

DRAFT

**Town of Middlebury  
Energy Committee / Energy Planning Subcommittee Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, December 8, 2021**

**Present via Zoom:**

**Energy Committee Members** - Diane Munroe, Richard Hopkins, Ross Conrad, Howard Widelitz

**Non-members:** John Barstow, Jeff Howarth, Andrew L'Roe

Meeting started at 9:00 a.m.

**Recap of Previous Discussions**

Howard started off with a summary of the previous discussions saying that the progress has been slow to this point. In previous discussions, we discussed producing both an Enhanced Energy Plan and a Comprehensive Energy Plan without there being full buy-in to developing both plans. He said most of us thought we should move forward with the Enhanced Energy Plan and again questioned whether we extend the Enhanced Energy Plan to be more comprehensive or develop the plans separately while maintaining all the components of an Enhanced Energy Plan. He complimented Andrew L'Roe on providing an excellent start to the Enhanced Energy Plan with the draft he provided.

John's understanding is that the Enhanced Energy Plan serves a specific purpose to enhance a town's standing with the Public Utilities Commission which is different from what would be included in a Comprehensive Energy Plan. They can't be one in the same. He also asked if we could piggyback off of CEAC's action plan as it applies to Middlebury. When asked if Andrew has seen a more comprehensive Energy Plan in other towns, he said he hasn't and that they generally go for the minimum standards in their development of the Enhanced Energy Plan. Andrew expressed a concern about the types of things to put into a Comprehensive Plan and that once you introduce land use planning and sidewalks and trees into the plan, it gets into elements of the Town Plan and the need to bring in the Planning Commission into the process.

To close on the original issue about separate plans (Enhanced and Comprehensive), Howard asked for everyone's perspective. As he eluded to earlier, John said the Enhanced Energy Plan is low hanging fruit with defined guidelines. The Comprehensive Energy Plan is going to take longer and require broader input. He suggested we complete the Enhanced Energy Plan on then take on the bigger piece with the Comprehensive Energy Plan. Diane agreed and believed we are all in agreement with John's perspective. Ross said he understands the need to develop the Enhanced Energy Plan but noted the important work would come in the Comprehensive Energy Plan for us to be able to get a handle on the emissions.

Howard asked Andrew how much more work he thinks is needed to complete the Enhanced Energy Plan given the excellent start he provided and his work with other towns. He said it normally takes about 6-10 months to finalize the plan. He went on to say the Conservation

## DRAFT

Commission takes the lead on the land use components which they had already started with Jeff Howarth's work with the students at the college.

***Take-away from discussion:*** Agreement we will separate the Comprehensive Energy Plan and Enhanced Energy Plan and focus on the Enhanced Energy Plan to start.

### **Review of Draft Enhanced Energy Plan (Data)**

- Andrew said the numbers in the draft of the Enhanced Energy Plan need to be updated and once Maddie, the new Energy Planner at the Regional Planning Commission, returns to the office, she can start looking at that. Richard offered to work with her on that.
- Andrew said although the numbers need to be made current, he stressed the importance of the looking forward components of the plan. Where do we want Middlebury to be in ten or twenty years?
- He also said Pale Blue Dot provided Middlebury specific data that we can use to update the numbers but again suggested the focus should be on the goals and policies to include in the plan.
- Regarding the goals for Middlebury, Richard said the State plan calls for 90,000 weatherized homes, 140,000 new heat pumps and 70,000 electric vehicles by 2030. This provides an opportunity to scale the objectives in the Middlebury plan to the states goals. Middlebury has 1.12% of the State's households. For example, if the state has a goal of 90,000 weatherized homes, Middlebury's goal should be about 1000. The number of households doesn't include Middlebury College.

### **Enhanced Energy Plan (Thermal Section)**

Howard pulled up the draft copy of the Enhanced Energy Plan for the group to go through for the purpose of identifying the type of changes that are needed and who will be taking responsibility for the various sections.

- Regarding the numbers, Andrew suggested the numbers derived for the towns should be seen as the minimum and revising those numbers upward would be reasonable. Howard suggested we factor in the unique demographics of Middlebury in mind when looking at the numbers since it has a large industrial sector compared to other towns. –
- Going through the draft plan, Andrew pointed out that the highlighted sections are where there is more work to be done.
- Richard offered to work on the "Thermal" section since he has been focused on that with CEAC.

## DRAFT

- John offered to support the Thermal section since he also has been involved with the same CEAC subcommittee.

Andrew asked Diane if the college is working on compiling the data on the College's energy use and output.

- Diane said several members of the faculty are working on website to make publicly available the data they are collecting and measuring. She said she will try to get a beta version of the website for this group. Diane suggested this might be a good area to involve the Energy Committee student contact, Ben Wagner and the Sunday Night Environmental Group (SNEG).
- Howard asked if we should factor in some of the off-campus real estate the college owns in the town since it includes actual houses. John said the Addison County Community Trust has been in discussion with the college to identify housing that could be potentially used for low- and moderate-income households. The inventory could be used for our purpose.
- Diane located an email she received stating that the college collects data on daily energy use from certain academic buildings and dormitories, electricity use and an annual greenhouse gases inventory to include carbon sources and emissions from the main campus, Breadloaf and the Snow Bowl. It doesn't appear to address the off-campus real estate in the data collection. We will need to figure out how to best account for the college energy use in the Energy Plan.
- Diane said Jack Byrne had asked her to be the liaison between the town energy planning group and the college and offered to work with the college to see if it makes sense to them to separate the off-campus housing from the campus housing and facilities. We could then include the off-campus housing with the Middlebury residential data.
- Richard pointed out that the commercial and industrial enterprises energy use is weak since it is not broken out based on the size of the business. For example, the local barber shop should not be treated the same as a large business or the college and suggested the square footage of the enterprise be factored in. Could also scale to the number of employees.
- John asked if it made sense to separate the commercial and industrial since Middlebury has many small businesses and the much larger industrial businesses. He also wanted to be sure that he and Diane collaborate since both are involved with the college interests with the Comprehensive Energy Plan.
- Richard noted the data from the American Community survey needs to be brought up to date. He also noted the data doesn't account for hybrid types of heating (e.g. heat pump and a pellet a stove) since filling out the survey allows for only one answer.

## DRAFT

- Ross asked why the data doesn't include masonry heaters since they can be more efficient than most advanced wood heating systems. Andrew said it can be added to the data.

### **Actions:**

- Richard will work on the thermal section with Maddie and John

### **Enhanced Energy Plan (Land Use)**

- The work Jeff is doing with the students will serve as a basis for this section
- Andrew mentioned Jen [Murray] requesting two maps, one for restricted energy development and the other for preferred locations.
  
- The amount of energy needing to be produced from renewable energy is handed down from the regional level to the towns. The idea is to identify locations to support this level of renewable energy
  
- Andrew proposes a more limited amount of land use until the amount of renewable energy that can be obtained from rooftop and paved areas is better understood.
  
- Andrew also noted that most of the areas have insufficient capacity (power lines) to handle large amounts of renewable energy.
  
- Andrew said the Conservation Commission will work on the Land Use section start with the Possible Constraints listed in Table 10B.
  
- Jeff sent a link for the map that will be used to identify the preferred areas for energy development. The habitat box and pairing connectors are in response to Act 171 which requires those constraints be included in the Town Plan
  
- Jeff also emphasized the need to engage the public with the preferred area designation maps since they are potentially impacted by where these areas are located
  
- Howard mentioned that we need to determine how these maps will be referenced since Jen wants to reference these in the Town Plan but they are currently included in the Enhanced Energy Plan and shouldn't be included in two places.

### **Enhanced Energy Plan (Transportation)**

- Howard offered to begin work with the transportation section.
  
- It was suggested to include Bill Cunningham and the Middlebury Bike/Ped Coalition in the transportation discussions.

## DRAFT

### **Actions:**

- Howard will work on refining the Transportation section of the plan and see if Bill Cunningham can provide support for this section.

Howard suggested the various sub-groups get together to work on the respective sections and not wait for the larger group to get together to work on it.

- Andrew suggested consulting with CEAC on the goals within the plan
- Howard suggested working on these sections and meet again in January to review the work done in the interim
- Ross asked who the point of contact for will be collecting additions/edits to the plan. Howard offered to perform this role. Howard suggested the subgroups can work within Google Docs and provide the updates for review by the general group.
- John noted not all the members of this group are present in this meeting, so there are others who can help with this.

### **Actions:**

- Howard will work with Andrew to establish a “master” copy of the plan with limited write access. The link will be sent to all involved with the energy planning.

Meeting adjourned at 10:15