

East Montpelier Energy Committee – Draft Meeting Minutes -- Monday April 10, 2023,

Meeting called to order 7:02 PM

- 1) Attendees:
 - a) Ben McCall (facilitator)
 - b) Emily Levin
 - c) Rick Bartow
 - d) Austin Cate (via Zoom)
 - e) Stephen Miracle
 - f) Andy Shapiro (secretary)

- 2) Non-committee members
 - a) Kim Watson, Planning Commission
 - b) Sam Lash, Climate and Energy Planner, Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission

- 3) Agenda approved

- 4) Committee approved the 3/14/23 and 3/27/23 minutes

- 5) Ben attended Selectboard meeting
 - a) Selectboard approved grant application to be sent by Gina, Town Administrator for community building mini-grant.

- 6) Sam Lash, Climate and Energy Planner, Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission presented to the meeting
 - a) RPC supports State agencies, represents and supports municipalities. Represents 23 towns. Funding from Towns and Agency of Commerce and Community Development, other State agencies. RPC is a planning resource for the Town
 - b) Overview of Enhanced Energy Planning
 - i) Updated in the VT Comprehensive Energy Plan – Act 174 sets standards for enhanced energy planning. Comprehensive Energy Plan and Climate Action Plan set renewable energy standards
 - (1) CAP came out of Global Warming Solutions Act (GWSA)
 - ii) Three sectors: thermal, electric, and transportation
 - iii) Doing an enhanced energy plan gives the town "substantial deference" before the PUC in siting decisions
 - iv) Unclear how much benefit this really provides
 - v) The real benefit of a town energy plan is that there is a lot of funding coming down the pike, so we will be prepared to pursue funding
 - vi) Part of our enhanced energy plan is developing implementation pathways:
 - (1) Tracking federal funding
 - (2) Revolving loan fund
 - c) Different types of energy plan:
 - i) Energy plan will be integrated into the Town Plan for the 2026 update

- ii) One option is to do the bare minimum to get an enhanced energy plan and get the substantial deference sooner, while taking longer to do the rest of the plan. This may be an amendment to Town Plan, but that has some disadvantages
 - (1) Planning commission looked to see if elements are already in the town plan and we have documentation of that
- d) Elements of the plan:
 - i) Baseline: Current usage, current land use
 - (1) Get some of this from Efficiency Vermont
 - (2) Energy Dashboard is not updated and future in question. Data on existing renewable energy systems in Town has to be gathered
 - (3) E. Mont. is served 60-70% WEC and 30-40% GMP
 - (4) There are utility constraints to renewable energy siting, and we don't have good data on things like grid capacity
 - (5) RPC is adding some improvement to the base data. baseline data from RPC and DPS is very coarse, but meets State requirement, with lot of holes in the data
 - (6) We can also develop a baseline for municipal usage across our buildings and fleets
 - (a) This can be done now
 - ii) Targets and analysis:
 - (1) Pathways are most important part of plan
 - (a) Define targets for efficient, safe and comfortable energy systems
 - (b) Sam has examples from other plans to use for targets, actions, and language she can supply, recognizing known limitations on data
 - (2) Establish analysis and targets
 - (3) Forest sequestration being looked at now (new)
 - (4) We get this from the RPC, which gets it from the PSD
 - (a) Best to start with this, then supplement with additional analysis of our own
 - (5) Our targets will be a proportional share based on the town population; we obviously don't have full control to meet those targets and can acknowledge that in our plan
 - iii) Pathways:
 - (1) Recommendations - siting, priority projects, etc.
 - (2) Implementation actions - what is the town going to do to achieve the targets
 - (3) Can include town ordinances and requirements for certain types of development
 - (a) 2019 draft effort has data in it, but it would best be updated
 - (b) 2019 effort did not include "pathways"(actions)
- e) Mapping standards - focused on siting:
 - i) Looking at forest blocks and conservation - integrating those
 - ii) Existing generation - Energy Atlas Dashboard is not updated, but that in combination with some PSC surveys can get a sense of this
- f) Also need to consider equity throughout the plan - both historical and currently
 - (1) Also inclusive process
 - (2) This can be a pathway - an ongoing process, doesn't need to be complete in the plan
- g) Process & tools:
 - i) Sam will send "starter kit"
 - ii) Break into workstreams:
 - (1) Develop a list of high-level goals for the town re: energy
 - (2) Baseline data - proportional targets
 - (a) Still waiting on the PSD to provide this - already a year overdue

- (3) Municipal buildings and fleet - gather this data
 - (a) They want this for the municipal energy resilience application
 - (b) Committee needs to gather 5 years energy use data for Town buildings. Data needed to apply for audits
- (4) Looking at existing generation - what is the current status
 - (a) Sam will provide links to sources that can give us this information
- (5) Review Town Plan and identify energy sections
 - (a) Draw on previous work
- (6) Stakeholder engagement plan
 - (a) Develop initial list of stakeholders to target
- (7) Reach the enhanced energy plan guidelines and other town examples
- (8) Review GMP and WEC integrated resource plans - Sam also working to get this for CVRPC
 - (a) Outage summaries
 - (b) Municipal building usages
 - (c) Grid constraints
 - (d) IRP
- (9) Brainstorm pathways
- (10) Review EVT energy burden report
- (11) Previous webinar on mapping and siting
- (12) Tools that are available from RPC
 - (a) Other Town plan examples
 - (b) Work with electric utilities
 - (c) Look at utility integrated resource plans
 - (d) Solar resource mapping available thru RPC
- (13) Sam would like a point person from committee for communication. Sam happy to get questions and attend some meetings, but not too many.

h) Funding:

- i) 3 EV charging programs coming this summer
 - (1) Multifamily properties less than 20 units
 - (2) Workplace charging
 - (3) Public attractions (tourist sites, etc.)
- ii) Drive Electric & DOT are looking for EV host sites -- identify those that would be helpful
- iii) Grants are available out for placemaking and bike/pedestrian upgrades - constantly being updated—some competitive and some block grants
- iv) Writing the Town Plan will position us well to pursue funding opportunities
- v) Municipal resilience audits - will be able to sign up for this opportunity soon
- vi) Funding opportunities. Sam will send more information. Will send VLCT guide to Federal grants. State will have EV charging grant programs for multi-family projects. Drive Electric will have grants.
 - (1) EECBG Competitive Program - due in June
 - (a) State has to allocate a certain amount to towns - unclear how the county and town funding will look
 - (b) Competitive - uses are pretty broad, can be planning/implementation/RLF, etc.
 - (c) But 40% has to go to Justice40 - unclear how this will filter down to towns
- vii) VT League of Cities & Towns has a funding guide for federal grants for VT communities

- viii) Other state level TA programs that we can consider - health equity
 - ix) Sign up for CVRPC newsletter - good way to stay updated
- 7) Kim Watson notes that it is Important to coordinate efforts with Town with Capital Improvement Committee
- 8) Consent to adjourn the meeting at 8:36 pm