

St. Johnsbury Town Energy Committee

December 14, 2021

Members Present: John Ajamie, Ben Deede, Elmore Dickstein, Steve Isham, Pam Parker (Chair), Keith Whitemore, Lynn Wurzburg, David Zajko

Guests: Bevin Barber-Campbell, Robert Michael, Don Smith

1. Minutes

The minutes for November's meeting were reviewed and accepted.

2. Executive Summary of Vermont's Climate Action Plan

The initial climate action plan was released on December 1 by the Climate Council. A link to the contents of the plan was e-mailed to the committee members and our e-mail list.

Pam encouraged committee members to at least read the executive summary of the climate action plan and to attend the December 15 Virtual Town Hall on the plan hosted by the Climate Solutions Caucus. Information has been sent to committee members and our e-mail list.

3. Report from Vermont Energy and Climate Action Network (VECAN) Conference

Ben, Lynn, Pam, Scott, and Steve reported on some of the takeaways from VECAN's annual conference, which was held virtually over five days. A link to all materials from this year's conference, including session recordings, slides, links to further resources, and copies of the chat, has been sent to committee members.

Ben:

There were a lot of practical ideas during the sustainable community sessions. He focused on transportation with good ideas from AARP and Local Motion.

Lynn:

A member of the town energy committee should attend Selectboard meetings to form a relationship with them and keep tabs on opportunities.

Pam:

- Climate Justice was the focus of Monday's session. It is a big focus of the climate action plan.
- There was a lot of emphasis on local action.
- On the whole, the committee is very active in a wide number of areas, but one area where it has not been active is soil health, water management, biodiversity. A second area is climate justice.

Steve:

- There are a lot of area and state resources that the committee can utilize that could be added to our Town Energy Committee Community Outreach Inventory.
- Town energy committee members were several times encouraged to get involved with other town committees because they have direct impact on local climate policies.

- The building permit application process should include information on weatherization and efficiency as a way to educate contractors and builders.
- There is a great desire for town energy committees to collaborate with each other. (See Regional Collaboration below)

4. Local Action on Committee Activities

Education—Lynn and Bevin:

- Climate Literacy Committee at St. Johnsbury School is doing a monthly newsletter. Lynn just started to work with an environmental club as part of the afterschool CATCH program. The club created posters focused on using less during the holiday season.
- Lynn talked with James Bentley about the Field Semester where students go out to get field data at the Academy's Field Campus in Danville. David plans to participate next year during his senior year.
- Lynn and Bevin made a presentation at the Academy for the Sophomore Stewardship Challenge about a Park-ing Day. One of the parklets could contain an electric car for people to experience it, but not drive it. At least one advisor group will do the Parking Day. Bevin shared the presentation slides.
- The Parking Day is scheduled for April 29. The committee will help the advisor group(s) in any way we can.

Transportation—Ben and Bevin:

- The organizing group will meet in January with Rise Vermont, Link, Local Motion and local partners. The e-bike day event would be held just before Local Motion's lending library in early summer. Climate justice would be a part of the event.

Weatherization—Pam

- There is a lot of emphasis on weatherization in the climate action plan. The committee is interested in building on the success of the Weatherization For All event last fall. Climate justice is a component of weatherization.

Regional Collaboration—Pam and Steve

- Steve is developing an initial description of his Climate Catalyst project to develop a system for area town energy committees to communicate, share resources, and work collaboratively. He is thinking of calling it the "NEK Town Energy Committee Hub." Next week, he meets with Jon Copans, Director of Climate, Innovation, and Leadership, Vermont Council on Rural Development to review his plan.

5. Town Energy Committee Community Outreach Inventory.

Some additions to the Community Outreach Inventory were made. Steve will set up Google Drive and upload the inventory for committee members to share.

Next Meeting is Monday January 3 from 5:30 to 7:00 pm