

# Minutes: June 9, 2014

**Group:** Brattleboro Energy Committee

**Attendees:** Lester Humphreys, Bob Rueter, Paul Cameron, Chad Simmons, Sheetal Kumar Chanda, Tad Montgomery, Ralph Meima, Jed Leslie, Jason Cooper, Kathleen White

**Guest:** Peter Thurrel (Sovern Solar), Tom Finnel (Energy Week on BCTV)

Topic	Discussion	Action
A). Call to order, Agenda review, Minutes approval		Minutes approved: 3 yays; 0 nays; 3 abstains
B). Announcements	<p>a. Proposal of biomass plant at VY site has potential for combined heat to Brattleboro, probably to bigger users who would be willing to pay for it. It would use hot H2o/steam. Combined biomass/heat makes it much more efficient. Give input to proposal. Questions: How many trucks to feed plant? How far away is the wood coming from? What is the scale of the plant?</p> <p>b. Proposal by Tad: Look into encouraging/finding a company to buy a solar array and then sell it to the town. It could work, but would have to own for 5 years to get tax credits. Make this proposal an agenda item in July.</p> <p>c. Committee members last meeting: Ralph, Jed, Jason</p>	
C). CEDF funding discussion	Clean Energy Development Fund. \$2.6 has been designated from Entergy settlement to Windham County. The draft plan will come out and will have a 30-day comment period and being facilitated by the Windham Regional Commission. They will start accepting proposals by mid/late summer. Table rest of meeting until next meeting. The draft proposal has a priority in biomass.	
D). Subcommittee Reports:		
1). Efficiency a. Town buildings b. Home energy challenger	a and b. Grant update. We went back to 2010 study and ranked them by the top 4 areas. These were based on things that were not in need of an audit. We can't do audits for any buildings that have asbestos. Is asbestos going to be remediated as part the municipal building? If the list	

	<p>does go over the \$10k gift, we may want to consider dipping into the fund to complete the tasks. What are the priorities for the town buildings? Skating rink; freshwater treatment plant. In transportation center, the elevator is a high-energy user.</p>	
2). Energy Data	<p>Jed did demo of process. Brattleboro.info</p>	
3). Home energy video project	<p>No update. Still finalizing re-recording.</p>	
<p>4). Renewables</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Solar tax</li> <li>b. Solar electric projects</li> <li>c. Electric car charging stations</li> </ul>	<p>a. Solar tax. Projects up to 50 kw are exempt. \$2800 is the total tax bill that will be sent out to all solar systems. This is based on the state mandated tax law. Brattleboro has no plans to change the state statute. If the committee wanted to change, we would have to advocate for the select board to bring it up at next year's town meeting. 50 kw and smaller projects are example. The committee's recommendation for \$4/kw is very close to how the town is currently taxing. Question becomes: What shall we do now? Nothing? Recommend another model? Comment: taxing solar at this point is making it harder to be profitable. It is already difficult as is. We want to move solar towards grid parity. Comment: what is the mission of this committee? Bring in taxes or promote renewables? It would seem advocating a tax would go against our mission. Our proposal that the tax dollars generated would go into the town efficiency fund. The select board has not accepted that proposal yet. This issue would actually have to be approved by the select board then moved to a full town meeting rep vote. Comment: advocating this position may have an impact on the committee's reputation. Comment: If we put a recommendation forward, can we put a stipulation on that exempts projects like community solar, based on usage. Comment: This tax would stop developers to even doing projects moving forward. Options: 1) withdraw our options 2) change our</p>	<p>a. Questions to ask (Paul will follow-up and will get input from select board members on where each stands): Can town exempt by size of project? If so, what's the process for making this happen?</p>

	<p>letter 3) send letter as is. Proposal: Committee recommends to exempt all solar projects from taxation. However, if a tax was implemented, the revenue generated would go to efficiency fund. Comment: the town could vote on the proposal we already put forward.</p> <p>b. Solar electric projects. Town municipal project in Townsend was found not suitable by ANR because it is in floodplain. The owner has another plot of land across the street and offered to move it there. There is a 60-day period to go through. The owner has a studio on Rte 30. It may not be big enough for the full project and abutters are addressing it. Instead, the project company is looking at a site on Rte 5 (Westminster). Brattleboro and Putney would share credits. The landfill project: The owners rep RFP coming out in June and due in Sept.</p> <p>c. Electric car charging stations: We now have two 100w chargers installed in the parking garage. Only thing left is the signage at exit 1 and 2 and within the town and on garage. The signs would acknowledge support from local businesses. Located halfway up first level from Flat St. We have separate meters to gauge uses. Representative from Tesla considering installing a station in the area. Green Mountain Power rep came down to look at spaces for installing a charging station.</p>	
5). Transportation	Paul meeting with World Learning to talk about their Smart Commute plan and WSESU.	
6). Project Atlantic	During Slow Living Summit, the student video was screened. Lots of great information. Ralph would like to stay engaged with the subcommittee. Would like to explore other ideas generated in the past. Is there anyone interested in chairing this committee? Possibly Michael Bosworth, who is joining the board next month.	
E). Feedback and next meeting data, topic, speaker	Have meeting go until 7pm.	
H). Next Meeting	July 14 <sup>th</sup> , 5-7pm	**This is an new date for

		July only**
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