

Bristol Energy Committee Meeting February 2023

2/15/2023, 7pm ET, Zoom

Attendees: Carl Engvall (BEC), Richard Butz (BEC), Jim Quaglino (member of the public), Ben Skolozdra (BEC)

Introductions

Administrative

- We do not have a quorum so we cannot vote to formally transfer chairpersonship from Sally to Richard & Carl.

Public Comment

- None

Follow-Up on Last Month's Driving Equity Training by Porter Knight

- Keep this in mind as we proceed with regular business. Who do our decisions impact, why are we making the decisions, etc.

Potential Collaboration with Brandon Energy Committee

- Rescheduled to 6 March 2023 at 4:30pm ET
- All interested parties who want to go to meet at Town Green at 3:45pm ET to carpool

No Mow May

- Hellen from Conservation Commission wants to collaborate. Hellen wants to attend next energy committee meeting to talk about it. Wants to discuss with Selectboard about not mowing Sycamore Park.
- We are willing to have Conservation Commission next month
- Jim Q. mentioned that there is someone to contact about feasibility of not mowing Sycamore. Bristol Rec (Meredith) should be involved as well.

350VT Post Card

- Richard has provided a link in the agenda to the post card template to emphasize the public's interest and motivation to get the energy-related bills through the Legislature. All interested parties should fill out the card and get it to Richard.
- Drop cards at Richard's house, he will get them to the Legislature next week
- The push is to keep pressure on the Legislature to get legislation through that gets Vermont to legally meet its existing legal requirements.
- Sign post cards and get them to Richard, also talk to your friends and neighbors.

Updates on Important Energy Related Bills in the Legislature

- H.56 bill was to implement regulatory process to incentivize VT Gas (and any other VT org, town, NGO, etc.) to incentivize use of district geothermal energy projects along with complex ratepayer protections, and restrictions on VT Gas territorial expansion.
 - H.56 Steering Committee has been working on the bill to keep it moving. There has been push back from existing gas companies to try to sink the important provisions that protect rate payers and implementing restrictions on territorial expansion (despite their own business plan saying they won't expand territory)
- H.56 is now H.242. H.242 is only district geothermal (removed rate payer

protections/restrictions on territorial expansion).

- Geothermal utilizes the stability of the internal consistent temperature of the ground instead of air (like a heat pump)
- Geothermal heat exchangers are not feasible on a home-by-home basis, in general. District geothermal is more palatable because it can serve a diverse array of building types/sizes (houses, schools, businesses, etc.)
- Geothermal is important replacement for fossil fuel projects (for example, Middlebury townhouses going up on Seminary Street extension)
- Ratepayer Protection bill has been tabled for now.
- Affordable Heat Act (discussed last month with Senator Chris Bray) and Renewable Energy Standard are big pushes for the Natural Resources Committee in the legislature. Expectation is that both bills will be passed during this session (during this biennial at the least)
- Affordable Heat Act is very tricky because of the reliance on home heating oil for consumers and distributor/workers who deliver the fuel. The goal of the bill is to eliminate fossil fuel for heating in VT (big ask). 75% of the money spent on fossil fuels in VT is sent out of state. AHA is trying to solve that. Act is heavy on heat pumps and weatherization. Hard to not hurt consumer and oil dealers unduly though. Geothermal is a part of this AHA as well.
- Weekly updates on Friday from VPIRG/Vermont Conservation Voters for these important bills
- Reach out to our legislators with questions: Chris Bray (Senate), Ruth Hardy (Senate), Caleb Elders (Representative), Mari Cordes (Representative). They are passionate about these issues and want to get these bills passed.

Public Service Department Webinar Series on Renewable Electricity Programs in Vermont

- See agenda for webinar schedules. Webinar 3 scheduled for mid-March. Reach out to Maddison Shropshire for additional updates and information.

EV Chargers Update

- No updates at the moment. Maddison Shropshire is a point person on this going forward (same with Municipal Building Audits/Retrofits project). Procedures are still undefined for state funding mechanisms.
- ARPA could be part of funding but it's unclear if it is a high priority for ARPA Committee members and the Selectboard.

Pocock Rocks and Farmers Market

- Bristol Farmers Market may be coming back! If it does, do we want to have a booth on a regular or semi-regular basis? Ideally yes but seems impractical. Something to consider even once or twice during the Farmers Market run this year if it indeed comes back.
- Pocock Rocks we should have a booth. Something to consider. No date known yet.
 - Before Bristol, the town was known as Pocock.
 - Pocock Rocks is a late spring/early summer celebration event with music, local merchants, etc.

Weatherizing Peoples Homes – Potential Outreach Opportunity

- Potential to organize a team of folks to help community members to weatherize homes, similar to the Window Dressers model of community-organized construction. Potential to enlist Hannaford Career Center students?
 - Richard mentioned that Brandon Energy Committee could be a good resource to help understand how we can organize this in Bristol. Keep it on the list for our meeting with

Brandon in early March.

Window Dressers

- No real updates, they did sent out a mailer summarizing last year's activity. See agenda item link.

Town Plan Implementation Plan Update

- BEC needs to work on organizing our results/work as part of the Implementation Plan Update in late March 2023.
- Our next meeting this will be a big item to get filled out and done.
- It looks daunting/intimidating but we have a lot of accomplishments that BEC has achieved that we can consider and organize.
- Suggest meeting in person at Holly Hall.
 - Richard is the chair next month, he will work on getting it scheduled with Sharon, Town Clerk.
- This will be the main objective of the March meeting.

Adjourned 7:42pm ET