures and host a tent. This was a Chamber event but will now be a Town Rec Event. Mr. Schneider volunteered to oversee this event for the BEC. Barbara Noyes Pulling stated follow-through is important for those people that have received energy audits and that is the biggest challenge. Ms. Noyes-Pulling noted the Button-up program will be available this year. Mr. Schneider advised based on income, BROCC and Efficiency Vermont can offer assistance. Erin Ballantine asked if there are funds from the State or other entities to assist with the upgrades. Mr. Emerson stated there has been new legislation to assist in achieving the goals and Barbara Noyes-Pulling noted the offers change frequently. Lollie Hoxie suggested it would be good if the Town could set up a revolving loan fund for energy upgrades. 3) Support of the Davenport Fest – Jack Schneider reported the Town wants to make this an annual event and next year the BEC will be assisting the Town as volunteers. It was suggested to determine a committee once the first festival has taken place. Robert Black suggested having a sign-up list for people to be part of the BEC working group. Mr. Emerson will draft a volunteer sign-up sheet for the BEC booth at the Davenport event. Lollie Hoxie suggested providing some small giveaways. Jeff Cohen suggested having something at primary voting on August 9th that could be either information about the BEC or possibly the survey. Tim Guiles suggested talking to Sue Gage about this and thought that as long it is not political, it would be possible. 4) Mr. Emerson suggested surveying the most effective practices of other committees. He received a response from VCAN with several contacts and noted Middlebury, Weybridge, Montpelier, and St. Johnsbury have active committees. Jack Schneider will monitor the other towns' websites and contact them. 5) The feasibility of a landfill solar project. The mechanics of this project has not been explored and will be researched and submitted to the Select Board to consider. 6) Survey distribution and results – this is the survey effort that needs to be carried to fruition. Currently there are two groups of people moving this forward. It is hoped to have all details completed by the next meeting concerning the launch of the survey. 7) Educational information to Brandon residents concerning managing food waste for reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Robert Black suggested a 4th working group should be education and suggested there could be other people to partner with for a broader effort on education. 8) Support community solar project – Erin Ballantine and Jim Emerson volunteered to work on this goal. Jack Schneider stated there are opportunities for town residents but also for municipalities as well. 9) Keep Committee educated - Jeff Haylon suggested this could be a part of each working group. Jack Schneider stated part of the mandate is to educate the Select Board and he felt this was done through the police car information. 10) Button-up efforts will be part of the conservation group. 11) Seek Town funds and grants – there had been a request to the Select Board to use ARPA funds. Mr. Schneider advised the Heat Squad has offered a \$50 discount from the usual \$100 fee for audits. The budget this year was not specific enough and needs to have more specifics going forward. Mr. Emerson suggested this could be another working group for researching funding sources to assist residents with the purchase of EVs, solar and other installations. Mr. Schneider suggested the Conservation group could work with Neighborworks and Transportation group with Vermont EV. Mr. Black suggested talking with Stephanie Jerome about potential grants, plus contacting towns like Middlebury and Vergennes who are successful with obtaining grant funding. Mr. Schneider reported the Town's Revolving Loan Fund is primarily business development and, in the rules, it has to be a loan of last resort but allows for businesses to do energy improvements. Erin Ballantine asked if there could potentially be a property tax reduction for energy conservation as an incentive. It was suggested Efficiency Vermont would likely have a ballpark figure on the cost for weatherization. It was noted the survey has several questions that would provide information about the efficiency efforts in the town. 12) Solar canopy for police station – this goal would be researched by the Generation working group. 13) Liaison for Solar Fest – Erin Ballantine met with Michael of Solar Fest and is now on two committees for them. 14) High speed charger in Brandon – this would be handled by the Transportation working group. Mr. Emerson advised there are another 12 goals to be considered that will be covered at the next meeting. Mr. Emerson asked the membership to consider which working group they would like to participate on and suggested each person choose two goals. Each working group would consist of 3 committee members. Mr. Emerson advised the BEC's budget was set for specific items that included \$1,000 for a survey, \$200 for displays, \$2,000 for promotional materials with about \$350 already used for the July 4th parade. It was suggested to specify which working group would be responsible for each goal.

11. Other Business

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Jim Emerson noted some BEC members have volunteered to assist Solar Fest with their event and encouraged anyone else interested in helping with the event to contact either he or Jack Schneider.

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

Erin Ballantine/Robert Black to complete electronic version of the survey

Jeff Haylon/Tim Guiles to complete paper version of survey

Jim Emerson to create sign-up sheet for volunteers for a BEC working group to be available at Davenport Event

Robert Black to send thank-you note to Taylor Rental

Jim Emerson to discuss with Sue Gage possible distribution of survey information with tax bills

Jim Emerson to craft July article for The Reporter

13. Next Meeting

August 1, 2022 @ 4:30PM at the Brandon Town Hall

14. Adjournment

The Committee adjourned by consensus at 5:58PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Charlene Bryant

Recording Secretary