

**Brandon Energy Committee (BEC) Special Meeting - Draft  
May 8, 2023**

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

**Others Present:** Marielle Blaise, Claire Schick, Mike Schick, Bob West, Seth Hopkins, Bill Moore

**Committee Members Present via Zoom:** Eve Beglarian, Carolyn Van Vleck

**1. Call to order**

The meeting was called to order at 5:06PM by Jim Emerson – Chair.

**2. Reflection**

*. Making and keeping agreements builds strong and meaningful relationships*

Jim Emerson stated it is important to make and keep agreements to maintain meaningful relationships. Marielle Blaise advised she is on the core committee for Brandon Heart and Soul and they will be interviewing in Brandon to determine the needs of Brandon and what people like about Brandon. She noted there are many ways this group could benefit the Town. Jack Schneider stated this input would be good for the Planning Commission. Mr. Emerson stated the BEC needs more support with events and suggested having agreements that are time-based for accountability. Mr. Emerson requested Carolyn Van Vleck provide a schedule of the articles she has committed to doing and noted Robert Black will be completing the bookshelf in about two weeks. Jack Schneider agreed to work on the Energy section of the Town Plan following the July events and noted the Planning Commission will be reviewing this section in November. Mr. Schneider advised the Energy section is in good shape, but the data is out of date. There is a questionnaire for solar developers and other details currently in the Plan, but the statistics are not current and the Plan should include future steps.

**3. Agenda Adoption and Approval of Minutes**

A motion was made by Jack Schneider to approve the agenda as amended. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Public Comment to be added to all meeting agendas going forward.

Add Review of Budget

A motion was made by Robert Black to approve the minutes of the April 3, 2023, meeting. **The motion passed unanimously.**

**4. Public Comment**

It was questioned if there is a way to track energy usage as far as how much gasoline is sold in Town. It was noted that the fuel dealers are not interested in making that public at this point. Marielle Blais suggested there could be public transportation offered to some of the large employers in the area, as it could cut down on gasoline use. Robert Black stated there is a flyer in Middlebury that provides information to people regarding bus stops and suggested posting this type of information in Town and possibly assisting with subsidizing rides for people to use the bus.

**4. Upcoming Events**

*. Green Up Day*

Mr. Emerson suggested in the future the BEC needs to be a supportive group of this day.

### ***. Imagine Zero Music Festival May13th***

Jim Emerson reported Imagine Zero Festival will be taking place this Saturday. There are several volunteers from the BEC that will be assisting with this event.

### ***. Parade Entry Plans***

Last year's Parade Committee was Erin Ballantine, Jeff Cohen, Jeff Haylon and Robert Black. Eve Beglarian advised Erin Ballantine, Robert Black and she will be meeting to discuss this event. Jack Schneider stated the E-Bikes should be included in the parade and possibly have them on display at the July 4<sup>th</sup> booth. The Library is working on the details of getting the bikes in use. Marielle Blaise has contacted Laura MacLachlan of the Vermont Energy Education Program (VEEP) who has indicated there will be kits available for children during the July 4<sup>th</sup> event.

### ***. Davenport Festival***

Jack Schneider advised the festival will need volunteers. The Committee is working on vendors for the event. Invitations have been extended to all Washington-based politicians and invitations will also be extended to the local politicians. Mr. Schneider also noted there will be a booth in Central Park during the July 4<sup>th</sup> event that will be shared with the Planning Commission. The Commission will be obtaining input for the Town Plan. The BEC will also have SolarFest information for the booth.

### ***. SolarFest***

SolarFest will be taking place the week after the Davenport Festival.

## **5. Budget Update**

Jim Emerson reported there is \$3200 in the budget and \$600 has been spent. The Planning Commission is requesting the BEC allocate \$200 for their use. Jack Schneider noted the BEC is a subcommittee of the Planning Commission. Mr. Schneider confirmed there are banners available for the booth for the July 4<sup>th</sup> event. Robert Black suggested the DBA, Chamber and BEC could possibly split the cost of some printed materials. Mr. Black will work with Mr. Schneider on this effort.

## **6. Town Plan Energy Portion Update and Site Line Issues**

It was noted there had been a plan to take photos of viewsheds that the Town wished to preserve to be included in the solar section of the Energy Plan. In the Plan, there is a questionnaire for solar developers that provides specifics regarding views. Mr. Emerson stated there is a Quechee test that could be used, but this is beyond the BEC's influence. Jack Schneider stated the Town has the ability to comment, but the PUC has the authority over solar projects.

## **7. Working Group Reports**

***Conservation Group - Jim Emerson (Jeff Cohen, Lollie Hoxie, Joanne Coons, Wyatt, Mike Shick, Serg Cotnoir):***

### ***. Brandon Businesses (Proposed September 9<sup>th</sup> BUB Business)***

The June Button-up event for businesses has been posted to September 9<sup>th</sup>. This date is cleared with the Town Hall and Chamber. The event will focus on providing information to businesses and commercial renters on energy-saving approaches with presentations on heat pumps and solar.

***Generation Group – Erin Ballantine (Tim Guiles, Wade Davis, Nate Doty, Robert Black, Jeff Cohen, Claire Schick)***

### ***. Report and Municipal Solar Proposal Update***

This group did not meet last month.

***Transportation Group - Jeff Haylon (Jack Schneider, Wade Davis, Eve Beglarian):***

This group also did not meet last month.

Jim Emerson noted there are funds for bike racks and suggested an inventory be completed on all current racks. It can be determined where additional racks would be useful as there are funds available. Eve Beglarian suggested a bike rack would be helpful at Hannafords and the Post Office/Liquor Store. Mr. Emerson stated the businesses would need to approve the addition and could possibly be a business partnership where they would sponsor the bike rack. Carolyn Van Vleck volunteered to do an inventory on all current bike racks in Town. Bill Moore advised the Post Office and Walgreens properties are locally owned, but not the Hannafords building. Ms. Van Vleck requested any location that people think a bike rack is needed, please email her with the suggestions. Mr. Moore reported the Town has received a scoping study to connect Brandon and Forest Dale.

## **8. Other Business**

### ***. New Committee Volunteer Intro Packet***

Jim Emerson stated it is hoped to have a new member when the Select Board acts on a letter of interest to replace Jeff Cohen. Mr. Emerson will have a new volunteer information packet prepared prior to the next meeting.

### ***. Brandon Town Garage***

This agenda item is being deferred to a future discussion.

## **9. Review of Committee Members Agreements from Last Month**

Jim Emerson followed-up with Efficiency Vermont.

The MERP proposal was submitted and approved.

Eve Beglarian/Robert Black/Erin Ballantine to meet to discuss the July 4<sup>th</sup> event for next month's meeting.

Jack Schneider moving forward with the plans for the July 4<sup>th</sup> event in the park.

Marielle Blaise contacted Laura MacLachlan regarding children's activities for the July 4<sup>th</sup> event.

Robert Black spoke with George Fjeld regarding the BEC logo for The Reporter and suggested a small BEC piece be included in each paper.

Mick Schick created an article on heat pumps.

Erin Ballantine posted an article for the Committee on Google Docs.

Jim Emerson and Robert Black met with Caleb, Middlebury College intern regarding assistance in defining community solar for those who are not eligible for incentive offers. Mr. Emerson reported he will be attending a grant seminar regarding modest income solar applications. Caleb will be presenting his work at Middlebury College tomorrow. Robert Black noted content from his presentation will be used and it is hoped that he will assist the BEC with future work.

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

Jim Emerson to draft an article for The Reporter for next month.

Robert Black to work on a bookshelf and speak with Barbara regarding books to purchase.

Jim Emerson to follow-up with Bill Moore regarding addition of a link on the Town's website for a BEC E-library to provide reports and other articles relating to key topics.

Jim Emerson to follow-up with Addison County and the local RRPC regarding the development of a Brandon Energy Report card.

Robert Black to work on developing a resource flyer for local bus stops and bike racks available. Mr. Black will follow up on the Middlebury model and speak to Bill Moore and Marielle Blais about Brandon Cares.

Jack Schneider to work on the revision of the Energy Section of the Town Plan.

Robert Black to speak with George Fjeld regarding the BEC logo for The Reporter and the inclusion of a small BEC piece for each paper.

Carolyn Van Vleck to do an inventory on the number of bike racks in Town and follow-up on placing another 4 or 5 racks at locations to be determined.

Jim Emerson to provide an Info packet for new board members at the next meeting.

## **11. Next Meeting**

June 5, 2023 @ 5:00PM at the Brandon Town Hall

## **12. Adjournment**

A motion was made by Robert Black to adjourn the meeting at 5:52PM. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,

Charlene Bryant  
Recording Secretary