

Addison County Regional Planning Commission

14 Seminary Street Middlebury, VT 05753 • www.acrpc.org • Phone: 802.388.3141

ENERGY COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, October 16, 2023

ATTENDEES

Cheryl Brinkman - Committee Chair
Don Ferris- Committee Member
Ross Conrad- Committee Member
James Dayton - Committee Member
Jeremy Grip - Committee Member

Mike Roy - CEAC
Maggie Eaton - New Haven
Robert West - Goshen
Carissa Finerty - ACRPC
Maddison Shropshire - ACRPC Staff

MINUTES

5:05 pm - Call to Order

Review of September 2023 minutes

- Jamie moved to approve the [September 2023 Minutes](#); Jeremy seconded; all in favor.

Guest presentation from Mike Roy, Climate Economy Action Center to discuss their Non-residential building decarbonization project and Mass Energize initiative.

- Mike shared background resources on the work of CEAC (<https://ceacac.org/>) and discussed several projects the organization is pursuing at this time.
- The [Big Building Decarbonization Project](#) is launching with an effort to understand the current level of interest in decarbonization by building owners and property managers of buildings over 5,000 sqft. CEAC is utilizing a Middlebury College class to organize and perform an expected 20 interviews in person.
 - If planning commissioners have connections to big building owners or managers, CEAC would welcome additional potential interviewees. A draft question list is available by contacting Mike (roymichaeldonald@gmail.com)
- CEAC is partnering with the [Mass Energize Platform](#) to develop an online database of decarbonization/ energy resources for residents, and event hub for energy champions in the region.
 - CEAC is seeking promotional support and ongoing engagement by the energy committee network to ensure this platform is used widely and
 - CEAC is seeking funding from towns to support this project and are specifically pitching the use of MERP capacity grant funds (\$4000 per town) to support the

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build out of this platform and other community engagement activities related to energy efficiency and sustainability.

- ACRPC has confirmed that developing a contract with CEAC for public engagement services is an eligible use of MERP Capacity grant funding. ACRPC is also available to support towns in applying for these non-competitive funds.
- CEAC has an additional project ongoing called the [Navigator Project](#) that will be discussed at a future energy committee meeting.

Maddi led a discussion of Enhanced Energy Plan update process including:

- A review of [State Standards for regional EEPs](#). These standards were recently updated in the Statewide Comprehensive Energy Plan in 2022. A majority of the standards remain the same, but there are additional requirements for the consideration of equity and forest blocks in the development of the plan. In addition, solar development estimates are expected to utilize newly available rooftop solar modeling.
- A presentation on updated data available to the committee.
 - Maddi shared the [LEAP model results](#) which determine the regional targets for energy use in the electric, thermal, and transportation sectors. These targets are provided in MMBTUs and require conversion to more useful units for the purposes of the regional plan. The targets must also be parceled from the regional scale to the municipal scale by ACRPC. This can be done by any method chosen by the RPC and therefore Maddi has requested decision support from the committee.
 - Maddi briefly shared the [Generation Scenario's tool](#) which indicates how little additional generation the region is capable of developing, due to capacity constraints. Future discussion of this tool is required.
- Discussion of maps and data that are desirable but not required for approval.
 - The required maps include known and possible constraints, and potential solar, wind, and biomass generation in the region.
 - Maddi proposed the addition of regional maps that address EV charger infrastructure and geothermal/ networked geothermal potential.
 - Maggie recommended that the GMP solar map 2.0 be included to speak to the issue of transmission. This generated discussion of how the EEP could support the improvement of transmission capacity.

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- Mike recommended that alternatives to transmission upgrades be considered, such as development of smart grid technology ([see this podcast](#)), [GMPs tesla powerwall](#) program.
- Cheryl suggested that Kurt Haigis would be a valuable resource for mini grids in addressing this issue.
- Ross promoted the inclusion of innovative hydro as additional generation resources in the EEP.

Discussion of regional energy fair

- The committee continued the discussion on regional energy events and agreed to a tentative plan to develop an event for fall of 2024 on a similar scale to the recent Vergennes energy fair AND a larger event in 2025 that would be housed in Middlebury.
 - Jeremy suggested that the committee seek to work with the annual building efficiency event in Middlebury. Investigation into the referenced event is required.
 - Maddi suggested that ACRPC host a gathering of energy committees from around the region in January. This event would provide a larger platform for CEAC to promote available programs, and engage energy advocates in the energy fair planning process. VECAN has agreed to support the event as needed. The committee agreed to move forward with this event.
 - Mike suggested that CEAC might be in a position to dedicate a staff person to energy event planning.
- Generate first draft list of vendors
 - Maddi and Cheryl will discuss past vendors and potential additions.

Assignment of tasks and discussion of subcommittee creation

- To move both the energy fair and enhanced energy plan rewrite, the development of sub-committees to tackle portions of this work may be necessary. Maddi suggested the following tasks requiring next step support:
 - LEAP data conversion and disaggregation to town scale
 - Assessment of each EEP section with an eye towards shortening the document and evaluating existing goals and policies for relevance and gaps.
 - Electric
 - Thermal
 - Transportation

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■ Land use

- Research into equity resources and considerations relevant to the EEP
- Planning for 2024 energy fair (establish dates, goals and scope)
- Planning for 2025 energy fair (establish dates, goals and scope)

Maddi provides a brief update on EECBG

- ACRPC sent the pre application for the EECBG grant in late July. The full application is due in January 2024. The estimated \$70,000 will be distributed to the County Sheriff's office, CEAC's programming, and potentially the broken EV charger in the ACRPC parking area.

6:30 pm - Adjourn

Note: agendas and adopted meeting minutes for this and all other meetings are also available online at the ACRPC website: <https://acrpc.org/minutes-agendas/>

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