

**Town of Middlebury  
Energy Committee Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, January 13, 2016**

Present: Jason Kaye, Laura Asermily, Jeremy Rathbun, Chris Robbins, Howard Widelitz, RJ Adler, Ross Conrad. Absent: Jono Chapin, Diane Munroe.

Guests: Peg Goldman, Kathy Blume, Nadine Barnicle, Elizabeth Golden Pidgeon.

Jason convened the meeting at 8:15 am.

Minutes:

RJ moved and Laura seconded a motion to approve the December minutes with minor amendments suggested by Howard. The motion passed unanimously, with Jeremy and Chris abstaining.

Vermontivate

Kathy Blume explained Vermontivate and encouraged us to participate. It is a climate and sustainability game, designed to get people to take action. When people play games, they challenge themselves and do things they didn't think they could do, but it doesn't feel like a burden. In the Vermontivate game, people work in teams and respond to challenges in categories like food, energy, transportation, water, health and wellness. They earn points similar to the way scouts earn merit badges. The teams are then encouraged to do projects in their community. For example, Calais is working to get a bus route to Montpelier and a community root cellar. Kathy said Vermontivate is becoming known as an effective motivator.

The signup for the game starts March 1, and the game goes from March 21 to May 7. On May 14 there is an ice cream party for participants. Last year Laura Asermily, Fran Putnam and Alice Eckles were a team.

Peg suggested to Kathy several other organizations that could be approached: the Center for Ecostudies, MALT, Otter Creek Audubon, the Middlebury Garden Club, VT SWEEP (statewide environmental education program), local museums, Venture North, and the Green Mountain Club.

Transportation

Nadine Barnicle from go/VT joined us for this part of the meeting to discuss plans for the transportation survey. There were a few questions about the content of the survey, but overall they are trying to keep the ones for different towns consistent.

The survey will be on SurveyMonkey between February 16 and March 17, and we need to let people know about it and offer paper copies if they don't have access to a computer. Ross said we cannot put the printed survey in the town report summary that gets mailed out to each residence, but we can put it in our committee report and send out a link with the town email newsletter. We decided to make up a post card with a link to the survey. The cards can be distributed in a number of ways: mailed to households, placed on chairs at Town Meeting, taken to senior residences, etc. Laura is looking into getting a link to the survey put on the cover of the town report summary. Paper copies could be available at our booth at Town Meeting and voting day. Laura and RJ talked about helping people at the polls or in the library do it on a computer there, but Nadine said she would have to find out how that could be done, given that she thinks the survey can only be taken once from the same computer.

By January 22, we need to do the following:

Jason will create a link from our web site to the survey.

Jason will write the promo material for the town report and the post card.

Howard will post this blurb on Front Porch Forum and send it to Chris English for the town email list.

Jeremy will take the lead for Town Meeting day (paper copies, post cards, computer).

#### 2016 Successor to Sustainable Living Expo

Elizabeth Golden Pidgeon joined the group for this discussion. The expo has been held for several years at the high school, with all-day exhibits and workshops. She said ACORN is not sponsoring it this year, and they would like the name changed. ACTR and Go/VT are sponsoring it, and they will emphasize transportation more than previously. The working name for the event is Healthy Life or Healthy Living, but committee members thought that sounded too much like the Healthy Living store in S. Burlington. Ross suggested Sustainability Expo, and the rest of the members agreed. That name will have to be run by the sponsors and ACORN.

The expo will likely be held in April, but the date has not been finalized. Elizabeth said they are planning to hold it at the middle school, which does not charge except for janitorial services. Income is derived from exhibitors and entrance fees. \$1000 of the proceeds are saved as seed money for next year, and the rest is distributed among the presenting organizations, of which the energy committee could be one.

Elizabeth asked the committee what we would like to do to support the expo: serve on the steering committee; recruit speakers, exhibitors and volunteers; help with publicity, etc. RJ agreed to be on the steering committee. Chris and Howard offered to help as needed.

Motion by RJ, seconded by Howard: the Middlebury Energy Committee agrees to co-present the Sustainability Expo at the Middlebury Union Middle School with ACTR and go/VT, with a focus on transportation. Passed unanimously.

Ross left the meeting.

#### Budget

Jason reported that the town has a \$78,000 budget gap and wants to have no increase in taxes this year. Our committee has requested \$2000 in operating funds (up from \$0) and \$5000 for a solar project such as a flashing beacon light. The Middlebury Downtown Improvement District has also budgeted \$10,000 for two flashing beacon lights. Jason suggested withdrawing our \$5000 request but retaining the request for operating funds. Laura said the Select Board appreciates the committee's work and the energy savings that have resulted, but there has been no move to devote some of those savings to further energy projects.

Laura moved and Jeremy seconded a motion to remove our capital budget request for \$5000. Passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:08. Next meeting: Wednesday, February 10, 8:15 am.

Respectfully submitted,  
Chris Robbins