

To be approved at the Dec. 30, 2019 meeting

**Barre City Energy Committee  
Meeting Minutes from November 25, 2019**

Committee Members Present: Conor Teal, Phil Cecchini, Elaine Wang, Romni Palmer

Committee Members Absent: None

City Staff Present: None

Visitors: Fred Pond, Barre City resident; Tim Perrin, EVT (Efficiency Vermont); Brad Long, EVT; Deb Sachs, EcoStrategies

1. **Call to order:** 5:47 pm
2. **Changes to agenda:** None.
3. **Visitors and Communications:**
  - Brad Long, Community Engagement Manager at Efficiency Vermont
  - Fred Pond, Homeowner and volunteer for ButtonUp VT Home Tour
  - Deb Sachs, EcoStrategies Consultant for Barre City Energy Plan Outreach Effort

The Energy Committee asked the guests to introduce themselves to the group as well as their participation in past or present activities with the Committee.

B. Long: Performed community engagement this past year, especially in Rutland area, to help residents of energy burdened communities to assist concentration efforts from EVT. Has worked on programs with planning commissions, select boards, and citizen groups. Has hosted some home energy visits/consultations, including multi-family housing projects, connecting them to Municipal activities, creating a Zero-Energy Home Tour. Important “nucleus” was to have 1-to-1 conversations between homeowners and perspective weatherization candidates, in order to share EVT’s goals of assisting the public in reducing energy use while improving quality of life. 225 home energy visits. 25 multi-family properties. Bellows Falls and Rutland. He has consulted with mostly small to medium businesses in Central Vermont.

B. Long: Two things: Listen and Ask. What does the community need? What does it want?

He has worked on mail-in campaigns, advertisements on buses, theaters. Realistic and restrained creativity. Over a dozen to workshops is still successful. Grassroots outreach piece needed.

E. Wang: Thanked B. Long for the insight and the helpful value of knowing the social resources available. She shared a brief description of the history of the Barre City Energy Committee. Recommends: Neighborhood Champions needed to expand public outreach.

B. Long: Second oldest housing stock in country is Barre City. High energy burden in the community is based on weak and too few weatherization updates to the housing stock.

E. Wang: We want an Act-174 compliant (based on framework) energy plan. Hired Deb Sachs to help provide outreach assistance for public participation/input in the energy plan.

D. Sachs: Didn't want to duplicate survey questions so reached out to EVT for data already provided. Created draft over-arching survey. Want to get some "nuggets" from EVT to tailor the results. Reaching out to solar installers to see what total has been installed in Barre City. "For instance in survey, did you know 200 solar sites have been installed in your city?"

B. Long: VECAN has helped energy committee members in a couple of towns I have worked with. Possible for BCEC to get more assistance in outreach with them.

D. Sachs: Northfield did a community survey for transportation, she worked on producing it. Asked if Brad Long has recently been reaching out to youth in energy workshops?

B. Long: Would like to more engagement with Vermont youth, and has worked with VEPP, but some programs didn't work too well.

D. Sachs: Noticing that students locally are striking for climate action and should be included in the conversation/energy planning.

B. Long: Happy to do a presentation on specific communities and examples of former projects at next meeting, 10-15 minutes.

T. Perrin: Excellent to have someone like Brad who has worked in multiple communities.

D. Sachs: Vermont Opportunity Zones, something to look into more and discuss possibilities at a later time.

 **ACTION ITEM #3 J. Shatney: Change December meeting to Dec. 30th.**

4. **Approve minutes of August 26 and October 28, 2019 meeting:** Committee Approved the minutes for both meetings, unanimously.
5. **Discuss plans for Button-Up 2019 Open House Tour:**

Committee and F. Pond agreed to host the Open House on Saturday, Dec. 14, 2019, 10 am to 11:30 am.

F. Pond: ButtonUp Open House host. He owns a 1905 built home with new insulation, in ceiling, sills and walls, solar, heat pump technology, water heater heat pump, second floor replacement windows, first floor storm picture window, and has 18 solar panels, Green Mountain Power NEST thermometer, plus DIY adjustments to the building

envelope to improve air-sealing and energy efficiency.

B. Long: Offered EVT handouts for air-sealing, heat pumps to be available for the open house. D. Sachs: She suggested local property managers of multi-family housing should be invited to the tour. As well as the consideration of recorded interviews on-site for accessibility for the general public at a later date.

F. Pond: Would like EVT's support there too, for instance, providing accurate data wall posters of energy interventions completed in the building. Asked what the promotion communication entails:

D. Sachs: Word of mouth, direct contact, Front Porch Forum, Energy Committee contact list. ButtonUp promotion.

F. Pond: Was thinking of showing various costs of interventions/additions.

B. Long: Recommends catching the emotional impact of home improvement, particularly the comfort factor. Often is more relatable to people in describing the benefits of energy efficiency measures and weatherization. Costs can also vary for different customers.

P. Cecchini: Offered to get shoe slip-one for guests to wear in the house.

B. Pond: Will also look into providing literature on Heat Saver Loan and other financing methods, Button-Up promotion pieces.

E. Wang: Do you want a walk-through a few days before? F. Pond: Yes, if the Committee is available to visit.

B. Long: Neighbors calling neighbors, have friends call people they know to bring them over.

C. Teal: Will the Committee make flyers? E. Wang: Possibly.

R. Palmer: Local businesses can host some flyers and maybe offer incentives to Home Tour visitors? P. Cecchini agreed and will seek out at least one location.

E. Wang: Will connect again with F. Pond later to confirm date for walk-through, possibly Thursday before Tour.

6. **Discuss Barre City Facilities (with EVT):**

T. Perrin: Described his past work examining energy use and points of efficiency upgrades to recommend to the City. Shared to the group a brief summary of buildings that underwent energy-saving interventions. He is waiting to hear from City Manager about updates on considerations of upgrading: pumps, lights, other items at Wastewater Treatment Plant. Worked with City Staff on upgrades at BOR, including compressors.

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Conversation turned to consideration of further cost-effective upgrades of City buildings, Committee sees potentials but is worried large projects aren't affordable under current City budget.

E. Wang: No capital improvement plan for Barre City. So it's been challenging to consider efficiency measures planning.

T. Perrin: Lighting upgrade possible from Fluorescent to LED at Ice Rink, cost effectiveness depends on if use only remains as seasonal.

T. Perrin: Small lighting work at Alumni Hall was being discussed with Jeff Bergeron, Director of Buildings and Community Service.

T. Perrin: City Hall Energy Audit, is there middle ground going forward to do work on it? We haven't looked at Public Safety building. Largest electricity loads, in order: Wastewater Treatment Plant, BOR, City Hall. Yet, Wastewater is still pretty efficient even given the load.

C. Teal: City equipment improvements?

T. Perrin: EVT doesn't cover this purview. Burlington Police have installed anti-idling tech in vehicles to maintain cabin comfort and computers without using engine.

Elaine: Updated data on draft Energy Plan. Is there availability of your time to look at data and confirm?

T. Perrin: Specific to Building Energy loads of City-owned. Interested in checking progress on improvements that have been made.

7. **Discuss draft community engagement survey for energy plan:**

Committee reading of draft survey made by D. Sachs. Discussion of priorities. E. Wang: Shall we each share opinions?

R. Palmer: Prefers the idea of splitting up the survey into multiple surveys as certain sections will be largely irrelevant to many survey takers. Being specific to certain groups would appeal them better.

D. Sachs: Agrees that nuggets of information to help the public understand the plan's intentions before submitting the survey. Some of these questions were included to be part of an interview of a partner.

B. Long: Consider adding physiological/emotional questions: "Are you comfortable in the summer/winter?" "Are you warm/cold in your home office?" Offer accessible solutions.

**➡ ACTION ITEM #4 Committee: Read draft, make comments/edits, and share to Shared Drive.**

D. Sachs: Would need clarity on “nuggets” (like energy measures or facts around energy use) and what should be included and disseminated to prep for the survey. Help from the Committee to focus the best information.

B. Long: Will make presentation at next Committee meeting on general facts/projects that have worked in other communities.

Committee discussed possibility of another work session for January to work on these and the survey in more detail.

**➡ ACTION ITEM #5 Committee: Spend time making lists of succinct, facts or housing upgrades for creating a communications strategy for the eventual public energy survey, updating on Shared Drive.**

**8. Discuss plan for quarterly updates for City Council:**

E. Wang: City Council wants Committees to have quarterly updates. Our next update is around February. She is usually busy on Tuesday evenings. Is there someone available to attend and present and what information should we share? Logical to organize Minutes from meetings and share important decisions made.

R. Palmer: Available to attend if the minute summaries are prepared in advance to share.

C. Teal: Also likely to be available to attend. P. Cecchini: Can’t commit at this time.

**9. Discuss plan for VECAN attendance:**

Only Elaine and Phil are attending and will be carpooling together.

**10. Roundtable: None**

**11. Adjourn.**

Motion to adjourn at 8:57 pm by P. Cecchini and seconded by R. Palmer, **motion carried.**