

MEAC Minutes
February 21, 2017, 7:00 PM
City Hall: Memorial Room

Present: Kate Stephenson, Mike Miller, Wavell Cowen, Barry McPhee, Dan Jones, Geoff Fitzgerald, Jarod Duval, Dan Costin, Cara Robeck, Paul Markowitz, Hanna Hubert (VNRC), Amy Gamble, Karl Johnson, and Anne Watson.

Mike Miller - Master Planning Process

The Master Plan for Montpelier was last updated in 2009 and involved a large public input process. The plan was very strong on goals, but not specific enough on how to achieve them. The format for the Master Plan will have more of a focus on the strategies to achieve the goals and who is responsible for making it happen.

Julie Beth Hines is the consultant putting the pieces of the plan together, but the MEAC has the primary responsibility for the energy plan portion. There will be some overlap on issues such as transportation and land use since these are of interest to both MEAC and other committees. Mike will help to resolve overlap issues.

There was discussion on who is responsible for getting strategies implemented. Anne Watson mentioned that sometimes it takes a lot of participants to get things accomplished, like getting personnel budgeted in the city staff to manage programs.

Mike wants four types of strategies: plans, projects, permits and programs. Projects are one-time activities or events. Permits are changes to regulation that the city controls. Programs are ongoing, such as a weatherization fund.

Intermediate deadlines: Subgroups need to submit drafts in April. We should go over these drafts at our April MEAC meeting. The consultant will put together an overall draft by the end of May. The consultant will handle the public input portion of the process.

Working Group Reports

Planning and Policy (Kate Stephenson for Barb McConrey, (who is on vacation)
Discussion is ongoing for new zoning rules. In the draft rules, parking spaces must be within 1000 feet of the residence, unless in downtown. This may affect plans to move parking out of the city center to remote areas. Contact the city council members if you feel strongly on this issue.

Residential (Jarod Duval)

Cara hosted a meeting. The group is trying to have an ongoing home tour project throughout the year to show off fuel switching and efficiency. Wavell Cowen is working on a business plan type document for the project. Becca Harris is working on writing up case studies for the MEAC website. Jarod is working on a one-pager of incentives.

Transportation (Dan Costin)

The group is working on the transportation portion of the master plan. Input was received by working group members and Dan Costin is putting the plans into Mike's new format.

Municipal (Geoff Fitzgerald)

This working group and the city staff will be meeting to discuss the qualifications of two applicants for a feasibility study for a wastewater treatment cogen facility. ESG and Siemens submitted proposals.

Geoff and Kate will be visiting City Council to give a report on the revolving loan fund. Funds will be used for a soft-start capacitor to reduce peak load charges. First-year saving should pay for the project.

Other Business (Kate Stephenson)

There was discussion on SolSmart, a program for promotion and support of solar installations.

They give bronze, silver, and gold certifications on solar-friendliness. This was considered not worth the trouble.

Hydro project: Matt Rubin contacted the committee about a hydro project that is coming on line in the Fall. Kate will set up a meeting to learn more.

We adjourned at 8:35 PM.