

Barre City Energy Committee - Special Meeting Minutes
January 2, 2020

Committee Members Present: Phil Cecchini, Elaine Wang, Conor Teal, Romni Palmer
City Hall, Council Chambers

Committee Members Absent: None

City Staff Present: Janet Shatney

Visitors: Jacob Hemmerick, Barre City Planning Commission; Brad Long, Efficiency Vermont; Deb Sachs, EcoStrategies

- 1. Call to order – 5:35 pm**
- 2. Changes to agenda? None.**
- 3. Visitors and Communications:**

Brad Long, Community Engagement Manager at Efficiency Vermont

Deb Sachs, EcoStrategies Consultant for Barre City Energy Plan Outreach Effort

Jacob Hemmerick, Planning Commission Member and current City Council Candidate, Ward 1

The Energy Committee asked the guests to introduce themselves to the group as well as their participation in past or present activities with the Committee.

4. Debrief Home Energy Tour and Discuss Next Steps

Both Elaine and Phil were present at the Home Tour and offered their praise of the process, the host's preparedness and courteous explanations to visitors of the upgrades he made to his Barre City home.

Phil made a motion to the Committee to officially thank the event host, Fred Pond, for opening his house to the community. Romni seconded. Unanimous agreement.

Elaine: Nine visitors signed up for the Efficiency Vermont Free Energy Walkthrough, given their participation in the ButtonUp Event. Approximately 20 visitors participated in the home tour.

Energy Committee members will contact Walkthrough signups.

Deb: Inquired about how the participants heard of the tour and what were their primary interests in the tour.

Elaine mentioned: Front Porch Forum, BCEC Facebook page post, flyers placed around Barre City, some word of mouth. The visitors asked many questions about the specific installations and were inquiring about the logistics of whole home weatherization.

Phil: Both the Committee and Fred have notes on the house improvements to share to the Committee for later reference.

5. Debrief Wood Heat Workshop and Review Webpage

Elaine and Phil were participants in a December 11, Modern Wood Heat Workshop hosted by Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission. Her takeaway from the workshop is that there has been significant progress in making the transition to Modern Wood Heat. She recommended to the Committee to consider arranging an event highlighting installations of these new high-efficiency wood heaters, including pellet boilers and furnaces; and specifically a Commercial Energy Tour, where a new large thermal system could be highlighted.

Phil was impressed by the presenters' knowledge on the subject and he also noticed the major progress in making these thermal systems more efficient than they've traditionally been known to be, as well as easier to install.

Jacob: Commented how he had installed a new pellet boiler and is impressed with how clean the pellets burn, i.e. little ash leftover many uses. Yet he's aware how "all energy choices have trade-offs." Currently fills manually with bags of pellets.

6. Debrief VECAN

Phil and Elaine who attended:

- Phenomenal discussion about Energy Burden with VEIC study.
- Communities have relatively the same energy use, but incomes are wide in range, Barre City is high on the Energy Burden list.
- Cost of Electricity, Cost of Heating, Transportation costs.

For sake of time and similar topics being discussed in a presentation by Brad Long, Efficiency Vermont, they concluded they will follow-up with the Committee later on further debrief details of their VECAN visit.

7. Receive Presentation by Efficiency Vermont

The following is notes from a PowerPoint presentation by Brad Long:

A) Overview of "Targeted Community", Barre City specifically. 2020.

Efficiency works with many different stakeholders to

Impact of Energy Burden in Vermont?

Energy Use Mix in Barre City: 45% transportation, 35% thermal, 20% electric.

Energy Spending / Household income = Energy Burden

Current VT range % of per household energy expenses: 6% to 20% on utilities is considered Energy Burden.

B) 2020 Efficiency VT Targeted Community: Barre City

History of the Efficiency Utility: Founded 2000. Statewide energy efficiency utility. Administered by VEIC under Public Service Board. Offices in Burlington and Rutland.

Targeted Community Background: Founded 2016. Have worked with 12 communities to date.

- Outreach/education
- Small business energy upgrades
- Residential home energy upgrades
- Municipal building energy improvements
- Energy efficiency upgrades for community-based nonprofits

Examples of outreach:

A) Light Bulb Swap Day at Hardware stores. A chance to receive a free dozen of LED bulbs when exchanging older incandescent bulbs with higher wattage.

B) Zero Energy Modular Home tour. Could Host Committee meetings in house? Place at Alumni Hall or Lenny's parking lot? 2 weeks?

2020: Irasburg, Johnson, Barre City, Island Pond

Program Offerings:

- Dedicated Community Manager (Brad)
- Tailored Outreach and Educational Programs
- Home Energy Visits for Residences (200 visits available)
- Free walk-through for Businesses (Need landlords of buildings to converse with them about energy updates)
- 20% Business Bonus (up to \$1000 in participation)
- Enhanced Incentives for Municipality and Nonprofits
- Free Walk-through and Products for Landlords

Multi-family and businesses: incentives available

Positive word of mouth is the goal, landlords sharing the awareness of the program to other landlords. And to revisit landlords again who have already received services or participated in previous events, since Efficiency Vermont has new offerings this year.

Monthly budget for marketing materials and refreshments. News advertisements, movie theaters, face-to-face contacts (stakeholders involved).

Q/A to Committee:

- Do you have any concerns?
- How does this overlay with current town goals?
- Do you see any barriers to executing this effort?
- Who are the key stakeholders I should work with in town?
- How should we stay in communication?
- Key events in town?

Committee decides to postpone answering the questions directly until after a dedicated discussion later, likely at the next Meeting.

8. Discuss Community Engagement for Energy Plan with Consultant

Committee and Deb Sachs discussed some parameters of the Energy Plan public engagement, including: Opportunities to get Barre residents involved in the survey, strategies for community engagement at events, and how to combine hosting educational workshops to offer Efficiency Vermont incentives with promotion of collecting input on the Energy Plan.

Reminder of State energy use goal: Reduce Energy Use by 90% by 2050.

Other items of consideration:

- A) Forming a Steering Committee.
- B) VTRANS - GoVermont! (Participation in events?)
- C) ZEM Home (Vermod) Placement downtown: educational display of new off-grid efficiency systems in a mobile modular home. Host events and meetings inside, planning charrettes?
- D) Split surveys by topic to be shared through the year rather than all at once?
- E) Bigger participation in Heritage Festival.
- F) Clear marketing items to describe the Energy Plan drafting process.

Need focus on community engagement to get feedback and opinions on draft Energy Plan:

1. Community Engagement (Survey, workshops)
2. Steering Committee Formation (Using events to help build capacity)
3. Energy Plan feedback, new input collected by the Committee
4. Action/Implementation Plan of new items

Brad and Deb will discuss together some event planning, finding stakeholders, potential volunteers.

Mention of how to get information around the Energy Plan to local employers.

Deb: A reminder of ridesharing apps that businesses have promoted to encourage carpooling, like: GoVermont!

Action Item #1 Deb: will build a calendar of events for all energy sectors, market segments for each sectors, and continue seeking out potential volunteers.

Brad: Important to track number of people coming to events, big accomplishments. Have the option available for people to leave contact numbers, decided incentive uses, all program info. Details on 'conversions made' (actionable items completed). Consider a three year outlook to compensate for delayed action on some projects completed.

Deb: Important to find more energy champions like Fred.

9. Review Availability and Coordination Between Meetings

Committee is considering additional meetings over the coming months to give more attention to the needs of the Energy Plan Community Engagement efforts. These times were considered best for Committee Members: Thursdays @ 6p , Saturdays @ 8a, Sundays @ 10a. No decision made yet for additional ongoing meeting day, will make decision at next work session.

Janet asked if Brad would like to get in front of City Council to explain program and he said he would like that at some point this month to explain Efficiency Vermont's Target Community Program and the City's role.

Action Item #2 Committee: Will form a running list of potential local organizations to contact for help in community engagement surrounding the Energy Plan.

Action Item #3 Committee: Work Session Scheduled for Sunday, January 12 @ 9a-12p. Capstone Community Action.

Deb said again before departing that she will make: characteristics of calendar engagement events, energy sectors specificity, target audience per sector, market segments matched with programs available, among other things.

10. Roundtable

Janet mentioned that she has had her staff work (Zoning Administrator) on organizing Municipal energy use data in spreadsheets (5 years of data), with the possibility of infographic of deliverables. The committee is thankful for Janet and staff time in making it readily available and discernible.

Elaine: Reminder for Committee to provide a quarterly update to City Council. The Committee discussed who would be available to present the latest activities, including ButtonUp participation and the Home Energy Tour. The specific Council meeting to attend was not chosen yet, but will occur in January.

Committee: Focus has shifted temporarily from City Facilities to outreach for the Energy Plan, but can return once the City releases a capital plan.

11. Adjourn

- Motion to adjourn at 7:57 pm by Phil Cecchini and seconded by Romni Palmer, passed unanimously.