

## Energy Committee: Monthly meeting minutes

February 3, 2020

Library Mezzanine Room, 5 – 6:10pm

Attended: Oscar Heller (chair), Carol Levin, Millicent Cooley, Ralph Meima, Richard Foley, Steven Dotson, Tom Finnell, Tony Duncan

>> *Action items and decisions are in red.*

### Introductions and Announcements

- Welcome to Steven Dotson, Brattleboro's new Sustainability Manager. Today was his first day on the job.
- Millicent Cooley, new member to the Energy Committee (joined in December but the meetings from that time until this one were cancelled).
  - >> **Action: Millicent will send two documents to committee members: 1) Sustainability Coordinator Research Report, 2) NEMS October 2019 conference report. Now done.**
  - Currently working to summarize the 2016 Brattleboro Energy Audit, so that we have a list of its recommendations and can use that list to decide what further actions to take.
- November meeting minutes (this committee's last held meeting) were approved.

### Open Meeting Law review

- Meeting time, location and agenda must be warned to the public, so that anyone may attend.
- Debates about issues outside of committee meeting may not occur if there is a quorum of people a quorum is defined as 4 or more people.
- This extends to email discussions; if there are more than 3 people in an email thread, then that thread should not include discussion of opinion on issues.

### Sustainability Manager's (Steven's) ideas about priorities for 2020

(informally stated, not committed)

- What are the community's goals for sustainability, and how to we prioritize these?
  - Want a process for engaging the public in this question... a survey?
- Use the Energy Committee as a sounding board for what he hears.
- Greenhouse gas inventory baseline
- Define what we mean by key terms such as "energy" and "sustainability". What is our mission?
  - Note: Oscar may consider changing this committee name from 'Energy Committee' to 'Sustainability Committee' – TBD.
- The focus so far has been on municipal energy, and we should broaden it to all sectors within the town, e.g. Residential, Commercial, etc.
- New project is 'Better Connected Brattleboro', for connecting existing trails into a larger trail system. Steven obtained a grant for this from the National Parks Service.
- Goal from Oscar: Select a couple of projects that will help Steven's new role to be perceived as successful, when they are completed.

- >> Action: Stephen will share a list of projects he is working on, in advance of each Energy Committee meeting.

### Tool Library

- Members can borrow tools owned by the library. This reduces the need for many people to buy and own tools that usually go unused.
- Location may be the old police evidence locker, in the basement of the muni building.
- People will be taught how to use the tools.
- How do you make it work? There are communities with tool libraries that function well, and we plan to learn from how they manage this.
- Steven will write a business plan.

### Repair Café

- One-time event where volunteers with specific types of repair expertise will assess repair issues that people bring. If the item is fixable at that time, that station works on the repair.
- The event is like a pilot; if it works well then will be repeated.
- Technical experts contribute to the community and gets positive visibility for their skills.
- Partner with organizations such as Time Trade and WSWMD (Windham Solid Waste Management District).
- The initiative is now ready to reach out and identify volunteers to contribute their skills.
- >> Action: Tony will send wording to use for spreading the request for Repair Café volunteers, to the Energy Committee and to Peter Elwell. Now done.  
(Peter promised to send this request to all municipal employees).

### Streaming and remote meetings, e.g. Google hangout or Skype

- Calling in to a committee meeting over the phone is already established.
- Remote digital joining was raised as a possible way to make it easier for remote people to attend.
- Allowed by the town as an option, as long as the public is warned about it (how?)
- Do not enable chat; it complicates meeting management if the public sends comments via chat.
- >> Decision: Committee agreed to not go forward with this, because of the complications. We confirmed the process to join the committee meeting via phone: Call Oscar as late as 10 minutes before the meeting and he will conference you in.

### Carbon offsets

- Concept is for the town to buy carbon credits in order to offset energy use.
- May consider also making this an option for residents.
- Patrick and Oscar will present the idea at the Feb 4 Select Board meeting.

### Networking with regional committees – Carol Levin

Ask Carol for more details, if you want them.

- Feb 4, 6-7:30pm at Montpelier Statehouse: Public meeting of Climate Solutions Caucus forum.
- Feb 6, 6-8pm at Burlington City Hall: TCI Public Meeting
- V-Can events on their website: <https://vecan.net/events/>

**Affordable Housing** – Richard Foley

- Richard: I (Millicent) did not get good notes on your section. Can you please tell us if there is anything that you want us to know about it.

**Additional business**

- Oscar is running for Select Board. If he wins (early March) then he will no longer be allowed to be the Chair of the Energy Committee, and that role will need to be filled.
- The Energy Committee should currently have a Vice Chair, and no one is in that role.