

Bennington Energy Committee

May 4, 2021 7-8:30 pm on Zoom.

Present: Michael Kuser, Jeannie Jenkins, Marshall Hudson-Knapp , Deanna Oakes, Bill Christian, Wendy Sharkey, Nancy Thompson

Michael Kuser called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

The committee reviewed the minutes from the April meeting. Wendy moved to accept the minutes, and Deanna seconded. The minutes were approved.

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Jeannie advised that the Select Board voted last week to continue the energy committee. There will be  
● three two-year seats and two three-year seats. There will also be one one-year Select Board seat. The deadline to submit a letter of interest is noon on Friday, May 14. Letters should be sent to 205 South St., P.O. Box 469, Bennington. Once the board is seated for next year, it would be appropriate then to have elections. To stay on the committee, current members must write a letter of interest. Both Nancy and Wendy noted that they would not be continuing.

Michael shared that he had started writing an article to publicize the Window Dressers program. Discussion was had regarding timing of activities since there will be new members. Jeannie pointed out that information printed in the *Banner* will also be in the Manchester paper. Marsh indicated that he is happy to continue on the committee in an advisory role.

The next item of business was revisiting the Select Board recommendations to create a work plan. Michael reviewed the list in the agenda:

- I. Publicize ways to cut energy use, especially fossil fuels.
  - 2. Work with realtors and building material suppliers to distribute EE info
  - 3. Work with Planning Commission on town's energy goals and data analysis
4. Promote weatherization, particularly in older homes, and for low-income households
5. Identify funding sources for community EE
6. Work with other energy committees on op-eds, etc.
7. Analyze available data annually to evaluate progress on energy and land use goals
8. Establish a baseline to measure progress based on the parameters in the Vermont Energy Dashboard Energy Atlas and post annual updates

Marsh shared what he has been learning about regenerative gardening and soil improvement. He notes that this practice has large beneficial implications for carbon. Nancy talked about the UVM gardening series and the presenters' views about soil.

Discussion was held around possibilities for funding, both at present and in the future, including with Efficiency Vermont. Michael suggested combing item 6 on the list above with item 1 to eliminate

redundancy. Jeannie mentioned GNET amongst other possibilities for sharing content. He also suggested combining numbers 7 and 8 because of their close relation.

Michael suggested an informative session for the next meeting and solicited suggestions. Michael suggested having someone from the Vermont Energy Atlas, and he will reach out to them to try to find someone to speak.

Michael encouraged everyone interested staying on the committee to be sure to write a letter to the town manager's office with their intent.

Marsh brought up a phone call with Paul Doucette, who was very enthusiastic about bringing the first hybrid detective's vehicle to Bennington. He is hoping it will be just a short time before they have their first hybrid cruiser, which will be much more energy efficient. They will be evaluating how the two vehicles function, and if they are acceptable, they will order more hybrids next year.

Michael recapped ideas for the next agenda. Marsh advised that he has not followed up on compost with Michael Batcher, but he will do that later this month.

Jeannie moved to adjourn; Wendy seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 8:02 p.m.