

FINAL

**Town of Middlebury
Energy Committee Planning Meeting**

March 13, 2019

Present: Ross Conrad, Steve Meier (entered at 8:45), Van Barth, Chris Robbins (entered at 8:35).

Absent: John Snyder-White, Lindsay Fuentes-George. Guests: Diane Munroe, Richard Hopkins

Howard chaired the meeting, which began at 8:30 am. The purpose of the meeting was to let members decide what they wanted to work on this year. Guests were allowed to vote because they expect to be on the committee next month.

Richard summarized what he said were the three main points of the state energy plan: electrify the energy supply, decarbonize electrical sources, and improve efficiency. None of these actions can stand alone. Ross added sequestering carbon in soil and vegetation. Chris added biofuels and electrical storage. The group agreed that all paths must be pursued.

Howard reviewed the options that were outlined at the last meeting. After the discussion of all the options, each person put three votes on their preferred one(s).

Purchasing Policy: Ross said he has been asked to find ways to word the RFPs so that quotes from vendors for fossil fuel-using and non-fossil-fuel using equipment can be compared. Richard said that money should not be the only factor for deciding what to purchase. Perhaps dollars per ton of CO₂ avoided could be a criterion.

Van said the college is considering an internal carbon tax or fee. The money would come out of each department's budget and would go into a fund for reducing carbon emissions.

Button-up Day: We agreed to continue this, recognizing that eventually most people will have heard the message.

Revolving Loan Fund: Steve said there may be a grant available from Efficiency Vermont. He is still not sure how to account for the savings. Chris said her house had an energy audit and retrofits done in 2013 but they have not seen savings, so it's hard to predict.

Reducing Food Waste: Howard said a lot of entrepreneurs are looking at ways to utilize food waste as a resource. Chris said a research project could document how much food restaurants are wasting. Richard wondered what percentage of food waste occurs in restaurants vs homes, grocery stores, factories, the hospital, college, etc. He is willing to research that. Diane said that college students had done a project with the food bank concerning food recovery (repurposing unused or unharvested food). Molly Anderson at the college is an expert in food systems. Steve remarked that other people are working on this topic.

Enhanced Energy Plan: Ross said town planner Jen Murray had shown some interest in applying for funding for an enhanced energy plan, and Adam Lougee at Regional Planning is checking to see if there is

any money available. Ross is on the energy committee of the regional planning commission. Richard pointed out that we should first look at the energy chapter of the existing town plan and see how we are doing at implementing it. He said that the Dept. of Public Service had posted requirements for regional and town plans and that they do not have to support natural gas. Ross agreed.

Steve added another action to consider: Helping to implement the town meeting resolutions passed by the voters. The resolutions were only a recommendation. The select board will have to draft ordinances to carry out their intent, or in the case of the state energy policy, write a letter to our legislators.

E-bikes and e-scooters: Steve said that there is no active vendor for public e-bikes and scooters at the moment, here or in Burlington. They are focusing on larger cities. Chris asked if the Addison County Walk-Bike Council was working on this, and Steve said they are not at the moment.

Helping Fund EV charging stations in homes: Efficiency Vermont will pay for the charger but not the installation. Revolving loan funds could be used for this.

Offering help to homeowners and businesses: This was a general category that is included in the resolution passed by the voters. It could include helping business owners walk through the process of making energy improvements.

Library heating: Ross reiterated that if we want the town to put in a wood pellet heating system instead of natural gas, we need to push for it. Richard said that heat pumps should be considered, and Chris replied that they are going to be installed but will not do the whole job. She thought that a lot of work has gone into evaluating the heating system and they would not be pleased if we tried to start from square one. Steve said his heat pumps work except on the coldest days, but for backup they use electric resistance heat.

Richard left the meeting, putting all of his votes on the enhanced energy plan.

Vehicles (town fleet): Steve said the police dept. is working on finding hybrid vehicles or gas powered ones that shut off automatically when idling.

At this point all voted on their priorities. Top vote getters were purchasing policy, library heating, revolving loan fund, enhanced energy plan, and supporting the select board in implementing the resolution. We noted that the revolving loan fund topic includes continuing to do energy audits and assist with weatherization of town buildings, whether or not a revolving loan fund is actually implemented.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:50 on a motion by Chris, seconded by Diane.

Respectfully submitted,
Chris Robbins