

Montpelier Energy Advisory Committee
Minutes 3/15/16 7:00 PM
City Hall, Montpelier, VT

Attendees: Tim Shea, Keil Corey, Cara Robeck, Kate Stephenson (Chair), Dan Crisp, Dan Costin, Barry McPhee, Barbara Conrey, Dan Jones, Geoffrey Fitzgerald, Laura Biren (AmeriCorps VISTA)

1. Introductions
2. MEAC approved agenda. Geoff moved, Barbara seconded approving minutes from 2/16/16 MEAC meeting. All approved.
3. Public comments: No public comment, but Dan Jones moved for a moment of silence in response to the 1.5 degree Celsius global increase in the month of February.

4. Working Group Reports:

a. Transportation:

Dan Costin reported that the working group has been discussing plans for an Alternative Transportation Event to be held on a Saturday in July on blocked off street (like Langdon Street). This could tie into another event and/or the Farmers Market. Cara met with Ward Joyce who is excited to have events on Langdon, but unsure of how MEAC could fit in. Cara discovered that insurance and liability are potential issues. Langdon Street Alive is supporting several events including street art, Montpelier Alive, VCFA. The transportation working group was eager to gauge how much effort MEAC would want to put into an event. The sense of the group was that it makes more sense to try to collaborate with others instead of spearheading a stand alone event and asked the transportation working group to re-visit the idea and report back to MEAC. The Way-to-Go VT week is in Sept 26-Oct 7th this year, but the group feels this is too late in the year for a public event as the weather may not be good. MBAC is planning a Bike Rodeo and PAC is planning a Walking Scramble but no dates have been set. National Life has their Do Good Fest on July 16; MEAC could have a table there. Geoff recommended that PAC and MBAC events seem like they should be coordinated together to have an event focused on alternative transportation that MEAC could also participate in and contribute to.

b. Solar:

Michael Miller (Planning Dept) requested input from MEAC regarding the two municipal solar projects underway – the finance folks have been giving some push-back on the 3 different buy out options. The original RFP requested buy-out options in 7, 10, and 12 years. Geoff recommended that the City separate the contract for the Sharon site from the Log Road site. MEAC unanimously agreed – give up options on Sharon to have better options on Log Road. Tim recommended that we request all 3 options (7,10,12 years) and if not given, fall back to 2 options. MEAC unanimously agreed. Both arrays should be online by the end of this summer. The additional 500kW school array is on hiatus because they did not make it into the queue. Right now due to net metering caps for GMP, the queue is closed. If the City generates more electricity than it needs, down the road it could sell some of its credits to the school district. Barry reminded the committee that the original roadmap for Net Zero Montpelier suggested that all renewable energies would be generated within the municipal boundary. Most of the committee members did not feel this was feasible, and that it was OK to pursue projects outside of the city as long as the net metering credits would go to Montpelier.

c. Municipal:

There has been some follow-up from the Kaizen event at the water treatment plant; they plan to do a few experiments with the dehumidification to see if that can be reduced, and are looking at payback for other mechanical improvements. There is also good potential for solar on the water treatment plant, but it is located in Berlin and there may be some restrictions there on installing PV there. Scott is working on the 2015 municipal energy metrics and hopes to have that finished up soon. Geoff is continuing to work with the wastewater treatment plant. They need to install flow meters to measure how much methane is being used to heat the digesters in winter, and also how much oil is burned for this use. They are also looking at a system which could generate electricity from excess methane in the summer instead of flaring it. Still considering options for insulating the top of the digester tank.

d. Outreach:

Kate met with the graphic designer, Sian Foulkes from Foulkes Design. She will be working on: designing slides for digital display, tabletop display, 1 page flyer, card for LED giveaway, heat pump insert flyer. We finally received a draft MOU from EVT for the \$10,000 grant towards MEAC outreach activities. This needs to be approved by City Council on 3/23 and we need to work out the details of the money transfer to the MEAC account and how invoices will be handled. Grant money will be disbursed in \$2500 chunks and we need to submit quarterly reports in order to get the next installment. The funds expire on December 31, 2016. 3E Thermal workshop for landlords set for Tuesday, April 26th from 8:30 – 10 AM at VSECU. Mailing is needed and will need money (ideal mailing date is April 1st). We have \$1500 still in MEAC account that can cover mailing costs.

5. Other Business

a. Sustainable Design Competition for Montpelier:

Dan Jones presented his idea for an architectural competition focused on a sustainable design for Montpelier in 2030. Dan is looking for MEAC to co-sponsor the competition (at no cost). It would be an open competition but submittals would be pre-qualified. Dan is also looking for corporate sponsors who would contribute to a cash prize. The jury would include Montpelier citizens, and the public would be invited to participate in charrettes with the designers. Geoff moved that MEAC support the design competition, and all were in favor. Dan J. will circulate the draft request for qualifications and competition guidelines before the April MEAC meeting for review.

b. Way-to-Go VT:

This year the Way To Go week includes a competition for schools to increase alternative transportation participation and one winning school will receive a \$30,000 solar tracker as a prize. MEAC has forwarded this information to Ken Jones to share with the schools.

c. EAN Dashboard:

The new EAN Dashboard website is in beta testing phase with representatives from the pilot towns giving feedback on the design and functionality. Kate, Cara and Barbara are all on the list for updates and feedback. No word on when the site will actually be ready for launch.

d. Earth Hour: International event on Saturday, March 19 from 8:30-9:30 PM to raise climate change awareness by turning off lights. State House lights will be extinguished for 1 hr. City/Jessie Baker was approached by a Montpelier citizen and was willing to participate on turn off light on the City Hall clock – if MEAC would take on messaging and outreach. MEAC did not support this as it would require City staff to come in on overtime and the impact would be minor. We will put this event on our annual calendar so we have more advance notice next time.

e. Planning Commission update: 260 public comments were received, but few dealt with energy sector. Main concerns about the energy sections came from City staff; specifically Mike Miller (Planning Department) said the city does not have the capacity to administer the energy code. Barbara checked the language to ensure that the stretch code requirements would only come into play in new construction projects not retrofits, and will work on clarifying the language. Administration of the new regulation would basically require a form certifying that the design meets the state stretch energy code submitted with a conditional use application for new construction. From a practical standpoint this would affect very few buildings each year.

6) MEAC Calendar/Work Plan for 2016:

Outreach team talked about dividing outreach focus into 4 Quarters: Q1: electric resistance, Q2: solar, Q3: transportation, Q4: thermal/weatherization. Laura worked to simplify Barry's Project Management spreadsheets into a Quarter by Quarter Synopsis that shows initiatives underway in each working group. This is saved in the MEAC Google Drive (<https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B1z1P90fw1xfd1BfSGplbmRQT3c>). Barbara noted it was unclear where the EVT Designated Downtown initiative fits into the working groups, maybe under Outreach specific to businesses? Geoff also encouraged the Outreach committee to pursue the idea of house tours, and Kate suggested this might fit into plans for the fall.

Meeting adjourned at 8:40 PM. **Next MEAC meeting set for Tuesday, April 19 at 7 PM**