

FINAL

**Town of Middlebury
Energy Committee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, September 19, 2018**

Present: Ross Conrad, Chris Robbins, Lindsay Fuentes-George, Van Barth, Steve Maier. Absent: John Snyder-White, Howard Widelitz. Guests: Jack and Chip Mayer.

Ross convened the meeting at 8:45 am. The agenda was approved on a motion by Howard, seconded by Chris. (Note: all votes are unanimous unless otherwise indicated.)

Minutes: Meeting Minutes from June 20 were approved with Van abstaining. Minutes from August 15 were approved with Van and Steve abstaining.

Climate Solutions Resolution Presentation: Chip and Jack Mayer presented a draft resolution that had been approved by 35 towns. The resolution encourages the town to press the state to do more to stop building fossil fuel infrastructure and to utilize renewable forms of energy. It also asks the town to take action locally. They wanted our input before getting signatures to put it on the Town Meeting ballot. Jack is a pediatrician, and he said he has noticed new diseases such as Lyme disease, babesiosis, and Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever that weren't here years ago. This is just one manifestation of climate change, as disease-bearing insects are becoming more prevalent. Committee members discussed the resolution, suggested some changes to the wording, and thought it might be good to break it up into two questions, one for state actions and one for town actions.

Illesley Library/Energy Committee Collaboration update: Chris had met with library director Dana Hart, Dan Werner, and two representatives from Efficiency Vermont: Matt Sargent and Rachel Mascolino. They discussed upgrades to the library's heating and cooling systems and did a walk-through. Eff. Vt. recommended getting off of steam heat as soon as possible and transitioning to hydronic heat. They suggested replacing the AC units with heat pumps one by one as they fail, but said there would be no problem integrating them with new furnaces powered by gas. Chris suggested looking at the option of wood pellets also. The current furnace leaks, but it will need an inspection to determine how long it can be used before it needs replacing. Rachel said steam boilers should really be inspected and maintained constantly, but that is not being done at the library. Dana wrote up a summary of meeting and said it had been very helpful.

Energy Upgrades to Teen Center and PD update: Ross took our recommendation to both the select board and the infrastructure committee, and both agreed to allocate \$9,000 to the police dept. and \$1,000 to the park and rec dept. for the teen center for weatherization upgrades. He spoke with Jackie about reinvesting the savings and she seemed to think it could be done. He will run it by Kathleen next. That led to a discussion of how to keep track of energy use in town buildings. Lindsay volunteered to look at electric and oil bills for those two buildings, and Van said he would set up a spread sheet to input their bills and usage. Chris said it would be important to look at heating degree days for each year because energy use varies with temperature. Steve wondered if Jackie had a database where she could add a column for energy use.

Town Renewable Energy Policy Proposal Update: After Ross brought the policy to the select board, they asked Victor Nuovo to work with him on some wording changes. Among other things, Victor suggested requiring the alternative equipment to be purchased if the cost is no more than 15% greater. (Our initial suggestion was 10%). The committee approved the revised version on a motion by Steve, seconded by Lindsay.

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Vermod Demonstration Opportunity Update: Howard and John had been working on this and were not present, but Howard sent an email saying that the demo may be located in the parking lot of the college park or in spaces next to it along College St.

Button Up planning update: Chris reported that we can borrow six sandwich boards from Homeward Bound to put signs around town. She had a draft of a sign that she will send to members for comment before the next meeting. Homeward Bound uses a printer in Vergennes to print theirs on waterproof cardboard for \$30 each; they can be reused. She has been creating Mary Mack dresses to set up next to the sandwich boards (with buttons down the back to remind people to button up). Chris also talked to Nancie Dunn about participating in the Spooktacular, which is on Oct. 27, close to Button-up Day (Nov. 11). Laura Asermily will try to get the stationary bike that powers a light bulb to bring to that event. We can come up with other fun ideas for kids also. In addition, we can have a table at the Midd Night Stroll in December as we did last year.

Van said that Middlebury College students may be able to help with these projects. The Sunday Night Group is starting the new semester this coming Sunday, and the sustainability office is hiring energy interns. He will make inquiries.

Committee member issues/updates: Steve discussed the \$40,000 per year payment that will be made to the town from Gro-Solar (now under a different name) and what could be done with the funds. Ideas included a revolving loan fund, subsidized installation of electric car charging stations at homes (more useful than public charging stations); and weatherization assistance for businesses. He said Efficiency Vermont is looking to help businesses in Middlebury anyway.

Steve also said that the Climate Economy project for the South St. neighborhood had ended the public outreach phase. About half the residents agreed to a home energy visit, but the organizers don't know what actions were suggested. He hoped that in the next neighborhood, the residents can be asked to release the forms to the project organizers.

Lindsay mentioned the town energy policy requiring the town to look into renewable or more efficient alternatives when considering a purchase of equipment using fossil fuels. She suggested that we look at some of the next pieces of equipment due to be purchased and try to do our own research on alternatives.

We decided to move the November meeting to the second Wednesday of the month to avoid Thanksgiving. That will make it November 14.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 on a motion by Chris, seconded by Lindsay. Next meeting will be October 17 at 8:45 am.

Respectfully submitted, Chris Robbins