

Minutes
Bennington Energy Committee
Wednesday, October 4, 2023
Via Zoom

Those Present: Bill Karis, Bruce Lierman, Jeannie Jenkins, Chris Bates, Bill Christian, Bruce Lee-Clark

Others Present: Marsh Hudson-Knapp, Shirley Adams

Absent: Alison Levie

- The meeting was called to order by the chair at 7:04 p.m.
- Bruce L-C moved (J. Jenkins, second) to change the agenda by moving the planning for the Annual Update for the Select Board to follow the Review of the minutes. Approved unanimously.
- Public Comments:

Marsh Hudson-Knapp provided the following comments:

Garlic Town Composting – Casella accepted all the compost collected. More volunteers will be needed next year.

Window Dressers – Bruce Lierman is participating by doing measuring. Cindy Hudson-Knapp reports that 81% of the slots for construction were filled. Builds are taking place in the coming week.

- Minutes: J. Jenkins moves/B. Lierman seconds, Unanimous approval of the September minutes.
- Planning for Annual Update for the Select Board – Bill Karis reported on his planned update scheduled for October 23. Bruce Lee-Clark volunteered to assist with the preparation of the presentation.
- Community Resilience Forum -- Bruce Lierman Reporting
The focus was on Agricultural Resilience with less focused on energy.
The top 10 topics for this year's Community Resilience Symposiums are:
 1. Creating a Regenerative Food Commons
 2. Wetland Restoration
 3. Pollinator Habitat Restoration
 4. Flood Resilient Communities Grant & Program
 5. Resilient Energy Microgrid Power Generation and Distribution
 6. Stormwater Management Systems
 7. Improving Interagency Communication
 8. Stakeholder Developed K-12 Resilience oriented Curriculum.
 9. Indigenous Land Use Practices
 10. Land Care Cooperative Community Economics & Locally Controlled Watershed management.

- MERP Subcommittee \$4K mini-grant -- B. Lierman/B. Lee-Clark
 - Audience is the whole community but focusing on those who carry the largest energy burden, whatever their income.
 - Activities:
 - Public Events
 - Senior Center
 - Sunrise Family Services
 - Church Groups
 - GBICS
 - Landlord connections
 - Local social media, FPF, CAT-TV, Town Web Site (Energy Page)
 - Town Facebook Page
 - Logo for Committee – Decision was made to choose the version seen below.
BLC/BK Unanimous



ENERGY COMMITTEE

- Marsh H-K reported that he had spoken with Dixie Zens regarding the construction of an air infiltration demonstration for tabling.
- ANR correspondence – B. Lee-Clark reported no current reply to our communication regarding the possibility of an open-loop system for the Rec. Center.
- EV Energy Burden Report – The report link will be sent out to the committee.
- Compost Summit – J. Jenkins
Bill, Allison and Marsh were participants along with Jeannie J. Paula Kamperman was there from the Bennington Co. Solid Waste Alliance
The following Goals were established:
 1. Motivate the Public
 2. Learning & Teaching regarding Compost
 3. How to make Change?
- Advisory Panel – B. Lee-Clark (B. Lierman) moved that Marsh be elected to the Advisory Panel for the Energy Committee. - Unanimous.

- Motion to Adjourn – Chris Bates (B. Lierman) moved to adjourn at 8:35. Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Bruce Lee-Clark, Secretary

Notes from the subcommittee to consider suggestions for the grant money

9-15-23

Bruce Lierman

Bruce Lee Clark

Alison Levie

Tasks:

1. Who is our audience
2. What is the direction we should take as we make decisions about best use for grant money

Audience

In choosing the audience, we should cover the entire community spectrum. Tailoring the method and message to the particular audience. We do not need to target those who have already bought into and made changes to reduce their energy use.

Specific locations for different audiences

- Public events
- Senior center
- Sunrise Family Services
- Church groups
- GBCS
- Landlord connections

First priority should be those with a high energy burden, especially in their housing. This will tend to focus on low and moderate income but could include those with higher incomes who have not yet taken steps to cut their home or transportation energy costs. Porous houses that are hard to heat may include people at a variety of income levels. Since renters often do not control insulation and weatherization of their housing, they may not be a prime target audience. Can we reach and convince landlords to do something?

Ultimate goal is to influence the choices people living in Bennington are making related to home heating, transportation, and compost. Connecting people here to the resources that will help them.

Energy Committee needs to identify opportunities and maybe make initial contact for presentations and demonstrations. Identifies other individuals and organizations to help.

Costs:

- Building materials for demonstrations and having people try skill (eg caulking)
- Video production cost?
- Something to hand out with numbers for places people can contact for financial support.