

MEAC Minutes 6/20/24

Attendees (Voting): Karl Johnson, Kate Stephenson, Amy Gamble, Amanda Sardonis, Mark Seltzer, Tim Favorite

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

Agenda and Minutes: Approved

Public Comment: None

Upcoming Events: None

Sustainability Coordinator Update: District Heat restoration is ongoing. Received a favorable bid for the fiber network and hoping to restore system fully by October. Hopeful that we can leverage FEMA money for net zero improvements - the money is contingent on rebuilding to current codes and standards, but it's unclear whether it applies to undamaged portions of buildings. There may also be a net zero component in the hazard mitigation grant program. Buildings eligible for improvements: public works garage and water resource recovery facility. For the treatment plant, considering pellet boiler and heat pumps. Currently leaning towards heat pumps since they provide cooling also. Currently the AC is window units. Baseline heating (oil and propane) could stay in place if heat pumps installed and need arises. Weatherization has not yet been considered, but is understood to be a prerequisite. DoE grant at the Rec Center: have received a favorable bid for asbestos removal and is slated for September. Current thinking from VEIC is that the DoE should be able to execute the subgrant in July. Asbestos removal will cost \$47K but is covered by the grant.

Working Group updates

Residential: Amy is going to Barre Senior Center to recruit potential volunteers for Window Dressers.

School: Tim has not met with the school board lately, but mentions the earlier-than-planned closure of school for summer due to unsafe temperatures in Montpelier schools, which do not have air conditioning. The school district mentioned in its letter to caregivers that they had previously applied for a grant to install heat pumps, but the application did not succeed. Sal mentions an interest in collaborating with the schools in the future should a need for cooling centers arise, but that is contingent on the schools having a cooling mechanism.

Grants: Amanda spoke with Adrienne Gil on the new Grants Committee.

Energy Metrics: Kate emailed Todd Provencher about collecting latest metrics, but has not heard back. She has also been contacted about storyboarding the energy chapter of the city plan and had a request for a map of net metered city buildings. Kate offered MEAC's support.

Project Timeline Discussion

Karl recommends that we reframe the discussion to focus mainly on projects and gaps that need the most attention. Further discussion on metrics and resources - we need metrics to prioritize and get grants, but city resources are tight. Mark mentions carbon accounting/bill aggregation services that might streamline metrics gathering, however, they have a cost. Chris questioned on how we can help. Chris: we are going after a number of grants but not sure there is bandwidth to do much more than what we are doing. Kate: is there anything we can do to get any projects closer to shovel ready? Chris will prepare some thoughts for the next meeting on future possible steps we could take, and places that could use some help. Sal brings up the Country Club Road site - if something is built, we will need to make certain it is built net zero, as it will be very difficult to fix it once built.

Other Business

Karl and Tim will work together to ensure agenda and minutes are sent well in advance of the next meeting.