

BENNINGTON ENERGY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, October 6th, 2021 7 PM

Community Room - Bennington Recreation Center - 655 Gage Street, Bennington

Minutes of the Meeting

In attendance: William Karis, Bill Christian, Deana Oaks, Joseph Maguire, Richard Dundas, Bruce Lee Clark, Al Bashevkin, Marsh Hudson-Knapp, Bruce Lierman

- Review minutes from Sept 1st meeting
 - Al Bashevkin suggested following changes to the Sep 1 minutes
 - Al present should be added to minutes.
 - Item 4 should be changed to say that Al Bashevkin sent a letter to Bennington Housing Authority to inquire about composting at their sites. The Housing Authority reported that they do compost with Cassella and stated that it has been going well
 - Motion made and accepted to accept minutes as amended.
- Define Minute Taker : Al Bashevkin has agreed to take minutes for this meeting.
- Opportunities with North Bennington/Shafsbury Energy Committee
 - Their next meeting is Oct 28 -Bill Christian will be attending that meeting.
- EV Infrastructure
 - EV car-share at low-income multifamily housing units
 - Twin Pines Housing Authority – serve Triangle area – Summer Park Residences – recently built/occupied units. Bruce will reconnect with his contact to understand program.
 - Bennington Police Department has been recognized by Climate Advocates. On 10/13/2021 at 3pm Bennington Award to Benn Police Dept over CAT TV on Main St for purchase of hybrid & e-bikes. Al Bashevkin has agreed to represent the Energy committee to speak. He will emphasize that this is a great first step (not the last) for Bennington and its police department in having an impact on reducing carbon emissions.
 - More EV charging Stations around Bennington are planned
- Compost discussion with guests, Michael Batcher of BCRC and Joe Maguire of Cassella invited
 - Bennington Housing Authority – Al checked in to see their composting facility. A passerby never heard of it. Compost area was moved nearer to the office to provide better oversight to reduce contamination. To compost at the Housing Authority likely needs better signage and communication with the residents.
 - Michael Batcher of BCRC
 - Landlords are challenging
 - Challenge with contamination
 - Put out of way to make it less convenient to contaminate
 - Rough Numbers of diverted organics
 - 2018 – 5000 tons in the county
 - 2020 – 7547 tons in the county

- But everything is increasing trash/recycling/compost
 - Suggestion of food drop off center at church – a good pilot to start with – specified time to monitor drop offs.
 - Michael has a lot of signage and handouts and has a power point about recycling and composting that he can share with others.
 - Marsh suggested three possible helps to encourage more composting
 - Signage
 - Handouts
 - Having advocates at the locations to help teach others how to do it.
- Joe Maguire of Casella
 - Challenge of residential sector engagement in composting is volume
 - Joining rotary to get the word out
 - Compost routes have grown needed to buy new bigger truck
 - Also doing Berkshires
 - Large places are challenging because of volume and smell
 - 100gal hot water heater to rinse out bins. Need bigger water capacity.
 - Willowbrook could send out a flyer too its residents
 - Centralized locations for composting would be great
 - Bennington College & Vets home. BC needed rolloff container
 - At large sites make all togo items compostable.
 - Plastic straws are large contaminant. Need more organizations to have compostable items. Good news is that paper straw use is growing
 - Casella tracking collection by route – we could track Bennington’s improvement
 - Signage goes a long way
 - In looking at the potential for a neighborhood-based composting drop off, the 2nd Congregational Church in Bennington is considering their facility to do this. They need something in writing from an official source saying that the Church can do this drop off/pick up. It was suggested that neighborhood-based composting sites idea start small.
 - Investigating:
 - Bennington College Flyers & Solid waste district
 - Another location for a community composting site – maybe Rec Center
 - Sawyer, a Bennington College Student is interested in this project
- Value of a Town Energy Coordinator
 - Bruce Lee-Clark– Brattleboro’s Energy Coordinator – position exists, but they never have hired anyone for it. They do have Sustainability “Person” – BLC has connected and asked or position info.
 - To achieve Green House Gas Reduction Goals Brattleboro hired “sustainability position”
 - Bennington College student: Sawyer is going to be working with the groundskeepers to help educate/communicate/coordinate activities around composting.
 - Dick Dundas has combed Brattleboro’s Energy committee
 - Coal free is a goal in Brattleboro

- Biomass heat is being looked into
- They have an Ebike lending library – In Bennington maybe this can occur through the library .
- Review Recommendations of the Energy Section of the Town Plan
 - Wait on this..
- Zero Emissions Yard Equipment: Not discussed
- Low-Income Outreach to Increase Uptake of Energy Efficiency Opportunities :Not discussed
- Public comment
- Confirm agenda for first Wednesday of month, November 3rd, 2021 meeting

Will look into new meeting space with better acoustics.

Respectfully submitted,

Al Bashevkin