

Bennington County Energy Committee Roundtable

November 15, 2022 at 4PM

BCRC Energy Planning Updates

Act 172 Update:

Progress is being made on an agreement between regional planning commissions and Buildings & General Services to support this program. It is still unclear when BGS will begin accepting applications, but they have developed a program webpage which will continue to be updated with more information as it becomes available: [Municipal Energy Resilience Program | Buildings and General Services \(vermont.gov\)](#)

Outreach on the renewable electricity standard:

The Department of Public Service has initiated a review of the Renewable Electricity Standard which may involve some public engagement and an opportunity for energy committees to get involved if interested. Callie will share any updates from PSD.

Energy Committee Updates

The committees discussed the [Diesel Emissions Reduction Grant](#) which is currently open until November 29th. This funding is cyclical and there will likely be another round in the future. Several committee members reported that their town vehicles are newer, but that this is a good opportunity to keep in mind for the future.

Sunderland:

- Participated in WindowDressers
- Working on getting additional heat pumps in the town hall, hopefully with money from Act 172.
- Investigating the potential of installing solar on the roof of the town hall.
- Researching efficiency improvements for the town garage.
- Would like to hold a climate change forum possibly in collaboration with the Arlington Energy Committee.
 - Possibly late winter/early spring at the Arlington Common
- The Sunderland EC is hosting a “meet and greet” with the new BCRC executive director, Bill Colvin, on December 5th at 5pm at the Sunderland Town Hall. All energy committee members are welcome to attend.
- Would like to initiate a Climate Change column in the Bennington Banner and Manchester Journal (maybe the VT News Guide too). It could run every 2 weeks (or so) and delve into one of the many issues as CC pertains to Bennington County and Vermont.

NorShaft:

- There are several improvements planned for the town hall once funding is available

- There is large solar array project planned in Shaftsbury that could contribute \$100,000 annually to the town. NorShaft EC members have met with the project manager. If/when the project is completed, the company may be willing to help the town install a solar array at a meeting house.
- The committee is looking for new members.

Bennington

- The committee has been analyzing town data to assess the town's greenhouse gas emissions and whether or not Bennington is on track to meet Global Warming Solutions Act goals. The town has made progress reducing fossil fuel use in their buildings through electrification.
- The EC has a Bikable Bennington subcommittee trying to promote biking as an alternative method of transportation.
- They have also been doing some outreach about composting at town events.
- Participated in WindowDressers and have helped with connecting income-eligible customers to BROC's services. Confirmed that BROC has followed up with the contacts provided and moved the process forward with two of the customers.

Dorset

- Planning a forum on incentives as part of the Button Up campaign
- Completed an energy audit on one of the town firehouses and planning one for the other firehouse as well.
- Nancy regularly attends planning commission meetings. The planning commission is updating the town bylaws which help implement the town plan and energy plan. She attended a webinar on land use planning and climate change offered through VT Agency of Natural Resources. A repeat of the webinar will be held on December 7th: [Trainings | Agency of Natural Resources \(vermont.gov\)](https://www.vermont.gov/energy/programs-and-services/training)

Manchester

- The committee formed in June
- Working through the VECAN toolkits
- Hosted an electric drive-in in the fall.
- Would like to do an inventory of all town-owned buildings and track all the potential sources of funding.
- An audit was recently conducted on the town hall.
- Interested in doing a solar home/business tour in partnership with Grassroots Solar and Power Guru
- Jim Hand is in discussions with GMP to install 4 EV superchargers near Main Street.

Arlington

- Would like to host a forum on incentive programs like BROC
- Doing a town-wide carbon footprint analysis, including an analysis of the town forest and its carbon sequestration rate.

- The EC has taken field trips to several town buildings to assess their need for efficiency improvements.
- Starting WindowDressers outreach to get new core volunteers involved.
- Talked with VT Council on Rural Development about their Climate Economy Resilient Communities program and have applied to the program.

Resources Shared:

[Climate-Change-and-Land-Use_Standard-Resolution_20220524.pdf \(ccrpcvt.org\)](#)

[The Bennington Bike Hub \(ourbikehub.com\)](#)

[funding_for_energy_committees.pdf \(bcrcvt.org\)](#)

[Diesel Emissions Reduction Assistance | Department of Environmental Conservation \(vermont.gov\)](#)

[Five things your TEC can do right now! \(vecan.net\)](#)

[Electric Bike Rebate - Green Mountain Power](#)