

Montpelier Energy Advisory Committee
Minutes of meeting 10/15/19

Committee members attending:

- Diana Chace, Secretary
- Barbara Conrey
- Donald deVoil
- Geoff Fitzgerald
- Amy Gamble, Vice Chair
- Karl Johnson
- Dan Jones
- Peter Luyckx
- Kate Stephenson, Chair
- Anne Watson

Others attending:

- Phillip Pecot

Additions to agenda

Two items were added to the agenda:

- District heat plant
- Committee focus on climate change mitigation vs. adaptation

Approval of minutes

Geoff moved to approve July minutes, Dan seconded. Motion carried.

The August and September committee meetings did not have quorums, so there were no minutes to approve.

Opportunity for public comment

No public comment.

Working group updates

Transportation:

We should know soon whether VTTrans will include the pilot microtransit program in their budget for next year.

Kate reported on a recent event, cosponsored by CVRPC, VCRD, and VECAN, at which local energy committees discussed sustainable transportation in central Vermont

Residential/window dressers:

A notice about the window dressers project was put on FPF and got a tremendous response. There was also a really good response from the letter Capstone sent to LIHEAP recipients. The project is allotted 150 window inserts, but right now there are 215 ordered so some are on wait lists. Space and time limitations will prevent going much over the allotment. 55 of the inserts are measured and paid for. Amy and Donald and Paul went to Glover's build and saw the frame-construction part of the process. We will need volunteers to sign up for shifts for Montpelier's build in January. Frame-building requires some carpentry skills, but the rest of the build process does not. Amy will send a link around for people to sign up.

Policy and planning:

The Montpelier Planning Department has applied for a planning grant from the state. If the grant is awarded, it will be used to hire a consultant to create a detailed plan for Montpelier to reach its 2030 municipal net-zero goal.

MEAC and the city continue to work with Richard Faesy of Energy Futures Group to create an efficiency disclosure ordinance. A draft ordinance is expected to be discussed at a meeting scheduled for Thursday, October 24.

Municipal:

ESG has a new engineer on the wastewater plant project. They are working on developing a matrix for decision-making. The gas generated by the digesters will be more than sufficient to cover heat loads at the plant and power 300-350 kW CHP. Digesters will begin to get cleaned and worked on next summer.

Update on city hiring

Montpelier has a new assistant city manager and a new public works director. The city had been planning to hire a facilities manager but the city manager is now not planning to hire for that position. Donna Barlow-Casey, director of public works, will be the MEAC contact and will work on the revolving loan fund, district heat, net zero plan, etc.

District heat

The district heat system has a city loop and a state loop. The city loop in summer (for hot water and also for shoulder heating seasons) has been run by oil. We are trying to shut down the district heat system in summer in order to stop burning that oil. MEAC is talking to the last one or two commercial customers who are still relying on district heat

in summer. It may make sense to arrange a meeting between interested MEAC members and relevant city employees, including Donna Barlow-Casey, to plan next steps.

Climate change adaptation

Dan raised the issue of whether MEAC could be doing more to help prepare Montpelier for a changing climate, including more severe rain events causing flooding and wash-outs. Barbara suggested that the changing climate will drive more people to want to live in Montpelier, and the city needs to address the need for more housing. Kate asked whether there is someone in city government already looking at these issues, and whether we should bring this up with them.

Upcoming events

- Taylor St. transit and housing center dedication on October 25 at 4 pm.
- Shared use path dedication on November 8 at 3:15 pm.
- Vermont Energy and Climate Action Network (VECAN) conference on Saturday, December 7 at Lake Morey.

Adjournment 8:31 with no objection.