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**Town of Middlebury
Energy Committee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, November 14, 2018**

Present: Ross Conrad, Chris Robbins, Van Barth, Steve Maier, Howard Widelitz. Absent: Lindsay Fuentes-George, John Snyder-White. Guest: Richard Hopkins

Ross convened the meeting at 8:48 am. (Note: all votes are unanimous unless otherwise indicated.)

Introductions: Richard Hopkins and committee members introduced themselves. He has moved here from Tallahassee, FL, where he was state epidemiologist. He is looking to use his abilities to analyze trends and data. He previously produced reports on energy use in Tallahassee.

Minutes: Meeting Minutes from October were approved with a change to the dates when the Vermod demo will be here. Howard moved, Steve seconded.

Energy Efficiency Upgrades to Teen Center and PD: Howard reported that he had discussed this topic with Kathleen Ramsay and Chief Hanley. For the next fiscal year there is \$10,000 in the energy budget and \$6,000 in the police dept. budget for energy upgrades to the department headquarters. The \$6000 is for wall to roof air sealing. Now they need to get quotes for the work. Howard encouraged them to get quotes for fixing the windows in the conference room as well. Chris said that the infrastructure committee had approved \$4,875 for Judy Harris to handle writing the RFP and getting the proposals for recommendation to the energy committee. (Harris is engaged in a years-long effort to evaluate all town buildings, including repurposing the structures at the old wastewater treatment site next to the police station.) She also said that Dan Werner had installed the programmable thermostat in the teen center and in the public works building as well.

Town Energy Use Spreadsheet Van said he had data for police dept. propane deliveries from the end of 2016 till March of 2018. The rates fluctuate and the usage is not consistent. He will try to get heating degree days to compare.

Chris said she would bring the list of anticipated equipment purchases to the next meeting so that we can research alternatives.

There followed a discussion of the pros and cons of wood energy and renewable natural gas. Chris said she has often heard that wood pellets are good for the Vermont forests because they allow woodland owners to find a market for low-grade wood; otherwise they would be more likely to sell the land for development. But worldwide, wood is being over-harvested. Richard said wood is more efficiently used for building heat than for electricity production. Southern forests in the US are being cut for shipping to Europe to substitute for coal in electrical plants.

Renewable natural gas is another option that customers of VT Gas can get for a higher price. Some of the industries along Exchange St. are planning to install a methane digester the process their waste; plus there are the plans to add gas from a manure digester to the VT Gas pipeline. Ross was concerned that the percentage of renewable gas is very small and not necessarily permanent (if companies move or close); Steve wondered what would happen if demand exceeded supply.

Button Up Update: Ross was wondering where to store the button-up supplies after we take them down. Chris said she would store them temporarily. In the meantime, we will move the sandwich

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boards. Steve will move one from Martin's to the sidewalk opposite the co-op. Howard will move the one from r.k. Myles to the sidewalk in front of the post office. Chris will move the one from Aubuchon to Seymour St. Lindsay already offered to move the one from Goodro to the Sarah Partridge library.

There are two Midd Night Stroll dates, both Thursdays: Dec. 6 and Dec. 13. Volunteers will be: Dec. 6, 5:00 – 6:00 pm, Howard & Van. (Chris will set up.) Dec. 6, 6:00 -7:00, Ross (and hopefully another committee member). Dec. 13, 5:00 – 6:00, Steve & Chris. Steve will bring fliers from Green Mtn Power and will contact Efficiency Vt to see if they have any other materials for us.

Committee member issues/updates: Van reported on the divestment campaign at Middlebury College. There was a student referendum where 80% voted in favor of divestment from fossil fuels. The faculty voted 92% in favor. They are hoping that the Board of Trustees will respond by deciding at their January meeting to divest. The college has been part of a group of colleges that use a company called Investure to manage their endowments, and it is hard to change the policy of this group. However, it appears possible to withdraw from it and invest elsewhere.

Chris asked Van if the college does a complete energy budget when figuring out their carbon-neutral policy. Van said that they do not take into account the energy used to harvest and ship the wood chips to their biomass plant. On a cold day they can use 3 truckloads a day.

Ross and Steve mentioned that tonight there is a meeting of the school district to discuss their facilities, and they plan to encourage the district to take energy efficiency measures. Steve cited Vergennes as a good example.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 on a motion by Steve, seconded by Howard. Next meeting will be December 19 at 8:45 am.

Respectfully submitted, Chris Robbins