

**Brandon Energy Committee Meeting
September 10, 2018**

Committee Members Present: Michael Shank, Lowell Rasmussen, Edna Sutton, Jack Schneider

Also in Attendance: Stephanie Jerome, Barbara Noyes-Pulling

1. Call to order

Michael Shank, Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:02PM.

2. Agenda Approval

A motion was made by Lowell Rasmussen and seconded by Jack Schneider to approve the agenda. **The motion passed unanimously.**

3. Approval of Minutes

July 2, 2018 and August 6, 2018 Meetings:

A motion was made by Jack Schneider and seconded by Lowell Rasmussen to approve the minutes of the July 2, 2018 and August 6, 2018 Energy Committee meetings. **The motion passed unanimously.**

4. Finalize Criteria List for Renewable Energy Development

Lowell Rasmussen had a discussion with Johanna Miller, who facilitates the Energy Committee Network throughout Vermont, regarding the development of a criteria list for renewable energy development. Michael Shank suggested inviting Ms. Miller to a future meeting for further conversation. Mr. Rasmussen provided a rough draft of a potential Brandon Energy Plan Review and Permit Process. There had been discussion of writing descriptive policies with regard to the Route 7 and 73 corridors, however, Ms. Miller advised that a solar developer is a commercial business and there has to be consistency across the board on restricting areas. Mr. Rasmussen noted there had also been discussion of the areas being used for housing, as the Town should have an expectation of getting a return on investment for such items as water and sewer, and solar fields would not provide this investment to the Town. Mr. Rasmussen developed a draft permit rather than an MOA due to potential liability issues. The document included verbiage about the standards used by the State of Vermont for system classifications. Additional requirements include: a statement of compliance, site plan, project budget and scope, qualified assessment and an action plan, guaranteed funding source for de-commissioning and statement of assurance the site is safe, stable and free of structures and hazardous material. Other questions proposed: 1) is the project a residential or commercial installation, 2) is it on public or private land, 3) is the installation net metered or on the grid and who owns the recs. Mr. Rasmussen noted the Town will be developing areas with known constraints. In addition, the matrix could outline where the current and future services might exist to provide this information to potential developers. The document could include information on the preferred sites for these types of development. Michael Shank noted this would be non-enforceable recommendations and based on his conversation with the Town Manager; the Town does not have enforcement capabilities. Edna Sutton noted there has to be a sensible way of monitoring the energy growth and there should be ways to strengthen criteria and suggested being very explicit in the documentation as the Town could end up with development in the wrong place. Barbara Noyes-Pulling advised if the Town is looking at areas to be just residential, that could be placed in the Plan as a constraint. Mr. Rasmussen noted the permit could also require project details. It was suggested the document be changed to a review process, as opposed to a permitting process. There was concern that a review process document could not be a requirement of the developer. Ms. Noyes-Pulling noted this would also have to be consistent across the board for all developers. Ms. Noyes-Pulling advised the Public Utility Commission (PUC) has different criteria than

the local municipalities. Stephanie Jerome noted any project would require a Town permit and solar developers are required to provide a presentation to both the local Planning Commission and Select Board. Mr. Rasmussen noted part of the reason for the questionnaire is to meet the state mandates that are on the books and gather data on the projects prior to the start of a project. Mr. Shank suggested doing one more iteration of the document prior to the next Energy Committee meeting. Mr. Shank will create a Google Doc and will share it with Johanna Miller and the Committee members for their input. Ms. Noyes-Pulling stated the PUC determines what is in the best interest for the State when processing applications and has the authority to override the local mandates. Ms. Jerome noted the Town has to be cognizant of development as a whole and some of this information would be useful.

5. Update on Discussions with Brandon Experts/Staff Regarding Preferred Sites

Edna Sutton and Michael Shank discussed potential preferred sites for solar projects with Dave Atherton and Elaine Smith. Mr. Shank noted this was a very helpful meeting and several properties were noted as preferred sites for solar development. The Committee will determine a plan for contacting the property owners to discuss whether there is interest in listing their properties as preferred sites in the Energy Plan. Jack Schneider questioned the percentage of the Town's municipal electricity that is covered by the Town's solar project. Michael Shank thought that it was about 20%. Edna Sutton questioned whether there can be commercial areas noted in the bylaws. Barbara Noyes-Pulling advised the Town has advisory capacity only because utilities are a State matter.

6. Preparation for Tow Fall Public Forums

a. Winter Prep: Efficiency, Conservation and Weatherization

Michael Shank will contact NeighborWorks, Efficiency Vermont and Green Mountain Power to assist in the Winter Prep community forum. Barbara Noyes-Pulling will provide Mr. Shank contacts for the groups. Mr. Shank will discuss a potential date in October with the groups and advise the Committee members.

b. Transitioning Off Fossil Fuels

This item was postponed for action following the Winter Prep public forum.

7. Discuss Electric Vehicle Day

This item was postponed for action following the Winter Prep public forum.

8. Discuss Site/Location of Charging Station

This item was postponed for action following the Winter Prep public forum.

9. Discuss Educational Opportunities (OVUHS Partnerships, Etc.)

This item was postponed for action following the Winter Prep public forum.

10. Old/New Business

Lowell Rasmussen requested Michael Shank contact Johanna Miller to provide information on the Brandon Energy Committee for addition to the listing of energy committees in the state.

Barbara Noyes-Pulling advised that she has information on an MOU that will be discussed at a subsequent meeting.

11. Next Meeting

Next Meeting will be Monday, October 1, 2018 @ 5PM in the Brandon Town Hall

12. Adjournment

The Committee Chair adjourned the meeting at 6:21PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Charlene Bryant
Recording Secretary