

**Middlebury Energy Committee (virtual option)
Wednesday, November 16, 2022 at 9:00 am
Town Offices (large conference room)**

Minutes

Present: Howard Widelitz, Liv Herdman, Diane Munroe, Steve Maier, Mike Roy, Bill Cunningham, Dan Rafferty, Richard Hopkins, Ross Conrad, Lindsey Fuentes-George

Absent: Ross Conrad

Guests: John Barstow, Jonathan Miller, Jonathan Dowd, Peter Sterling

Review meeting agenda

Removed Municipal Greenhouse Gas Monitoring as it was not ready for discussion.

Approve meeting minutes from last meeting

Some minor amendments were made to minutes. There was discussion of whether we should provide a shorter synopsis with the minutes. Mike offered to provide an abridged version of the minutes. Howard moved to approve the October minutes. Dan seconded. Unanimous approval.

Anaerobic Digester Analysis / Committee Recommendation

Richard will talk to the Infrastructure Committee (IC) in January. He shared the presentation he will bring to the IC (see attached slides). There was some discussion of how to improve the messaging. Other points of discussion included: Would Option 1, using the methane to generate electricity, contribute to the net metering cap? What is the timeline of the project? Can we get the right consultants?

It was reported that the town is in the process of choosing an engineering firm for the wastewater treatment plant upgrade. We will engage with the IC in January. It might make sense to ask engineering firms some relevant questions at the upcoming Infrastructure Committee meeting. Ask if there are case studies from VT or elsewhere that might guide recommendations. Howard will communicate with Dan Werner about this. Emmalee Cherington is succeeding Dan so we should be sure to communicate with her as well. Thanks to Richard for all the work on this!

Role of Energy Committee in Planning Commission decisions

A brief summary of the 11/9 discussion with Jen Murray was given. The goal of this conversation was for us to take a greater role in things that relate to energy. We need to stay in touch with Jen and see what we can do. She would be supportive of stricter energy standards etc. if we can develop a process that is inclusive of relevant stakeholders to develop the standards.

It was noted that to do this we should have representation on relevant committees (e.g. Planning Commission) so that we can engage properly. We need to communicate both ways, we should monitor agendas as well as have committee chairs alert us to things that may be of interest.

John Barstow gave a brief update on the town/college climate plan. Ted Redmond (consultant/facilitator) will have a meeting soon with college folks and towns etc. This will be a good forum for accomplishing our goals and engaging with the relevant entities.

Renewable Energy Vermont (REV)

Campaign to Reform Renewable Energy Standard

Peter Sterling and Jonathan Dowds shared a presentation. Question: Does the REV revision change storage provisions? It does not, but the feeling is that businesses will take part in that. REV does support small in-state hydro as part of the mix. It doesn't seem like there will be a lot of new developments in that regard, but there may be options they are unaware of. Weatherization is also an important part of driving down demand. Prioritizing building solar on the built environment as well as using geothermal can all be important parts.

Vermont has 14 different utilities, and in general they don't want regulation. It will be more expensive if they are not retiring Renewable Energy Credits (RECs).

What is important here is the electrification and load growth over time and there is a need for better policy that allows that.

Bristol Solar Array Issue

The array was reconfigured in a way that reduced output by 12%, and there is a potential settlement agreement. The town voted to approve the settlement.

Public Outreach

- Initial draft of communication spreadsheet (audience and approach)

This is a great vision with a lot of synergy between organizations. Folks should read this document so we can discuss it at the following meeting.

Ben Wagner gave an update on Sunday Night Environmental Group (SNEG) project. The campaign is to have the college look at its relationship with Chase bank. Chase bank is the biggest funder of fossil fuels amongst banks. SNEG is meeting with the college provost. It would be a good idea to explore alternatives. Also, to know which board members might have a relationship with Chase. We can provide feedback on the initial presentation.

Updates and other news

- Amtrak Platform Solar – Status update – looks like a lot of energy will be generated. The platform's electricity use is greater than anticipated. Solar installed on the platform would need to cover platform electricity before any town benefit.

- Memorial Sports Center Rooftop Solar – solar panel project appears to be a no go due to roof issues. Maybe they could explore putting it up in the parking lot?

Adjourn Vote

Richard moved to adjourn; Steve seconded. Unanimous approval.