

Bristol Energy Committee Meeting March 2024

3/20/2024, 7pm ET, Zoom & In-Person at Holly Hall

Attendees: Mike Roy (member of the public), Carl Engvall (BEC In-person), Richard Butz (BEC in-person), Jim Quaglino (member of the public via Zoom), Sally Burrell (BEC via Zoom), Ben Skolozdra (BEC via Zoom), Dan Batten (member of the public via Zoom)

Citizens Comments/Concerns

- None

CEAC Updates from Mike Roy

- Next steps for CEAC Big Building Decarbonization Study (Mike Roy)
 - Decarbonization survey sample size was small and results were underwhelming. Reaching out to more people to get a broader survey (online) to get a larger slice of the population. CEAC survey will have an option to have folks follow-up with CEAC one-on-one.
- CEAC's website companion to its Energy Navigator project (Mike Roy)
 - Energy Navigator is a coordination between Maddi Shorshire at Addison County Regional Planning Commission and CEAC.
 - Coordinating with Massachusetts-based organization (Mass Energize) to align actions (things people can do) with contractors to do the work using finance techniques to make them economically viable.
 - Outreach: how to get people involved in the program, how to get help from a Navigator; lots of social media, print media, word of mouth, etc.
 - Volunteer Curators and Navigators: how to consolidate and utilize energy committees locally to reach out to their local community members. There are several energy committees in Addison County that have already signed on to work with CEAC.
 - In Sally's experience, the BEC has been through this before with help from Efficiency Vermont, it is unclear if this approach would be more successful in terms of outreach to local community members to which the community would be receptive.
 - This could be different, i.e. more successful, because there is more inertia (federal funding for incentives via IRA, for example). If the economic case can be made and leveraged, the volunteer navigator program could be more successful.
 - Biggest limitation: availability of contractors to do the work. No quick fix for this problem.
- Two asks from Mike:
 - Does BEC want to work with Mike to continue collaborating?
 - Yes
 - Would BEC be willing to advocate for some MERP mini grant funding to be used for the CEAC Energy Navigator program?
 - Pending the discussion below.
 - Mike can provide a sample agreement to govern the allocation/use of grant funding should it come together, for the Selectboard to review before deciding on proceeding or not.

Approval of February 2024 Meeting Minutes

- Approved

Approval of Agenda

- Approved with Mike Roy moved to the first item (see above)

Clarification on Term Lengths (to be shared with Town Administrator)

- Sally will do 2 or 3 years depending on staggering of other members
- Expectation is John McCormick is not interested in serving another term.

Update on EV Chargers

- Ian Albinson (Selectboard) met with Drive Electric VT and Richard to survey the town to look for good locations (this has been a legacy issue for Bristol).
- Selectboard must make a decision for L2 and L3 charger locations. Ian is also talking with a local private property owner (Pomerleau) to see if that is a potential.
 - For example, behind Bank of Middlebury there is a potentially good location for 3-phase power availability and protection from snow plows.
 - Another site could be behind Mountain Green buildings but there are additional challenges (location, routing). Sally mentioned that this location was impractical from an installation cost standpoint.
 - Another spot potentially near the town green but there are distance issues between curb and sidewalk. Another town green location to the west has power available and meets ADA accessibility (near playground) against the park.
 - Another site: closer to the traffic light along main street (SE corner of the town green) has some concerns with town office staff but any further west would get close to the gazebo which has aesthetic concerns.
 - Champlain Farms gas station across from the town green maybe? It might be worth asking.
 - The location continues to be a sticking point but Selectboard wants to keep working on finding the right place.

Update on MERP

- No update, no report received yet

BEC's role in surveying the Town of Bristol re: bringing in VGS

- This item has been tabled. The Selectboard has clarified that they are not asking us formally to look into this item. No further discussion.
- BEC By-Laws will help clarify our role for items like this going forward.

BEC By-Laws

- Richard sent out a set of by-laws for the committee to review, based loosely on Middlebury's Energy Committee by-laws.
- Let's give it some more thought, each BEC member can review and make comments.

ACRPC Survey

- Input from BEC due by tomorrow. Items we can list for prioritization:
 - Solar panels on the high school/elementary school
 - New net-zero town garage (estimate is \$2 million for building, geothermal installation, solar panels and battery back-up)
 - Ground-source heat pumps for Bristol elementary school
- Richard and Sally have submitted survey already.
- Ben to submit survey item for Department of Public Works item noted above.
- Carl will submit survey item for solar panels on high school/elementary school.

Update on Geothermal System for Bristol Schools

- Carl has fuel usage data from Floyd. More to come.

Bristol Town Plan 2020

- This document helps clarify town goals and can be a good reference document for the by-laws.
- Jim referenced a committee meeting from the previous evening that we should look at to help clarify the climate goals we are looking at as a town, county, state, etc.

Thermal Energy Network (TEN)

- Sally met with Debbie New, Jim Dumont, and Ian Albinson to discuss the possibilities of TEN's in Bristol. Debbie offered to have a learning session with Bristol Energy Committee members.
 - Carl thinks it would be good to have a learning session for the BEC.
 - BEC should be educated first and foremost, and then provide our recommendations to the Selectboard.
 - Should we invite the planning commission? Seems like a good idea.
 - Is there a way that this could be a Bristol-specific presentation? Based on our downtown area. Conceptually this could be created before really needing to reach out to private property owners.
- There is some uncertainty around state legislative action on Thermal Energy Networks this session. In any case, organizing locally will take time so we should continue on no matter what is happening in Montpelier in the short term.
- Let's have a presentation at the next BEC meeting in April. Invite the Planning Commission. Have Jared Rodriguez there as well. Maybe Debbie can create a layout from Google Earth with lines drawn to make it conceptual but concrete.

MERP Community Grant

- They are available up to \$4,000. Planning Commission is encouraging municipalities to apply for these grants.
- Current draft: \$4,000 grant. \$2k to CEAC and \$2k to BEC. Also, request the Town to set up an accruing fund for BEC. Richard wants to look into seeing if the Selectboard is interested in an annual town appropriation. For example, Conservation Commission has an annual appropriation.
- Healthy conversation: should we go down the road of an annual appropriation? What would we use the funding for? Things to bring people in: food? paid speakers? operating expenses?
 - Perhaps a best practice would be to stick to grants for now before approaching the Selectboard about any type of appropriation.
 - Another method to consider: ask Selectboard for when we need funds, and track how frequently this comes up, instead of an appropriation.
- If we are uncertain about giving to CEAC, we would need to modify the grant application. In any case, the Selectboard will need to weigh in.
- Is CEAC redundant with Efficiency Vermont/VEEP/ACRPC? Maybe but it's intended to be more neighbor-to-neighbor using the Energy Navigator model.
 - Also, trying to customize for Addison County. Having buy-in from other Addison County stakeholders is a big deal.
- BEC has voted 4-0 to proceed with the grant as-written, requesting \$2k to CEAC and \$2k to BEC.

Additional Items

- Meeting minutes are not currently posted to town website. Going forward, all meeting minutes

correspondences will be CC'd to the Town Clerk for posting. Ben will look into historical meeting minutes to see if these can also be posted to the town website retroactively.

ADJOURNED 8:30pm ET

Next meeting: 17 April 2024, 7pm ET