

Brandon Energy Committee (BEC) Meeting - Draft
June 5, 2023

Committee Members Present: Jim Emerson, Jack Schneider, Robert Black, Claire Schick, Erin Ballantine, Jeff Haylon

Others Present: Marielle Blaise, Mike Schick, Carolyn Van Vleck, Kathy Clark

Education Discussion prior to Meeting:

VECAN Spring Conference report by Jack, Claire, and Mike. There were 17 Different Topics for discussion and much information shared. Air Pollution, Clean Energy and Climate Change Book reviewed. It was recommended to document the improvements a town makes. VECAN list of 5 things Energy Committees can do include Transportation, Thermal, Communication & Outreach (Choose one to start). They suggested inviting Youth members and staying in touch with State representatives. Also discussed was the PACE Program that is a partially forgiven loan from the USDA and is a \$1 million program. They suggested learning more about the Resilience Micro-Grid and suggested contacting VECAN to ask about the Middlebury Intern Program to assist.

A library offering update was provided by Kathy Clark. A list of about 10 to 12 books has been started (i.e., Sustainable Energy/David McKay, Renewable Energy from Oxford Press, etc.). Also, books for children and on DIY Projects. More information is needed about electric cars. Regarding the E-library, Bill Moore has advised Erin Ballantine has a link to the Google Doc listing on the Town's website. Ms. Ballantine will assist Ms. Clark in this area.

Jim Emerson is working with Addison County to get more information on an energy report card for the Town.

Articles scheduled to be written: Composting, Recycling – Carolyn Van Vleck, Are EV's a real option for Vermonters? – Carolyn Van Vleck, Solar and Decommissioning Costs – Jim Emerson.

Development of a directory of Rebates: Efficiency Vermont, GMP, IRA, etc.

Jim Emerson provided a handout regarding information for a new committee volunteer packet. Jeff Haylon suggested meeting format and open meeting regulations may not be pertinent for a volunteer packet.

Mr. Black suggested regarding the meeting agenda that a Public Comment section be added to each agenda. Mr. Emerson suggested as a follow-up to the VECAN Conference that a Brandon Energy Community picnic be scheduled for sometime this summer.

1. Call to order

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

2. Agenda Adoption and Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Robert Black and Erin Ballantine to approve the agenda, as amended. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Add Public Comment to the agenda.

A motion was made by Jack Schneider and seconded by Erin Ballantine to approve the minutes of the May 8, 2023 meeting. **The motion passed with one abstention – Jeff Haylon.**

3. Reflection

. Is there one key theme the BEC should devote its attention to as a committee?

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Jim Emerson expressed appreciation for the work the BEC members are doing in the community to make things happen. Erin Ballantine stated the BEC has many goals and suggested creating a long-term plan. Robert Black suggested creating an agenda that is structured as project-oriented and action-oriented items and take on only what the BEC can do. Mr. Emerson noted the initial Smart goals have a timeframe. Jack Schneider stated due to the number of programs, the BEC is not focused enough in providing community members the information. He noted there are funds ready to be spent and the BEC needs to be more of a resource. Jeff Haylon suggested having an intern position as an avenue for assisting the BEC. Ms. Ballantine suggested a State office may have information compiled regarding the funding available. It was suggested to contact Representative Stephanie Jerome regarding this subject. Mr. Black suggested there are also several Energy Committees in the State the BEC could connect with. Mr. Schneider noted some towns have an Energy Coordinator and suggested the position could be a Grant Writer/Energy Coordinator for the Town.

4. Public Comment

There was no discussion held.

5. Recent and Upcoming Events

. Imagine Zero Music Festival May13th

Jim Emerson noted eight BEC members volunteered for the Imagine Zero event. The BEC received a thank you from the Imagine Zero group.

. Parade Entry Plans

Robert Black noted the BEC entry for the parade last year combined Davenport and the BEC, and suggested this theme be continued. The chariot was a success and the intention is to continue this idea to promote Thomas Davenport and the BEC with education in mind. There was a suggestion to use the chariot, but pull it with an EV, surrounded by E-bikes and pedestrians. It was also suggested to create a large puppet similar to a Bread and Puppet-type of Thomas Davenport to be placed on the chariot. A new logo will be developed for the chariot. The rest of the entourage would be the Town's E-bikes and other community members on bikes and walking. The idea is to make people aware of Thomas Davenport and the BEC. \$500 to \$800 would be the amount of funding needed for the July 4th event. If materials can be obtained, the work could be done with a few volunteers. Mr. Black to send out an email encouraging anyone interested in helping.

Erin Ballantine to confirm with Solarfest the chariot can be worked on June 10th @ 10AM at their location. Mr. Emerson advised 6 people have signed up for tee shirts and the minimum order is 12 at \$13/each.

. Davenport Festival

Jack Schneider stated Brandon will be hosting its 2nd annual Davenport Festival on July 8th at OV. There will be a guest speaker from the Smithsonian to talk about Thomas Davenport's place in history in the OV auditorium. Outside will be other current EV models. The BEC and Planning Commission will share a booth in Central Park on July 1st that will have information about SolarFest and the Davenport Festival. The Planning Commission will be talking about the revisions to the Town Plan. It was suggested the chariot could be parked near the booth. Mr. Schneider will be manning the booth and suggested information about renting the E-bikes could be available also. Jeff Haylon stated the Library has the E-bikes and are good to go with the program, however, they are working on the insurance part of the program and the plan is to follow what the Middlebury Library is doing. He is not sure when the Library will be able to begin renting them on a daily basis and it is not confirmed if the E-bikes will be available for the parade. Mr. Haylon offered his E-bike for the parade. Mr. Schneider stated the July 1st event is scheduled from 10AM until the fireworks. Erin Ballantine, Jeff Haylon and Robert Black volunteered to assist with the booth. Joanne and Paul from Solarfest will be in Town and Ms. Ballantine suggested the Solarfest group join with the BEC for the parade. Mr. Schneider will be

in the booth initially at 10AM. Marielle Blaise will talk to Laura McLoughlin from VEEP to obtain some activities for children.

Mr. Schneider advised the Davenport Festival is a Town event, with assistance from the BEC and requested a list of volunteers for that event.

. *SolarFest*

SolarFest is scheduled for July 15th and 16th, the following weekend after the Davenport Festival. Erin Ballantine stated SolarFest would like volunteers that would allow entry to the festival at no charge and a tee shirt. They ask for 3 hours of time each day from a volunteer. Jack Schneider suggested the BEC could have a booth at the event. It was suggested to have a BEC flyer as a handout that Mr. Black will develop and a sign-up sheet for volunteers. Jim Emerson will also obtain handouts from Efficiency Vermont, Heat Squad and BROCC. Ms. Ballantine will ask Mike @ SolarFest if there is another group that the BEC could share a booth with. Kathy Clark, Jim Emerson, and Jack Schneider volunteered to assist with SolarFest.

Jack Schneider reported he is working with Mike Bailey to create a master email list to promote the events in Brandon. Mr. Bailey will obtain the Imagine Zero list and will run some Reporter ads, radio, and emails. The promotions would go out under the Town's email address.

6. Budget Update

. *Regular Budget (To spend +/- \$2300 by June 30th)*

It was noted there is \$500 for the parade, \$250 for tees, and \$1500 for the bike racks. There had been a discussion about the bike racks with Bill Moore being located at Estabrook Park, Town Hall, Hannafords, Walgreens, Post Office, and Nifty Thrifty. Eve Beglarian had suggested painting them all the same color. The bike racks have not been ordered at this point. Jeff Haylon also suggested asking Dunkin Donuts about one at their location.

. *MERP Grant*

The grant will provide \$1000 for the Library, \$1500 for an education mailing that can also be used to support the Davenport Festival in some way and \$1500 to develop the Town's energy score card.

7. Working Group Reports

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

The Button-up Brandon Businesses event is scheduled for July 17th at 4:30PM.

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

Erin Ballantine reported the group is still working with OV to build a practice group and set up a recurring project where a physics class solarizes a golf cart each year. The idea is to start with a SolarFest cart. There is potential interest for the Neshobe Golf Course to have their golf carts solarized. Jim Emerson suggested inviting a student to be a member of the BEC. Ms. Ballantine advised they are trying to get students to send questions that can be included as tidbits in the paper as an ongoing way to have a presence.

. *Municipal Solar Proposal Update*

The municipal solar proposal would be a solar system for the Town and Fire district. There will be preliminary results provided this week. Jim Emerson talked with the Fire district regarding the idea of teaming up with other groups. There is some reluctance, but it was noted this will save the Water district users a lot of money over the years. It is hoped there will be more interest from the presentation. Mr. Emerson spoke with Stephanie Jerome about a moderate

solar program and she suggested providing a proposal for it to present to the Legislature. It was suggested the Heat Squad, Acorn Solar and getting Middlebury involved with this project. Ben Mark is enthused to make this happen and he suggested getting a lobbying group together to craft the bill.

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

Jeff Haylon stated there will be regular meetings starting up again soon. Mr. Haylon suggested getting more members involved in this sub-committee and noted the group is best suited to be project-based. Mr. Haylon is working on the Library E-bike program.

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

Jim Emerson will send out the agreements from the meeting.

11. Next Meeting

July 10, 2023 @ 5:00PM at the Brandon Town Hall – Full Committee
July 17, 2023 Conservation Working Group

12. Adjournment

The Committee adjourned by consensus at 5:58PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Charlene Bryant
Recording Secretary