

# **BRATTLEBORO ENERGY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2014**

## **Background:**

The Town of Brattleboro has been a leader in promoting energy efficiency, renewable energy, and transportation alternatives over the past twelve years. The Town joined the Cities for Climate Protection Campaign and approved a Climate Action Plan in 2002.

The Selectboard established the Brattleboro Energy Committee in 2009, expanded its membership to 10 in 2012, and to 11 in 2014.

## **Mission Statement:**

The mission of the Brattleboro Energy Committee is to assist Brattleboro residents, businesses and Town government in reducing energy consumption and costs through conservation, increased energy efficiency and conversion to renewable energy sources. The committee assists the Town Energy Coordinator in planning and carrying out projects to advance these goals and serves as a resource to the Town on energy-related issues.

## **Goals:**

- Improve energy efficiency in commercial buildings and homes by encouraging upgrades in lighting, heating systems, motors, and weatherization.
- Reduce fossil fuel use in motor vehicles and lawn equipment by promoting the use of alternative fuels, carpooling, reduced idling, expanded mass transit, active transportation (walking and bicycling) and smart-growth practices.
- Promote the use of renewable energy sources such as biomass and solar to generate electricity and heat.
- Provide information to the public about sustainable technologies and practices.
- Collaborate with energy organizations in other towns to share information, strategies, and best practices.

## **Energy Committee Members:**

Lester Humphreys, Chair  
Bob Rueter, Vice-Chair  
Chad Simmons, Secretary  
Jason Cooper  
Kathleen White  
Milt Eaton  
Tad Montgomery

Anne Brinton  
Tom Finnell  
Michael Bosworth

**Town Energy Coordinator:**  
Paul Cameron

The committee currently has five active subcommittees - Energy Efficiency, Renewables, Transportation, Energy Data, and Project Atlantic.

## **Current Project Reports:**

**Project:** Streetlights

**Subcommittee:** Efficiency

**Description:** Green Mountain Power completed the conversion of the Town's streetlights to light-emitting diode (LED) fixtures, which use far less electricity and have a longer lifespan than conventional incandescent fixtures. An incentive program through Efficiency Vermont paid for the conversion.

**Annual Savings:** \$81,225

**Status:** Completed

**Project:** Efficiency Improvements in Town Facilities

**Subcommittee:** Efficiency

**Description:** The Town received a \$10,000 grant from Efficiency Vermont to be used for efficiency improvements in Town facilities, for its participation in the 2013 Vermont Home Energy Challenge. The Town is using the grant to retrofit 39 decorative streetlights with LED fixtures, retrofit the entrance light at the Municipal Center and install a motion detector in the basement, and install programmable thermostats in the Water Treatment Plant. The Town established an Energy Efficiency Fund of \$45,000 through a vote at the 2014 Representative Town Meeting. The Energy Committee is recommending that the fund be used in FY 2015 for energy audits in six Town buildings (if no asbestos is present), as well as seven additional measures recommended by Efficiency Vermont (see attached FY 2015 Energy Efficiency Plan).

**Potential Annual Savings:** Home Energy Challenge grant - \$5,330  
FY 2015 Energy Efficiency Plan - TBD

**Status:** The Energy Committee has prepared a draft Request for Proposal (RFP) for the energy audits.

**Next Steps:** The Town will issue the RFP once an asbestos assessment has been completed in the six buildings.

**Project:** Energy Data

**Subcommittee:** Energy Data

**Description:** The subcommittee works to compile annual data on energy use and costs in Town buildings and operations, and presents an annual report to the Selectboard. The report informs Town leaders about the relative effectiveness of energy-saving measures.

**Status:** Ongoing

**Project:** Municipal Solar

**Subcommittee:** Renewables

**Description:** In 2013, the Town chose Integrated Solar and Green Lantern Capital to install a 500 KW solar electric system that would generate net-metering credits for the Town. In August 2014, Green Lantern Capital sold the project to Next Sun Renewables, which has started construction of a solar array at a site in Westminster, VT. The Town has decided not to issue an RFP for a second solar project at this time, pending development of a project by the Windham Solid Waste Management District which could provide additional credits to the Town.

**Potential Annual Savings:** \$16,250

**Status:** Under development (first project).

**Next Steps:** To be determined.

**Project:** Electric Car Charging Stations

**Subcommittee:** Renewables

**Description:** The Town received a grant from the Vermont Agency of Commerce to install two Level 2 electric car charging stations in the Transportation Center, replacing an obsolete station. The Energy Committee co-sponsored an Electric Car Demonstration & Forum at the Marlboro College Graduate School in October 2014.

**Benefits:** Attract consumers to the downtown area, reduce fossil-fuel consumption and air pollution.

**Status:** Completed.

**Next Steps:** The subcommittee will monitor electric consumption at the charging stations, and will continue working with Green Mountain Power and local businesses to identify additional potential sites.

**Project:** Transportation

**Subcommittee:** Transportation

**Description:** The subcommittee worked with Vital Communities, a White River Junction-based nonprofit, to launch a “Smart Commute” program among members of the Brattleboro Transportation Roundtable, a group of Brattleboro-area businesses and transit providers promoting transportation alternatives among their employees. Participating businesses distributed a commuter survey to their employees and received a Smart Commute Action Plan.

**Benefits:** Reduced traffic volumes and air pollution.

**Status:** Ongoing

**Next Steps:** A follow-up survey will be distributed to measure progress toward the project goals.

**Project:** Project Atlantic

**Subcommittee:** Project Atlantic

**Description:** The subcommittee worked with an environmental science class at Brattleboro Union High School and science teacher Mike Auerbach to help develop a series of videos about energy sources, and energy use in Brattleboro. The videos were shown as part of the Slow Living Summit in June 2014.

**Status:** Ongoing

**Next Steps:** The class is planning to repeat and expand the project during the current school year.

## **Planned Projects**

### **FY 2015 Energy Efficiency Plan**

Energy audits in six Town buildings (pending asbestos assessment) and additional measures recommended by Efficiency VT. The Town is currently obtaining estimates for the recommended measures.

### **Municipal Solar**

The Windham Solid Waste District is developing a large system on their closed landfill site in 2015 that could be a source of additional net-metering credits for the Town.

## **Recommendation**

Incorporate operating cost analysis into all Town capital projects, including estimates of total tax rate impact: bond payments, operating expenses, and maintenance expenses.