

MEAC Minutes 4/16/24

Attendees (Voting): Karl Johnson, Kate Stephenson, Peter Sterling, Tim Favorite, Ken Jones, Dan Jones

Attendees (Non-voting): Sal Alfano, Chris Lumbra

Agenda and minutes: Ken had a conversation with VT Gas which he wanted to add to the agenda.

Sal wanted to comment on the solar shading discussion from the last meeting. Discussion regarding the hours, roof and lawn language is out. Still a work in progress, and need MEAC or solar installation expert's help to finalize it. Peter offers to pass on the request to solar developers connected to Renewable Energy VT.

Public Comment: None

Upcoming Events: Middlesex Energy Committee doing an energy fair at Camp Meade the last Saturday in April.

Sustainability Coordinator Update

DoE grant being pursued for Rec Center re: thermal storage. Discussion on merits of thermal storage and whether or not it can affect costs. District Heat, working with Efficiency Vermont. Capturing some money from the clean energy development fund. Citywide LED lighting changeover around 34% complete, including completion of police and fire stations. Fuel switch at DPW campus and equipment barn still on hold. Finally have good data for biogas - we do not have excess biogas at DPW campus. There is exactly enough gas to heat the WRRF. Waiting for more information before moving forward. Electric vehicle chargers, got update from GMP - 4 fast chargers will be installed next to Shaw's. Hoping they will be online mid-October. Karl requests a copy of Chris's update to the council.

VT Gas update

Ken met with Vermont Gas re: high waste feedstock. The high waste market has become very competitive, especially in Chittenden, Addison, and Franklin. There are some waste processing facilities in eastern Washington county, but it may be hard to compete. Also competing, Black Bear Diesel in Plainfield. Demand for agricultural waste and waste oils is likely to increase and it will be hard to break into that market.

VT Gas is in the business of bringing energy via pipes. They are interested in District Heat, including geothermal, and in particular Montpelier's system and the idea of DH as a utility. The discussion seems like it may continue. Kate asks if the city is open to the idea of an outside entity maintaining it.. Ken - District Heat is not being run currently the way a utility would run it, it is not healthy. Customers are not happy. Ken would like to present some options. Dan/Karl - likely a significant business interest for someone like VT Gas to step in. Karl - has the cost analysis (\$/mmBTU) been done on District Heat vs. alternatives? Ken - not a blanket answer - varies from building to building. Chris concurs with Ken. Kate wonders if we can provide some high level information about the challenges of running a district heat system.

Working Group updates

School: There is a Facilities and Energy Committee meeting this Friday, hoping for updates on the future of the Net Zero Adhoc Committee as well as on the facilities report the school board commissioned last year.

Other Business

Karl wants to give some thought on how to prioritize efforts. Currently functioning adhoc.

Wonders if we should revisit [NZ Action Plan](#) to focus our efforts better. Kate concurs, would be worth seeing how much progress we've made on initiatives. Chris is laying the groundwork for it. It would be good to lay out a plan for each bullet point. Sal: replacing fuel oil boilers with equivalent should not be allowed in our zoning. Action plan could potentially accomplish this.

Karl suggests setting aside 15-20 minutes in the next agenda.