

To be approved at the March 23, 2020 meeting

1 **Barre City Energy Committee**
2 **Special Meeting February 9, 2020**
3 **Capstone Community Action, 10 Gable Place, Barre City**
4

5 In attendance: Committee members Elaine Wang, Phil Cecchini, Conor Teal, Romni Palmer.
6 Also in attendance were Debra Sachs and Lauren Maus of EcoStrategies, LLC.

7 Meeting came to order at 9:30 am

8 The committee reviewed the goals of the community engagement project:

- 9 1. Which sector or sectors would be most popular among transportation efficiency, space
10 heating and cooling efficiency, and renewable energy;
11 2. Which initiatives would be most impactful; and
12 3. Engaging more people to get involved in reducing use of fossil fuels.

13 The group discussed the ‘nuggets’ drafted by Deb Sachs, the community engagement
14 consultant hired for the project. The group agreed key nuggets included but weren’t limited to:

- 15 • How much Barre City residents spend on energy and their cars relative to their income.
16 • The high level of reliance on fuel oil for heating.
17 • More nuggets related to heating and cooling.
18 • Empower people, don’t scare them, as fear tends to make people shut down or give up.
19 • Make this issue relevant to \$35,000 median income household.

20 The committee discussed the surveys revised by Sachs. Feedback included:

- 21 • Make a version of the survey (skip logic) that is relevant to renters.
22 • Get input from people as to why alternative transportation is hard for them.
23 • Don’t have too much on renewables (solar).
24 • Incentivize taking of long-form survey with free LED bulb.

25 Other points of discussion related to possible specific initiatives included:

- 26 • Providing information about overall costs of change. E.g. changing to a heat pump may
27 mean paying less for fuel but more for electricity.
28 • How to advance rooftop-based community solar, since there isn’t enough land in city
29 limits for large ground-mounted solar. Wang said she didn’t think there were any
30 community solar projects available to the general public since SunCommon’s was fully
31 subscribed. Sachs said that there is a new developer, All Earth Renewables, which is
32 owned by her partner. Wang said as a municipal committee it could not pick one vendor,
33 but that if there were community interest in off-site solar it could issue an RFP. But
34 someone would have to provide the information on the rooftop solar potential. Sachs said
35 that 20% of roofs statewide are solarizeable, meaning facing south and strong enough to
36 support a solar panel.

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- 37 • Whether solar parking canopies would be worth pursuing. Sachs said they are too cost
38 prohibitive.
- 39 • That landlords face many challenges and may be hard to convince. This makes Efficiency
40 Vermont's efforts with and incentives for landlords very important.
- 41 • Whether to focus on one campaign at a time, like changing out fuel oil furnaces for heat
42 pumps. There was not consensus on this approach, as many people might not be ready for
43 that one action. However, *adding* a heat pump can be a cost-effective way to reduce fuel
44 oil use.
- 45 • A campaign around 'the most cost-effective options for getting rid of your fuel oil
46 heating system' since it is a key area of emissions.
- 47 • Whether weatherization was harder to motivate than "changing a thing." Cecchini noted
48 that when the incentives are good for weatherization, the pitch is easy. These may be
49 reduced, so it's important to encourage uptake sooner rather than later.
- 50 • How to address the 'last mile problem' posed by taking public transportation in Vermont.

51 The committee spent several minutes marking their preferred survey questions. They
52 returned them to Sachs to compile into another revision.

53 Next steps included:

- 54 • Develop short survey for people who don't want to spend a lot of time with us at an
55 event.
- 56 • Sachs to determine which statistics on transportation energy costs are more accurate,
57 from the energy burden report by Efficiency Vermont, or the Barre City Energy Plan
58 drafted by the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission.
- 59 • Find out from Brad whether supplementing fuel oil heating systems with a heat pump is
60 cost-effective for people who aren't income-qualified.
- 61 • Sachs to get updated Central Vermont Way to Go handout to Janet Shatney.
- 62 • Get list of large employers from Shatney or the CVRPC.
- 63 • Get the final report on commuting from the CVRPC.
- 64 • Sachs to add nuggets based on community energy dashboard, from other sources like
65 SunCommon that may be missing from the dashboard, and the latest City Energy Plan.
- 66 • Sachs to develop skip-logic version of the survey.
- 67 • All to finalize survey questions at next Barre City Energy Committee meeting Feb 24 so
68 that it can be administered at Town Meeting Day. Palmer, Teal, and Cecchini said they
69 would take turns tabling. Wang will find out when tabling materials are due for approval.

70 The meeting adjourned at 12:15 pm.