

Town of Bennington - Energy Committee
Bennington County Regional Commission Conference Room
111 South Street, Suite 203, Bennington, Vermont
Tuesday, October 29th, 2019
7:00 – 8:10 pm

Minutes

Members present: Jeannie Jenkins, Michael Kuser, Wendy Sharkey, Deanna Oakes, Nancy Thompson, Bruce Lierman, David Traver-Adolphus

Also present: Donald Campbell (Select Board Chair), Madison Kremer (BCRC VISTA), Marsh Hudson-Knapp, Hudson Koss..., Bill Christian (NorShaft Energy Committee, Climate Advocates of Bennington), David A. Durfee (Climate Advocates of Bennington), Michael Weber (Climate Advocates of Bennington), Jim Thierrien (Bennington Banner), Richard Dundas (Climate Advocates of Bennington)

Background and goals for the formation of a formal energy committee were discussed: Town plan as guiding document contains 47 recommendations. The committee is tasked with deciding what is actionable.

Three goals of committee:

1. Organize as a group, following open meeting law
2. Set priorities based on town plan
3. Use members' passions and experience to sustain committee and implement town plan's recommendations

The select board has appointed the energy committee for one year and will decide at the end of the year if there is momentum, continued need for a formally-organized municipal energy committee. Donald Campbell noted that the formal committee may have good synergy with local informal energy/climate organizing.

Open Meeting laws discussed: Donald Campbell outlined open meeting law, including requirements for minutes, agendas, and providing notice to the town about meetings.

Board officers voted upon: Michael Kuser was unanimously elected as Chair. Wendy Sharkey was unanimously elected as Vice Chair. And Nancy Thompson was unanimously elected as secretary.

Climate Advocates discuss declaration: Richard Dundas brought up the Climate Advocates of Bennington's proposal to the Select Board that Bennington declare a climate emergency. Jeannie Jenkins noted that the Select Board is organizing a separate work group to discuss the

matter. Donald Campbell mentioned that Energy Committee is specifically tasked with implementing town plan recommendations, and that SB is looking directly at this proposal.

Invitations to relevant events: Madison Kremer brought up the November 10th Button Up Campaign kick-off hosted by the North Bennington/Shaftsbury energy committee to help residents weatherize their homes. The event will take place between 2 and 4 at the Bennington Fire Station. Madison also invited committee members to attend the VECAN conference which provides training to energy committee members in early December at Lake Morey.

Next steps outlined: it was agreed upon that all committee members will receive a printed town plan and will review. Each member will decide on 2-3 priorities to be discussed at the next meeting. Jim Sullivan of the BCRC will be invited to attend the next meeting provide background on local energy work. The Committee will work to figure out what information on municipal and local energy consumption is available and what isn't.