

Central Vermont Regional Roundtable – December 5, 2009

Energy Committee Updates:

Waterbury LEAP:

- New nonprofit
- Applied for solar on town schools
- Received grant to replace boiler - \$12,000
- Goal: Be a model green community in 10 years

Greensboro:

- Organized Button Up workshop and low-carbon diet program
- Looking into a hydro power development – in permitting process currently
- Looking into PACE/CEAD program – co-hosting community conversation about PACE December 10.
- Doing info programs on renewables

Hardwick (HEART)

- Transition town official designation
- Undertook home energy tours on Oct 24 (Green Mt Monestary is a powerful example of a green home)
- Held community forum on a community ‘energy descent’ plan (Trans. Town)
- Effort to put solar panels high schools
- Looking into PACE/CEAD program – co-hosting community conversation about PACE December 10.
- Hosted Sustainable Living and Ag fair – 1,500 attended! Had rides, animals, parade, info booths. Attracted ‘beyond the choir’ b/c of partnership with Ag.

Newbury

- Held Button Up workshop
- Wood chip heating project for shared school
- Changed over 200 lightbulbs in a campaign

East Montpelier

- Vermont Community Energy Mobilization project undertaken – town hall and home visits
- Looking into PACE/CEAD program; initiated conversation with Selectboard
- Working on expanding bus/public transit options w Plainfield & Marshfield
- Hosted a joint energy fair

Plainfield

- Vermont Community Energy Mobilization project undertaken in conjunction with E. Montpelier and Marshfield

- Looking into PACE/CEAD program
- Addressing town street lighting
- Looking at efficiency retrofits for town garage
- Working on expanding bus/public transit options w E. Montpelier & Marshfield
- Looking into town hydro project; currently in permitting process
- Limited people participation is a challenge for Plainfield
- Hosted a joint energy fair – 300 attended

St. Johnsbury

- No formal committee as of this point
- Work is starting on a town plan update
- Host Button Up workshop with Jim Merkel

Montpelier

- Formally reconvened committee recently; 15 projects I.D'd that the group will begin to commence work on going forward
- Vermont Community Energy Mobilization project undertaken
- Looking to measure Montpelier's energy use and get status on weatherization
- Undertaking a fundraising effort – 300 attended

Marshfield

- Undertook community survey of town – 80 homes responded
- Applied for a muni assistance grant for a wood chip boiler
- Hosted a joint energy fair – 300 attended
- Municipal building efficiency work being undertaken
- Vermont Community Energy Mobilization project undertaken; outreached to low-income residents in particular
- Did solar home tours
- Did solar hot water workshops
- Interested in PACE/CEAD program. Went to Selectboard already and were met with a chilly response.
- Need: Real energy audits

Williamstown:

- Very new committee
- Host a Button Up workshop
- Looking at two potential hydro sites
- Looking to do an energy fair in 2010
- Looking at street lighting opportunities

Moretown:

- Hosted a Button Up workshop
- Secured a weatherization grant for the municipal building
- Goal: Town clerks office and library also weatherized.
- Looking into PACE/CEAD opportunity with other Mad River Valley towns

Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission:

- CVRPC has funding to offer communities in central Vermont region for energy efficiency and conservation audits and retrofits. Communities should stay tuned in central Vermont. Those not in central Vermont should connect with their RPC for potential financial support for energy efficiency projects.
- In central Vermont, they have about \$250,000. Will make grants to central Vermont towns on a per capita basis for \$5k-\$10k.

DISCUSSION: Potential for Coordination, Collaboration and Capacity Building:

- Create energy portfolios/need energy assessments (hard numbers on community energy use)
- Mad River Valley wiki – a potential good model
- Small Town Carbon Calculator (from NH) might be a good resource for small towns especially. Look for it on VECAN web site.
- VT Sustainable Jobs Fund's 'Renewable Energy Atlas of Vermont' due Feb 2010 or so. RE resource for VT.
- Engage youth! High school students/green teams are a great potential resource
 - Solar grants for schools ties into engagement from teachers and students
 - Governors Institute kids – a vehicle for outreach
 - Change the World Kids – vehicle for outreach
- More town to town collaboration important and helps – Marshfield reached out to neighbors for fair, transit initiative etc. Helps!
 - Combined meetings could help
- PROJECTS would benefit from coordination:
 - PACE/CEAD – VECAN, VNRC, others are working to help coordinate
 - Solar Hot Water – model after First Branch Sustainability Networks successful challenges (Note: hold solar hot water events in March, April – NOT when contractors are swamped in the summer etc)
 - Residential building codes and comprehensive energy planning in general
 - VNRC and VLCT are putting together a guide for local energy planning
 - Local Energy Fairs – Make it a cross town effort; share how-to strategies, success strategies etc community by community
 - Community energy inventories
 - Good models, partners, resources

- VECAN – serves as a resource sharing hub, offers technical assistance services, creates networking and training opportunities (this conference, regional roundtables etc)
- Cambridge Heat
- Transition Towns
- Energy inventories – best tools
 - Organize workshops on how-to
- Community energy committees could/should outline their goals; put on VECAN web site
- Share websites and resources among groups in general
- Current budget realities require better coordination, create opportunity

Other resources:

- VT League of Cities and Towns provides good resources to communities, local officials. Find info at www.vlct.org
- VT Planners Association
- Vermont Planners Information Center – VPIC . www.vpic.org

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