

Town of Middlebury
Energy Committee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday 3/21/18

Present: Chris Robbins, Ross Conrad, Steve Maier, Hannah Hurlburt, Van Barth, guest John Snyder-White

Meeting called to order by Ross at 8:45am

(Note: All votes are unanimous unless otherwise noted)

Minutes: The minutes from the previous meeting were reviewed and a few minor changes were made, Steve motioned to approve, Hannah seconded.

Update on Net Metering: Discussion took place regarding the town's approach receiving power going forward. The three options seem to be the following:

1. Using town land and building our own array
2. Becoming an off-taker of a net metering project
3. Continuing to purchase from GMP

The Energy Committee is generally supportive of solar in our community. It is positive for our community members, positive for our town as one part of transitioning to a future that doesn't depend as highly on fossil fuels, and positive for the State and region in meeting renewable energy standards and requirements.

Steve made a motion to approach the selectboard with the following recommendation, Chris seconded, all approved:

In negotiating the M.O.U. with Gro-Solar, we recommend that the Select Board look into negotiating additional benefits for the town such as:

- asking that the town and its citizens have preferred access and rates in a future net metering project by Gro-Solar
- asking that Gro-Solar assist the town in implementing a solar array that the town would own and operate

- asking that a certain number of renewable energy credits be retired in VT

In addition, we request that you consider using income from the project for energy projects in the town.

ENERGY AUDIT PROJECT: Zero by Degrees will be performing the audits for the teen center and police department.

NOTE: In previous meetings we got the name of the company mixed up, in previous minutes where we said Zero by design we meant zero by degrees.

RENEWABLE ENERGY POLICY PROPOSAL:

Suggestions were made and changes will be made this month and we will approve changes at the next meeting.

Proposal as it stands on 3/21:

Middlebury Renewable Energy Policy Proposal – Submitted by Ross Conrad

Whereas, the best time to replace fossil fuel powered appliances and equipment (e.g. boilers, street lights, vehicles, etc.) with appliances that run on renewable forms of energy is after they have reached the end of their anticipated life expectancy and usefulness, but this is not necessarily happening within Middlebury's municipal system;

Whereas; Middlebury Department heads have an incentive to save money and use old fossil fuel powered appliances for as long as possible before replacing them, and in the case of boiler/heating systems, this may mean that the heating system fails during winter creating an crisis situation so that the cheapest and fastest way to get the heat back up and running again is to simply replace the fossil fuel powered system with another similar one;

Whereas; once a new fossil fuel powered appliance is installed it makes little sense to remove and replace it before its useful life has been fully utilized and this locks the town into greater fossil fuel use over time and this greatly slows our transition to renewable energy alternatives:

Therefore; the following proposal is being offered for consideration by the Middlebury Energy Committee:

1. Whenever a Middlebury Department Head obtains and submits vendor quotes to purchase an appliance/vehicle that will be powered by fossil fuels or fossil fuel sourced power, they will also be required by the Select Board to obtain and submit vendor quote(s) for a comparable appliance/vehicle that can be powered by renewable energy sources such as electricity, biodiesel, or biomass such as wood pellets.

2. Department Heads will also be required to request that all vendors submitting a proposal also supply the town with an estimate of the cost of using their appliance over an extended period of time (e.g. 20 years) using current fuel prices and a standard average number of operating hours per day. (e.g. heating system runs an average of 6 hours every day, or street lights are on for an average of 10 hours every night)

3. Department Heads will also require vendors to provide quotes for the average number of labor hours required for maintaining the appliance/vehicle on a yearly basis and an estimate of the cost for all supplies and materials needed to perform said maintenance on a yearly basis.

4. This information (initial cost, delivery and installation, cost of energy, cost of maintenance) would then provide the Middlebury Select Board with the information needed to fully evaluate both the short and long-term economic benefits of converting the town's fossil fuel infrastructure to renewably powered alternatives at the time when purchasing decisions are being made and will allow the town to convert to renewable energy alternatives when it makes sense to do so.

SOCIAL MEDIA:

A discussion of group e-mail and approval of facebook page took place. MEC facebook page will be up and running shortly.

TOWN MEETING SURVEY RESULTS:

Q.7. Energy Measures: 225 people responded out of 251 (90%) as having one or more of the listed energy measures. Most (85%) had LED lights. 58% had done some level of weatherization. 29% had clean burning wood or pellet stoves. 25% (56 people) have solar, presumably solar PV or hot water, or some passive solar? Or perhaps a combination. 22%. (49 people) have heat pumps (a handful further wrote in “ground source” and “hot water”).

As to the “electric car/bike” response, the 10% (23) included some folks who just circled “bike”, making me wonder whether they had a bicycle or was it actually an electric bike.

Q.8. Town websites visited:

19% (41) visited “AddisonCountyRecycles.org”, the ACSWMD web site.

6% (12) said they had visited VTenergyDashboard.org

DISCUSSION OF APPOINTMENTS:

Van and Hannah’s terms are up for renewal, John is interested in joining the committee.

10:15 Steve motioned to adjourn, seconded by Van, meeting adjourned.