

Greater Middlebury Climate Economy Initiative

SUBCOMMITTEE Meeting of Task Force on Home and Business Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Opportunities Demonstration Project(s)

Tuesday, December 12, 2017 – 7:00-8:30 pm
Bread Loaf Offices

Attendees :

Steve Maier
Chris Huston
Chris Stackhouse
Jeremy Gildrien
Kate Williams
Howard Widelitz
Fran Putnam

Resource people:

- Tom Murray, VT Gas
- Matt Sargent, Efficiency Vermont

Summary/Meeting Results: The Efficiency/Renewable Energy Task Force SUB-COMMITTEE gathered to review lessons learned from the Weybridge weatherization program, and discuss approaches to the neighborhood demonstration project identified by the larger group as an opportunity to implement WX projects on a large scale. Sub-committee members to provide 3-5 focus points for review and advancement at the next meeting the week of January 8th.

Detailed notes:

Fran discussed Weybridge program approach and lessons learned:

- 7 member Energy Committee in 2011, mixed backgrounds of retirees and parents
- PACE program flopped, too complex, high financing rates, they went looking for other projects
- Found Efficiency Vermont, Vermont Home Energy Challenge
 - Goal of 10 homes in each town, if you reach top town in your county win \$10K
 - EVT training, how to run campaign
 - Partnered with school, who started their own program
 - Kick off potluck supper, demonstrations, testimonial, discussed incentives
 - Set up booth at every event, town meeting, picnic, etc
 - Trained to conduct home energy visit, walkthrough (pre-audit) compared fuel bills to average home, 51 homes, phone-a-thon (called 300 residents) to sell walkthrough, encouraged to get energy audits. Note that calling people at their homes may be more difficult today than in 2011. The group discussed Front Porch Forum, and using the Middlebury town email serve list as alternatives.
 - Municipal buildings in addition to residential
 - School did LEEP program, built model homes
 - Lawn signs were very effective in advertising participation in the program
 - Progress thermometer was also helpful

Notes; Meeting of 12-12-17 of Middlebury energy efficiency/renewables sub-committee

- How were homeowners connected to contractor? Picked off EVT list, also worked through Neighbor Works Heat Squad
- 19 homes weatherized, 5%-6% of population, 10 more in subsequent years
- Weybridge was most successful town in challenge
- People have been coming up to Fran for 3 years since, saying they've saved up and began their weatherization (WX) project
- Used \$10K award for WX of town office, heat pumps and HPWH
- In 2013, Eff VT created a report on what worked and what didn't work, other towns were too big, couldn't meet percentage goals. **Paul W to share report.**
- Barriers were project cost, junk in attic and basement, competing projects, length of occupancy, wet basements, asbestos/vermiculite
- Asked if Fran's report could be shared with group
- Asked how much time was invested in the project? Fran's time was significant, others were a few hours here and there.
- Eff VT involvement was critical to success in Weybridge.

Howard and Steve discussed Midd Energy Committee awareness, outreach, and education methods:

- Education in the school
- Mentioned town email list, Ilsley Library, Town Offices, Coop bulletin board, 4 or 5 events throughout the year (Town Meeting etc)
- \$10K budget item in capital improvements line, earmarked for EE in municipal buildings
 - They want to show return, feel that it might be renewed if there's a good return
 - Audit for public works, police station, etc. will exceed \$10K
- Vital Communities in Upper Valley got contractors to do free audits to pre-screen houses (**note**, we need to ask them what has worked for them)
- VGS conducts free audits, contractor network, 30% cost share, loans (they provide the structure to support the whole process, start to finish)
- Matt shared summary of Market Research document that Paul W shared previously:
 - Barriers- 65% of Vermonter's who responded said that project cost was #1 issue, #2 issue was hassle and time involved. People are still looking for the silver bullet, and are unsure of savings estimates.
 - Motivators (600 respondents who had completed a WX project)- #1 lower energy bills, #2 environmental benefit, #3 comfort
 - Demographics- most want to do more. Most are young/educated

Group wants to move forward with how to target a neighborhood for demonstration project. General discussion as follows:

- Resources: VGS, GMP, Tesla, EVT, VCRD
 - What are special opportunities that these groups **can** bring to the table?
 - Limited time special incentives?
 - Is there a minimum amount of work that constitutes a project?
 - Must be enough to notice effect on comfort and bills
- Community bank, zero percent financing for WX projects, can we do this?

- How broad a scope? Is this a model that can be scalable/expanded?
- Presentation should be simple and consistent to all customers, there may be messiness around that but we must create a way to even this out
- Tom: VGS 0% for 3 years, they will guarantee loans for customers with low credit score. Noted that the average VGS WX project is \$9k.
- People talk about payback, can we come up with financing options? Cost remains the #1 issue. How can we make it **simple/easy**? Need a trusted 3rd party to help explain. Solar industry has made it easy for their customers.
- Can we go to PUC with special programs that are outside of regular utility programs?
- Midd town satellite imaged reviewed for neighborhood selection due to density and relative house age. E Midd, Butolph Acres, Gorham Lane were identified.
- Suggestion to have neighborhoods self-select
- Hybrid of us selecting what defines a viable neighborhood and having the neighborhood self-select?
- Reach out in newspaper or FPF, with Middlebury WX challenge
- It was agreed that we should include locations in Midd and surrounding towns.
- Some sort of contest, essay, get them to commit to having a neighborhood champion, percentage of homes who will commit to home energy visit.
- Can we work with virtual neighborhoods? Multiple neighborhoods simultaneously?
- Neighborhood challenge, positive competition. Home energy challenge on a smaller scale.
- EVT Home energy advisors to help individual homeowners, neighborhoods have champions for enrollment.
- Do we want to define timing? Six months like vital communities.
- Signup in the fall audit in winter, work in spring. Need to establish timeline.
- Does someone in the neighborhood already have WX project done? Need critical mass to be successful.
- Do It Yourself should be discussed as a means to accomplish WX.

Next meeting? Larger group meeting after this sub-committee meets again. Target the week beginning January 8. Other task forces having meetings on same night- need to coordinate so there is no overlap for those who are on two committees.

ACTION ITEM:

- From each sub-committee member - Need 3-5 bullets of where we are headed, what we'd like to have answered from next meeting.