

Middlebury Climate Economy Initiative Efficiency/Renewables Task Force Notes – Meeting of 11-16-17

Attendees:

Chris Huston	Jeremy Gildrien
Steve Maier	Laura MacLachlan
Paul Wyncoop	Garrett Welson
Cooper Smith-Stackhouse	Hans Goudey
Nate Gusakov	Colton Paquette
Christopher Bray	Michelle Smith
Chris Eaton	Veronica Ciambra
Chris Stackhouse	Kate Williams
Angelo Lynn	George Klohck
Cas Chlodnicki	Howard WidELITZ
Fran Putnam	

Resource people:

- Thomas Murray, VT Gas
- Paul Markowitz, Efficiency Vermont
- Rick Shappy, NeighborWorks of Western VT

Summary of 1st Task Force Meeting of 10/12/17

Energy efficiency demonstration projects with renewables

- Residential -- comprehensive efficiency and energy transformation efforts on a selected neighborhood
- Municipal/schools – making sure maximum efficiency is incorporated into any capital improvements
- Multi-family properties –work with rental property owners
- Commercial/industrial

Demonstration projects should

- Addresses the myriad of challenges to home weatherization
- Improve customer services, including a simplified process for participants
- Optimize opportunities to get to positive cash flow
- Include careful tracking and measurement of savings and costs

Opportunities include:

- Renewable Energy Standard - Tier 3 – carbon dioxide reduction goals
- Vermont Gas plans to invest in energy efficiency in Middlebury area

Residential Demonstration Project – homeowner focus

Demonstration project aspect - overview

- Achieve significant energy savings in a large percentage of households within a targeted geographic area within Middlebury
- Utilize existing resources, create innovative financing options, provide high-quality customer support/services
- Demonstration project will lay the groundwork for working in other areas in greater Middlebury area
- focus on one demo project, learn from it, and expand
- Possibly take one efficiency project and then one renewable (or incorporate renewables/solar at the outset)

Key Ingredients

- Energy audit is an obvious first step – gives us baseline data
 - Identify in an empirical way what needs to be done, savings potential
- Residential solar industry in Vermont has been able to provide an attractive offer to homeowners to do solar
 - Made it convenient, easy, and cost-effective for homeowners
- Neighbor-neighbor interaction; trusted messenger; word-of-mouth is key to success
 - Examples: house parties in homes that have completed work
- Potential economies of scale (and savings) by working in a concentrated area, e.g. working with contractors who can do multiple houses in a day
 - Possible bulk purchasing of efficient products
- Public education is key
 - Educate people on what can folks do to make their homes more efficient
 - E.g. Hold weatherization home tours
- Make sure we have the workforce who can do the work and meet the demand
 - Work with Hanover Career Center to help with job training

Financial aspects

- How do we make it financially viable?
- What kind of incentives can the Town offer?
 - Provide incentive for individuals to make efficiency investments
 - Idea of reducing property taxes for home weatherization
- If we are going to do a demonstration project that we want to be able to replicate – whatever incentives that are available for the demo project would need to be available in the replication stage
- How can we package the incentives that make it attractive to the customer?

Resources

- Middlebury has great resources available to help implement creative and innovative solutions
 - Efficiency Vermont – has a range of financial and technical assistance programs to help, e.g. Home Performance with ENERGY STAR – up to \$2000/home
 - Vermont Gas – has high goals to do audits and help finance efficiency investments in homes; will also be providing renewable gas through methane from farms
 - GMP – has a range of leasing options for heat pumps, heat pump hot water heaters, more.

Has obligations under the Renewable Energy Standards Tier III requirements to reduce customers' carbon footprint.

- GMP is teaming up with Suncommon to expand access to solar to low-income households
 - Rural Development (USDA) – has a range of financial assistance programs available
 - NeighborWorks of Western VT – provides low-interest loans, audit services, and comprehensive weatherization services
 - Weatherization contractors – there are at least 7 contractors who serve the Middlebury area
 - CVOEO Weatherization Assistance Program – weatherizes homes of low-income households (60% or less of median income) at no-cost to homeowners
- Googles Doc - can we set up a place to put information/resources, e.g. Google Docs
- **Action step:** Put together a summary document on the resources available for homeowners

Where to focus demonstration project?

- Focus initial efforts in a geographic area within Middlebury, e.g. neighborhood
- Develop a set of criteria for selecting a geographic area so that the decision is transparent
 - Perhaps neighbors could submit proposals/bids to be selected?
- Possible criteria:
 - Buildings with high energy intensity
 - Diversity of housing
 - Homes with lower-moderate incomes, e.g. farm workers
- Geographic neighborhood approach – advantage is that it brings in homeowners who might not normally participate (vs. making it available to those who express interest)
- Idea of a two-potential neighborhoods – one middle class and one low-income neighborhood and low-income (ties in with social justice goals of overall Middlebury Climate Economy Initiative)

Capturing Lessons Learned to Date

- Critical to learn from projects that have been completed to date
 - Create case studies that can be shared on what was done, savings, how it was done, etc.
 - Create a portfolio of houses that people can use as models
- What projects/programs can provide us with key lessons?
 - Panton – GMP/EVT partnership
 - Weybridge participation in Vermont Home Energy Challenge
 - Weatherize Upper Valley
 - NeighborWorks
 - **Efforts outside of Vermont**
- **Action Step:** Organize a series of presentations at next Task Force meeting

Other Possible Projects

- **Schools** - Can the school model/exemplify the right actions?
 - Laura from VEEP – middle school students reaching out and working with energy professionals
 - Energy committee is working with 4th graders on Button Up Day

- **Municipal** – energy committee has put \$\$ in the town budget to make efficiency improvements in municipal buildings; starting with doing energy audits
- **Rental market** – need to make it easy and financial attractive for rental property owners

Who else do we need to bring into the discussion?

- Addison County farm bureau
- Vital Communities – Sarah Brock
- VT Community Foundation?
- High Meadows Fund
- Connect with energy committees

Meeting logistics/structure

- Agreed to meet more frequently – at least initially to make headway
- Idea of breaking into work groups to tackle multiple projects
- **Next meeting: November 30th, Thursday – 7:00-9:00** – Addison County Regional Planning Commission, 14 Seminary Rd.