

Brandon Energy Committee Meeting Minutes
4:30 PM Monday, November 6, 2023
Town Hall Basement Meeting Room

Attendees: Jim Emerson, Clare Babyak-Schick, Erin Ballentine, Robert Black
Guest: Bob West/Goshen Energy Committee, Nate Doty

Agendas are posted on the community bulletin boards located at the Town Office at 49 Center Street and the Junction Store & Deli at 2265 Forest Dale Road. The Energy Committee reserves the right to add additional items, if necessary, at the beginning of the meeting.

EDUCATION ITEMS

4:30 Discussion of plans for 2024 and results of surveying other towns successes.
JE: Reviewed 34 Towns members out of 66 town region "Vital Communities" (NH & VT)...
Websites w/"Climate farmer" stories, Housing solutions Breakfast, etc.
Open e-mail discussions to build community conversations; planning for community resiliency.
Green Real Estate "crash course"...a
Goal: Region wide 100% Renewables by 2050.

Middlebury College \$7M grant for "Climate Action Program" (CAP) Program...looking for ideas.
JE asked RB to explore connections with this group for Brandon Energy Committee.

JS: Stowe 7-member Energy Committee (1 Student) Town Mgr participates but can't vote. Have a \$7K Budget...Climate Resiliency...Household Efficiency...Transportation...
Stowe has an Enhanced Energy Plan (sim. To Brandon)...Stowe is municipal utility, but has direct contracts, incl. 1 Mw solar grid...
Window Dressers Program + Efficiency Program.
Stowe Energy Committee has a page on their website

RB: Norwich Energy Website. Information on Electrify Everything" Program, also Window Inserts Program...lots of public education and outreach to engage community members.

JH: Essex has Town Plan + Energy Committee. Properties Mgr. liaison to Energy Committee.
10' wide sidewalks with dedicated bike lanes in progress...

Richard Butz/Bristol. Worked on Heat Pumps to meet GHG Goals (90%)...48% of electric generation by 2025. Successful events – displays at Harvest Fest....Button Up events stimulated 35 Energy Audits. How to get people to participate....a critical initiative needs more work...how to get more notice. Only 5 active Committee members. Fall Weatherization Program – 7 people in attendance...need more time for audience questions...

JE: Solarfest recent event could have been better attended... needs more marketing.

REGULAR BEC MEETING AGENDA

5:00 JE called the meeting to order.

5:02 Adopt agenda and minutes...unanimous approval..

5:04 Invitation for public comments, incl. MicroGrid comments

JS: spoke with GMP reps working on the MG project...pick towns with high energy burden, low resiliency, single transmission line/no redundancy...Brandon does not qualify for early phase. Solarfest MicroGrid presentations incl Kenya examples...GMP working on batteries for homes. With focus on rural homes.

5:05 Reflection: *What are we most proud of about our work together as a volunteer team?*

Consider regular linkages between various Towns' Energy Committees...ongoing dialogue... possible "Energy League" in Vermont.

See website: "Rewiring America" for list of Tax Credits available in each state: Heat Pumps, etc. Current Select Board/Town Mgmt is more responsive and receptive to Energy and Ideas.

5:15 Upcoming Events and Ongoing Project Reports:

Fall Button Up Brandon event Wednesday (11/8) 24 registrants

Follow up on Town Facilities visit (JH working on BEC report by Dec Sel Bd mtg.)

Brandon Energy Plan update (Draft complete with RRPC inputs/goals.)

ARPA funds for solar

Bike rack lending library projects completed

Electric yards and lawns event (5/21/24) Nate to reach out to OVUHS for possible student help to assist with this program for Seniors, etc.

Bike rejuvenation project for next spring (Eve to work on this in Jan 2024)

Climate Catalyst grant applications this fall via SolarFest (\$4K grant funds early complete). Another grant possibility for Equipment Lending shed at Library?

Explore how this program will be administered/managed (not by Library staff)

Reporter articles – Ideas: "People who have adopted solar"; (Topics, heat pumps, EV's, etc.) KC, EB, RB to work on a series of articles. EB to create a

Facebook page + other social media for BEC.

Annual Report for 2023 – JE to finish report by Dec 1 to Sel Bd for Annual Town Report.

5:50 Budget for 2024/2025

2023 Budget (\$4.5K) will be expended on successful activities to year end.

2024 Budget to expand public outreach, Energy displays, 4th of July Parade, etc., partnering with local businesses (ala "Cocktails for a Cause" for the Library)...combine social + educational activities.

5:55 Review agreements made. Next meeting December 4th and good byes!

5:58 PM JE adjourned the meeting.

Next meeting we will open with the reflection: *Why are we volunteering for this committee - the first thought and the deeper reason!*

Interested parties may also attend this meeting electronically: Video Conference via ZOOM:
Meeting ID (870 4222 00996)

Respectfully submitted,
Robert Black/BEC Secretary