

**Barre City Energy Committee
Meeting Minutes
May 2, 2019**

Committee Members Present: Elaine Wang (via telephone), Phil Cecchini, Romni Palmer, Conor Teal

Staff Present: Janet Shatney

Visitors: Mike Moser via telephone

1. **Call to Order:** 5:38 pm
2. **Changes to the Agenda?** None
3. **Approve meeting minutes for March 25, 2019 and April 11, 2019:** Motion made by R. Palmer and seconded by C. Teal , motion carried with P. Cecchini abstaining.
4. **Check in on Button Up follow-up calls:** various discussion regarding the right spreadsheet to use; most recent update was made April 19th, so only 4 folks to follow up with as we only follow up with people who have a proposal received from a contractor. R. Palmer will correct the worksheet and email out who will make calls to whom.
5. **Discuss energy plan community engagement plan with UVM Center for Rural Studies:** at this point, the meeting needed to move to a different room, J. Shatney stayed only for a few more minutes. M. Moser was dialed on the phone, and talk about what we wanted in the RFP to occur.

BCEC wants more people engaged, and would like to see a roadmap for what the committee can be spending time on; want to go the community to get some better long term project ideas from.

Question asked: should we try and get “everyone’s” input, or some strategic subset of the City?

P. Cecchini: more community engagement, better prioritized project list which could then grow the committee.

- C. Teal would like all of public to be engaged to some degree.
 - Input from experts on what we should do
- Higher energy user segments
- Surveys are good for engage and inform.
 - Won’t hear from everyone, will be respondent bias
 - Can demograph respondents: income levels, rent/owner, MF vs. single dwelling
 - Less likely to hear from lower income
 - Get laundry list

- often will verify what you think you know, can justify next steps
- different approaches to data collection
- need to market survey which is really marketing in general skills
- focus groups are good for getting in depth from specific group. Opps, challenges, concerns
 - need to beat the bushes to get them to attend
- don't need random sample survey of population
- survey and focus group are best two outreach options
- survey can be distributed via:
 - mail
 - email
 - website
 - FPF
- M. Moser recommended the committee ask ourselves over and over:
 - What info do we need to know?
 - What will we do with the info?
 - *These answers inform methodology*
- R. Palmer's objective: people in city to be engaged in it, involved in it, and be aware of it – find ways to engage in it
- Mike: which citizens?
 - They'll have different needs, perspectives and challenges
 - E.g. If talk about solar panels, will lose renters from the conversation
 - E.g. elders who are homeowners and don't use the internet
- Incentives for participation are helpful to get input from people who otherwise can't afford the time to participate
 - \$50 gift card for participating in focus group for 1.5 hrs., childcare. Marketed via resources like community action group
 - Public listening session with childcare and free food
- If you want engagement in energy efficiency, need to keep it simple, and offer low barrier to entry: light bulb exchange, free light bulbs – get data from them, learn about their needs.
- E. Wang: There's no shortage of good ideas about what the city can do. We need the energy plan process to be a tool to get more bodies to run the programs.
- R. Palmer: We don't need the plan engagement process itself to be another series of events. Think we should get lots of ideas and sift through them, without having the input bogged down by the challenges of implementing them. We want to hear what ideas there are to make sure we haven't missed any.

- M. Moser:
 - Could be series of questions that are asked over a period of time, not just one-time survey. Something ongoing, a few questions at a time
 - Ways to get good coverage: Take your grand list and voter checklist, combine, take out duplicates, print and mail survey to combined list, incentivize participation (put in postage paid envelope for return). Cost effective. Might be \$1 apiece. Bulk mail rate based on what comes back. Data entry, analysis, reporting

- At this point the Committee opted to share their takeaways so far:
 - E. Wang: Like the idea of a mass mailing, generate lots of ideas. Put what matters to each segment (as organically arises out of survey analysis) of the community in the plan. This will then inform separate roadmap/project pipeline, which we develop with experts viz. feasibility.
 - P. Cecchini: best response might be mass mailing. Though might be most of our money, especially with crafting questions properly. Not really a dialogue.
 - C. Teal: agree with mailer. Series of survey is good. Start with cheapest – online, then maybe mailer. Maybe it doesn't go to everyone. Maybe random by wards, then if more data is needed do more. Maybe eventually go to focus group. **Needs. What should city pursue, what committee should do**
 - R. Palmer: a mailing survey would be a great place to start. I think we should mass mail all viable address.
 - Have other means to participate – online, QR scans, businesses hang posters and talk about it and that they've weighed in, be part of it. Put your thumbprint on this plan
 - Would you be interested in having/participating in a discussion group on this? How contact?

- M. Moser: Ask as few questions as you can, get them incentivized in order to hear from folks that don't care

- 6. **Discuss next steps for energy plan community engagement RFP:** For next steps, the Committee agreed that they needed time to think over Moser's advice and to discuss next steps regarding the RFP at the next meeting.

Reschedule meeting from May 27th to another date that will be polled.

- 7. **Adjourn:** Motion to adjourn at 7:52 pm made by P. Cecchini and seconded by C. Teal, motion carried.