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Town of Middlebury Energy Committee Meeting Minutes Wednesday, November 18th, 2020

Present via Zoom: Howard Widelitz, Richard Hopkins, Steve Maier, Van Barth, Ross Conrad, Diane Munroe, Lisa Bernardin and Lindsey Fuentes-George

Guests: Dan Rafferty, Scott Buckley and John Barstow

Absent: Liv Herdman

Meeting started at 9:00 a.m.

Review and Approval of Previous Minutes:

Ross corrected typos and clarified the section about J-term course slots at the College. Richard motioned to approve October's minutes as amended, Diane seconded and all approved.

Green Lantern Discussion:

The MEC was joined by Scott Buckley, the VP of Finance for Green Lantern Solar. Ross explained what the MEC has been looking for in a solar panel project and Steve described Acorn Energy's proposal. Scott said that Green Lantern has projects that are similar to the style of Acorn's proposal. Green Lantern can provide a partnership flip model where the Town of Middlebury would have the ability to receive credits from a solar array for the first five years and then have the option to purchase the array after that. Green Lantern has an agreement with the Town of Cambridge that follows this format. Scott noted that there would be increased complexity with Middlebury since the Town only has 347 kW of net metering available and Green Lantern generally works with arrays of 500 kW. Ross asked if Green Lantern would allow for community members or organizations to sign on to the additional 153 kW. Scott said that Green Lantern does not want to deal with multiple off-takers. Howard said that he will share the calculations that the solar-subcommittee has done and then Scott will provide estimates from Green Lantern for comparison.

Police Station HVAC Evaluation:

The MEC and Police Department received a proposal for a \$2,800 evaluation of the station by Dan Dupras of Engineering Services of Vermont. This is the same consultant who did the evaluation of the heating system for the Ilsley Library. The intent of the evaluation is to determine how feasible it would be for the police station to be converted to heat pumps. Ross asked Howard how much the MEC has in its budget to ensure that there were sufficient funds for other projects such as buying a biodiesel fuel tank. Howard checked and found that the MEC has approximately \$25,000 which is more than enough for both the station evaluation and the fuel tank. Ross motioned to allocate \$2,800 from the MEC budget for the evaluation, Lindsey seconded and all voted in favor. This will be sent to the Selectboard for approval.

Carbon Dioxide Reduction Goals:

Richard asked Lindsey if he could have 20 minutes at the next Infrastructure Committee meeting on December 10th. Lindsey said she would request this. Ross will send Howard information about the biodiesel tank to forward to the Infrastructure Committee.

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Howard presented a spreadsheet he developed to track the schedule and progress of carbon dioxide reduction measures. He mentioned that this plan involves a lot of moving parts happening at different times. The spreadsheet is organized by the three main categories the MEC has been working with: electricity, heating, and transportation. The timeline for each category is divided by calendar quarters. John suggested having a low, medium or high priority distinction for projects. Howard said he would like to add cumulative reduction statistics at the end of each year for the three categories. Steve said that calculations of financial savings from projects could be helpful for the Revolving Loan Fund and convincing the Selectboard to fund further projects. Richard noted that electricity projects are more financially beneficial than environmentally beneficial. Steve added that, although financial information would be helpful, the MEC should not shy away from environmentally responsible projects that are not profitable. There will be more discussion on this spreadsheet at the next month's meeting.

Richard updated his pathways for carbon dioxide reduction. Gasoline and diesel emissions are both now targeted to decrease by 60% after getting feedback from Town staff. This brings the total reduction to 76%. Howard suggested advancements in technology could account for an additional 4% over the next 10 years, bringing the total reductions back towards 80%.

Other topics

Van has been working with Chris English to try and develop a document repository for the MEC that follows Open Meeting Law. Lindsey said that the Selectboard creates a document packet for each meeting which helps with organization. Van will put together a proposal by the next meeting.

Lisa will reach out to Tracy Isham and Jack Byrne from the College to ask about energy related internship opportunities for J-term.

Richard motioned to adjourn, Van seconded and all approved at 10:31 a.m.