

## **Bristol Energy Committee**

April 16, 2025 Meeting Minutes

**7:00pm by Zoom**

Attendees: Richard Butz (BEC), Jim Quaglino (Member of the Public), David Flashenriem (BEC), Sally Burrell (BEC), Ben Skolozdra (BEC), Dan Batten (BEC)

- i. Citizen Comments/Concerns
  - a. None
- ii. BEC Membership Update – Welcome Dan Batten!
- iii. Approve Agenda
  - a. Climate Council Meetings Update and Farmer's Market Update
- iv. Approve March Meeting Minutes
  - a. Unanimous approval
- v. Town Energy Plan Grant (Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grants, EECBG)
  - a. Per Jolyon on 3/25, grant submission deadline was missed. However, the state energy office decided to re-open applications, unclear on timeline for that. Ben reached out to Jolyon on 4/14 to confirm. Update from Jolyon is that the application was submitted, waiting to hear if we will be awarded the funding.
- vi. CEAC Energy Navigators/VEEP Event Update
  - a. Richard reserved Holly Hall from 5:30 – 8:00 on 6/18.
  - b. Ben to follow-up with Adayliah (CEAC) and VEEP to check in and see if anything is needed from BEC.
  - c. Post about it on FPF? How frequently?
    - c.i. We should post on FPF. No cap on attendees really so let's get wild. Ben to compile information and confirm messaging strategy to CEAC before we send something out.
    - c.ii. Dan can help with designing fliers to post around town.
    - c.iii. Should we invite other energy committees? Starksboro and New Haven? Yes
    - c.iv. Consistency with messaging is important.
    - c.v. Get imagery from VEEP for posters.
    - c.vi. We should consider getting food from Cubbers. Ben to talk to CEAC/VEEP if they think it's useful/appropriate. Note the meeting is during dinner time hour(s).
    - c.vii. Richard has paid \$100 out of pocket to reserve Holly Hall. Can this be waived? Richard to talk to Meredith about it as a starting point. Per Jim Q., the town can reimburse personal expenses so suggest reach out to Ian and Meredith.
- vii. Update on EV Chargers
  - a. Ben to follow up with AZ on EV charging zoning and talk to Norwich on schedule and funding.

viii. Update on MERP

- a. Two meetings held @ Holly Hall. First with Deconstruction Works about demolition of trim/historic building implications.
- b. Second meeting was with Asher Nelson (Vermont Integrated Architecture, architect) to get a price for design. Town has been trying to sort out if it's got to be competitively bid for those architect/design services, sounds like it might not need to be.
- c. Town trying to tie Holly Hall and Library scope together with VIA to save on cost.
- d. Freeda mentioned that the library money is "safe" and so is MERP funding. They are expected to go ahead.
- e. Things are moving slowly but having a hard time finding a contractor interested (6 firms have already declined). Some only want part of the work and that is challenging. Ian thinking about getting a construction manager to arrange the different subcontractors together.
- f. State division for historic designation office will need to be consulted and need documents for what scope is being done. Ian trying to set up a meeting with them in the next couple of weeks.
- g. Big trouble finding contractors, looking to expand to Manchester-area.
- h. Asher/Matt Sharpe/Ian/David did write a scope of work to itemize the scope as efficiently as possible so that can help define the work (not just using the report).
- i. Richard can send the MERP report to Dan for reference.

ix. Climate Council Meetings Update by Richard

- a. Richard reporting on some interesting discussions. There is large representation from Energy Committees across the state. Climate Action Plan (CAP) involves a lot of energy issues.
- b. Climate Action Plan was adopted in 2021. Part of the plan includes an update every 4 years. Climate Council is in the process of updating the plan. Month of listening (7 locations + 2 virtual meetings). They want to hear from people about what they think.
- c. Richard has been meeting with Act on Climate Coalition subgroup to discuss focus points, including a meeting last night before the Climate Council meeting.
- d. Several important points have emerged during these discussions:
  - d.i. Current administration and some of the legislature have been submitting bills to significantly weaken the climate action plan. They want to roll things back. Concerns include costs, implications to towns etc. All are legitimate concerns. Richard has been discussing with Senator Heffernan on these issues.
  - d.ii. Climate Council is required by law to facilitate the Climate Action Plan when it was passed. Energy Committees trying to urge Climate Council to move forward with CAP as written. Legislature is trying to roll back but there is momentum to not.
  - d.iii. Clean Heat Standard requirement will likely be rolled back.
- e. High points to focus:

- e.i. Community solar with focus on low and middle income, renters, etc.
  - e.ii. Facilitation for low and middle income folks to use EV vehicles.
  - e.iii. Ultimate point is financial burden will set back goals and this is very concerning.
  - e.iv. Expansion transit routes for low and middle income people to get around
  - e.v. Weatherization and insulation assistance
  - e.vi. Assistance with heat pumps, hot water heaters, etc.
  - e.vii. Partnering with cap/trade or cap/invest program similar to the Western Climate Initiative (or NY state program that is not law but may be soon)
    - e.vii.1. There is history with all the new england states adopting and cooperating in a program to cap/trade emissions for production of electricity. Financial penalties if targets not met, money comes back to state to reinvest into weatherization programs in VT, for example.
    - e.vii.2. Cap/trade for heating/transportation fuels is the concept. Big impact and implications because transportation and heating/thermal sector are the highest burdens (nearly 80% of pollution).
    - e.vii.3. Financial implications are the big attraction because penalties can be reinvested in items listed above (solar, EV subsidies, etc.)
  - e.viii. Big push to stay on path for Climate Action Plan. Resist Council's instinct/urge to roll back. Be sure to include updated plans for the above items.
  - e.ix. Data collection is the key because without strong data, it's hard to assess how close we are to reaching goals. It is understood that there is significant data collection for heat pumps, EVs, etc available so one of the things that's important is strengthening data collection AND making data available to Regional Planning Commissions to help with localities in their local plans.
  - e.x. Richard strongly urges BEC members to attend the Climate Council's meetings (there is one on April 30 in Rutland). If anyone is interested, Richard is going to Rutland's in-person meeting.
  - e.xi. Meeting format is unique, facilitates coordination and discussion amongst everyone.
- f. Richard suggest we try to work together with others Energy Committees to see what they're doing and how they're implementing goals for their towns (New Haven, Starksboro, etc).
- g. Dan attended a virtual session too and felt the Climate Council is very interested and serious about listening to public input.
- h. Climate Council is split between members appointed by administration, appointed by legislature, and community members/NGOs. There is a plan by the administration to remove community members from the Council in lieu of administration appointees.
- i. <https://climatechange.vermont.gov/climate-action-plan-2025-update>
- x. Farmer's Market & Harvest Festival
  - a. Harvest Festival table reservations are not open yet. Ben to follow-up and see when/if it opens.

- b. Farmer's Market: Sally to store materials for our table in her office for accessibility. Ben to talk to Courtney or Sara about status of Farmer's Market. Can we talk to CEAC about collaborating? Can we get a table near an outlet?
  - b.i. All Earth Renewables is doing a sale of gently-used solar panels on Earth Day (4/22/2025). Should we look into this? 24 panels at a cost of \$200 or so.
  - b.ii. Ben to look into getting a panel and a micro-inverter with some wiring for an LED or fan. Portable solar prop to get people interested. Misting fan for summer?
  - b.iii. Richard has some interesting literature on solar affordability vs. heat pumps, and hot water heaters, and other items that he can provide to the BEC.
- xi. Other Business
  - a. None

Adjourned 8:10pm ET

Next regularly scheduled meeting: May 21, 2025