

SPECIAL BARRE CITY ENERGY COMMITTEE MEETING

Saturday, April 10, 2021 at 8:00 am

Remote Participation via ZOOM Platform

Committee members present: Elaine Wang, Chair; Conor Teal, Vice-Chair; Phil Cecchini, Romni Palmer

Committee members absent: None

Visitors: Deb Sachs, EcoStrategies, LLC; David Blittersdorf, All Earth Renewables LLC

1. **Call to Order:** 8:06 am. on the video conference platform ZOOM.
2. **Adjustments to the Agenda:** None.
3. **Visitors and Communications** (*for something not on the agenda*): None.
4. **Old Business:**

a. Committee Priorities:

In response to the Mayor and Council's request to provide the committee's priorities for the next 12 months, and based on what was agreed upon at the last meeting, the committee's top 3 priorities are MicroTransit, Heat Pump Campaign, and Energy Champions Marketing Campaign.

[Barre City Energy Committee Funds question answered: *FY20, funds left over we have accessible to us \$935; there were no funds for FY21, and the \$1,000 has been put in for FY22.*]

MicroTransit: Discussion occurred about what is happening for ridership, rates, trips per hour, etc. that are interesting statistics in a report about ridership, and the interest that Capstone has in the program, and getting Barre involved. The committee wants MicroTransit in Barre City, and we should define it as the last mile of transit. Montpelier's program is that you can travel anywhere within their service shed, and Barre City as well as Barre Town could be a part of the service shed. Integrating the last mile is very important. The point of MicroTransit is essentially door-to-door commuter service. With Barre City, the service shed is smaller, and more compact, so that the population is that much denser. C. Teal asked what would be the relationship between transit in Montpelier versus Barre City, and how the service sheds might interact with each other. The big takeaway is that Capstone has already started taking a lead on this for the area. C. Teal thought that a short video showing people how to use the MyRide App would be beneficial, and also reaching out to the local rep so see if there would be any interaction there, and finding out the schedule of implementation. E. Wang asked if there was a timeframe to get any of this done, but seems like it's in the governor's plan so its dependent on that, but perhaps the energy committee's small voice but important.

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Action for the Committee: Reach out to Capstone formally as a point of education, being a concerned neighbor and figure out how the committee can support their efforts.

E. Wang asked how best to who was going to reach out to Capstone, as the committee letter should come from the City on City letterhead. If a committee member could write up the letter, but make it very clear to Capstone that the committee is very interested in this. The question on how to get the Mayor on board with it, really should come from the Mayor with the Council support. The action item is to pitch this to the City Council, as long as the support is there. As for timing, P. Cecchini suggested following our process and getting council support on it, so that Capstone knows that Barre City is very interested. D. Sachs also stated she has pitched verbally to AOT that Barre City is very interested as well.

Heat Pumps: how do we increase the number of heat pumps installed in the city. Are there higher rebates to promote, like the energy tips, promote the rebates. C. Teal said he couldn't think of another way to get the word out, other than what we were doing now. Who has recently installed one, see how the process went, making it more tangible for people to see what the process is to try to normalize heat pumps and breakdown some of the myths surrounding them and some of the barriers that people have about it. There are energy grants available, as there have always energy grants, as well. P. Cecchini stated that the number of people doing weatherization is a small number, and the bigger gap is the trades, and the person connecting the pump must have a refrigeration license, and an electrician is needed and someone with a gas certification, and the interest is out there to create a workforce that has a career that will live beyond this bubble and funds.

D. Blittersdorf spoke of heat pumps and how he is having them installed in his 25,000 square foot manufacturing building, and spoke to installations, etc. and it's a great idea to increase the number of heat pumps in the city.

Energy Champions Marketing: are still hoping to do landlord initiatives. C. Teal suggests putting a friendly face to this, for example Darren [Ohl] at the Vermont Bike Shop. Pick a champion or champions that represents our goals, and has an action that meets the goal. Other names were suggested were Bob Nelson at Ace Hardware. Highlight the businesses as well, as suggested by P. Cecchini, as he has done so much. D. Sachs suggested engaging the survey respondents. "Be like Fred"...or similar, and connect with other city committees. R. Palmer agreed that doing quarterly snippets, or engagement pieces would be beneficial. Locally funded grant sourcing was talked about for mass heat pump installs., perhaps tapping into local investors. There is a lot of funding in the ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act).

A work session was suggested for next Saurday April 17, 2021 at 8 am.

5. New Business: None.

94 **6. Roundtable:** Nothing.

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96 **7. Adjourn:** Adjournment occurred at 10:14 a.m.

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99 platform.

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Respectfully submitted

Janet E. Shatney, Planning Director

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