

Regional Energy Committee - Meeting Notes
December 8, 2009
NRPC Office - 7-9pm

Attendees

Deb Woodward, Georgia
Roger Lindala, Bakersfield
Bob Buerman, South Hero
George Lague, Swanton Village
Kathy Lavoie, Swanton Town
Guy Palardy, Alburgh
Barclay Morris, Grand Isle
David Leslie, Grand Isle
Rob Meader, Georgia
Suzanna Brown, Georgia
Robert Horr, Fairfax
Skip Taylor, Fairfax
John Ashton, Fletcher

Welcome and Introductions

Deb Perry welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the regional energy committee. Attendees were asked to introduce themselves and sign in.

Efficiency Vermont Presentation on Energy Audits for Municipal Buildings

- Presentation made by Bob Murphy of Efficiency Vermont (EVT) and a member of the Underhill Energy Committee (available online at <http://www.nrpcvt.com/energy.html>).
- Towns interested in helping their residents weatherize their homes may still be able to schedule a “Button Up” workshop by contacting Paul Markowitz at paul@markowitzvt.com or 802-229-6307
- Bob noted useful resources for energy committees including the VECAN website (www.vecan.net), the Clean Energy Guide from VPIRG (www.vpirg.org/cleanenergyguide). Information about renewables is available at www.rerc-vt.org.
- Bob provided a summary of projects in the region that have received assistance through EVT, including:
 - Enosburg Falls Town Clerk Office and Wastewater Treatment Facility
 - Richford Wastewater Treatment Facility, High School Gym, and Elementary School
 - Bakersfield Elementary School
 - Fairfax Fire Department and Wastewater Treatment Facility
 - Swanton Wastewater Treatment Facility and Central School
 - Alburgh Town Garage
 - St. Albans City
- For older town halls, he recommends both electrical and thermal audits. The audit will help to prioritize projects and ensure towns get the most “bang for their buck.”
- EVT does not conduct audits but will help to review their audit reports.
- Audits for residential and small commercial buildings are completed through “Home Performance with Energy Star” Program. A list of trained auditors is available through EVT.
- A basic audit might cost \$300-500 and would look at lighting and appliances, would test the heating system, and would include a blower door test to detect infiltration.

- During the audit, the auditor should conduct a combustion analysis of the heating system. This should also be done before and after a contractor does work on the building and when you have the heating system tuned.
- Committee discusses potential challenges of getting bids from an auditor to do a variety of different buildings. Bob suggests using EVT's Building Energy Performance (BEP) form which requires the collection of some basic information that will help an auditor understand the buildings. Bob will send this form to Deb.
- How can NRPC help towns ensure that upgrades are done properly and effectively. Should someone inspect afterwards?
- It is uncertain which upgrades may be of concern to the Department of Public Safety since these are public buildings. George has talked to a Fire Marshall, but it is unclear what would trigger a permit.
- In 2010 EVT will begin covering unregulated fuels, including oil and propane.

Grant Updates

- **Energy Grants to NRPC:** The NRPC will be receiving a grant from the US Department of Energy for \$195,600 and the Vermont Department of Public Service for \$80,000 to support energy work. Deb provided an outline of the tasks proposed under these two workplans.
- Tasks were developed based on the goals and objectives of the grants and the skills and strengths of the RPC. Tasks such as the energy audits for municipal buildings were written to be very specific, while other tasks, such as economic impact analysis of renewable energy, were intended to provide some flexibility. The energy committee will be asked to provide input as the RPC begins to develop these tasks.
- Proposed tasks were:
 - Developing the Green Economy: Workforce training, economic evaluation of energy projects, local food systems and regional energy conference.
 - Transportation Demand Management: Park and ride assessment, "Safe Routes to Schools" activities, transit, bike and pedestrian plans, promotion of the "Way to Go" Commuter Challenge.
 - Renewable Energy Generation: Feasibility assessment of the potential for distributed renewable energy generation, support for municipal utilities to incorporate new renewable energy generation into their portfolios.
 - Energy Efficiency in Public Buildings and Services: Conduct energy audits in 20-30 publicly owned buildings throughout the region, conduct a street lighting analysis in 1-3 village areas to identify opportunities to improve the efficiency of street lighting, provide funding for small scale implementation based on the recommendations.
 - Integrated Land Use, Transportation and Energy Plans: Update the energy chapter of the Regional Plan with specific indicators for energy efficiency and renewable energy that can be used to gauge success over time, provide technical assistance to local communities to develop zoning guidelines that promote energy efficient development, complete integrated plans, form municipal energy committees, and identify and pursue grant opportunities related to energy and climate change.
- **Summary of Municipal energy grant proposed projects.** The VT DPS had a grant application for municipalities due earlier today (12/8). Grants for up to \$50,000 were available for energy efficiency retrofits and renewable energy installations (geothermal, biomass and combined heat and power only). Grants for transportation projects were up to \$25,000 and financial incentives for up to \$250,000. Towns were able to submit multiple proposals. Applications submitted from communities in the region included:
 - **Bakersfield-** Energy Efficiency Retrofits for Town Hall
 - **Fairfield-** Energy Efficiency Retrofits for Community Center, Public Transit planning

- **Georgia-** Energy Efficiency Retrofits for Town Office, Library, and Highway Garage, Energy Efficient Streetlighting, Energy Efficient lighting at Georgia Elementary School
- **Isle La Motte-** Energy Efficiency Retrofits for Town Hall
- **Montgomery-** Energy Efficiency Retrofits for Town Hall
- **St. Albans City-** Energy Efficiency Retrofits for City Hall, Energy Efficient Streetlighting
- **Swanton Village-** Energy Efficiency Retrofits for Municipal Complex, Energy Efficient Streetlighting
- **Swanton Town-** Energy Efficiency Retrofits for Highway Garage

Discuss Organization and Membership of Regional Energy Committee.

- o Deb provided the description of the Regional Energy Committee as approved by the Regional Board of Commissioners in May 2009. Each municipality was invited to appoint a representative.
- o The Energy Committee discussed establishing a regular meeting schedule, perhaps starting with monthly meetings as things ramp up in early 2010 and then phasing into a quarterly meeting schedule. Committee members also suggested using alternative means of communicating, such as conference calls, an email “group,” and the energy page of the NRPC website. The committee decided to meet on the second Tuesday of the month from January to March: January 12, February 9, and March 9 at 7pm.
- o In addition to municipal representatives, five “expert” members can be invited to join the committee. Energy committee members are encouraged to consider what kinds of expertise might be useful to have on the committee.

Topics for Future Meetings

- o The next meeting will be Tuesday, January 12th at 7:00 and will focus on developing a plan for getting energy audits of 20-30 municipal buildings in the region. Specific discussion points will include how to choose which buildings are audited, use of the BEP to identify opportunities for efficiency improvements in the building, available funding to implement the recommendations of the audits, and the process for getting lighting vs thermal audits.