

Climate Economy Initiative--Capacity Group
Minutes of the Meeting of April 16, 2018
AIA

Present

Fred K (recording), Spence, Amy, Jeremy, Claire, Fran, Lynn, Mary Cullihane

Check in

Spence gave an overview of initiative and group for Mary's benefit.

Thoughts:

Jeremy would like to discuss meeting more often. Spence suggested we discuss at end of meeting.

Fred K liked parts of all the pitches, but really liked Andrea's

The group listened to Andrea's pitch.

Fran suggested that much of what Andrea discusses reflects how Vital Communities operates. Spence mentioned that they have a \$1 million budget, 25 years of experience and cover a much larger geographic area. Claire: their staff has grown from 5 to 8. Fred K. asked if it would be productive to have someone come to speak with our group. Spence suggested some of us should take a field trip to visit them. Claire: that would be difficult. They don't stay in an office; they are in the field. Fran: Would be useful to hear how they got started.

Action Step 1: Everyone go to [Vital Communities](#) website to research what they do, history, governance, etc.

Action Step 2: Claire will send around electronic [Vital Communities newsletter](#). We should all read and subscribe. (Click [here](#) to subscribe)

Mary Cullihane introduced herself, her partner Stacey Rainey, and [Community Barn Ventures](#), a new business consulting group located in downtown Middlebury. She related their experience and what they do.

Spence connected their work to what we are doing, noting that we are focused on the climate economy and coordinating main efforts in Middlebury and surrounding area.

Mary compared our efforts to her work at Microsoft to encourage change through worldwide innovation. She ran program called "Strive" which operated similarly to VCRD's community visits: identify stakeholders, identify macro targets and help coordinate efforts to achieve change.

Lynn mentioned that a challenge in our area is that many folks are not from Middlebury, but Middlebury is the Shire. Many efforts are at the regional or county level, not town level. Small town governance can sometimes be an obstacle to broader thinking. Need all county-wide organizations involved and active.

Spence pointed out that there is a structural issue: our effort is sanctioned by Middlebury Select board, other towns are not yet on board. When we have a project ready we can go back to the Select board and then to the other towns.

Task Force Reports:

Jeremy updated on the Energy Committee: decided on a Neighborhood Weatherization project which can be a model for other weatherization programs. Location is South Street. Incentives not decided yet. Steve, Jon and Chris are talking to the utilities regarding funding. Trying to make weatherization offering more robust than what is currently available. Claire asked if they have talked to Acorn Energy? Jeremy: Not yet, but Acorn deals with production, not weatherization.

Claire updated on Transportation Committee: They are focused on rail. Town has sent out RFP for rail platform siting and chosen consultant, who know about the GMCEI. Consultants will take stakeholders through siting options and decision. Mary asked about variables for the location, which are design, commuter patterns, and function in the downtown. Claire stated that there are 4-5 potential sites along the route that can address the criteria.

Lynn updated on the Ag committee. Committee has discussed the problem: Addison County farms are releasing carbon. Also asking if it should exist as a task force. Asking what they can affect. Have discussed possibility of naming an environmental farm of distinction. Having a hard time getting farmers to participate to discuss farm impact on climate change. Farmers feel they are moving away from conventional practices. Spence commented that there is a divide between conventional and alternative methods and disagreement regarding how efficacious new methods are.

Steering Committee/September Challenge:

Group discussed VCRD role, fact that we will lose day-to-day support in September. We need to engage professional, consultative help to get to next step. Discussed possibilities of fiscal agent. Fred K. said that ACEDC can fill that role if desired. Also discussed whether Town of Middlebury should/could fill that role.

Sources of funding:

Group discussed potential sources of funding.

Action Step 3: Assigned people to research and report back on eligibility, use of funds, grant levels, grant schedule/due dates, requirements:

- [VSECU](#): Heather mentioned at last meeting; she can cover at next meeting.
- [Lintilhac Foundation](#): Lynn
- [Solutions Project](#): Fred
- [USDA/RD](#): Fred
- [Ben & Jerrys](#): ?
- [High Meadows Fund](#): Steve
- [Vermont Community Foundation](#): Steve
- [Growald Family Fund](#): Fran

Amy asked if we should be seeking funding first or deciding on and implementing process to hire a consultant or some form of professional staffing? Group discussed that we need to decide what we would use funding for, develop a plan for capacity and do a gap analysis: what we have in the community already and what we need.

Spence mentioned that Steve is already pursuing High Meadows and VCF. He will clarify what Steve is asking High Meadows to fund.

Jeremy suggested we use Andrea's pitch to develop goals and objectives. Mary added that we need to form intent, but we can investigate funding sources in the meantime and gather data/inventory of resources and market opportunity. We won't pitch to them until we are ready with fully baked pitch.

We have agreed to who we are (mission), what we hope to be (vision), now need to decide how to sell.

Action Step 4: Spence to provide electronic/written version of Andrea's pitch. This can serve as starting case statement for the initiative:

(See: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1lfZvVhDAzVMkm-QpRtgMdK8OLKdVLER5VAAkSeJV8Jw/edit?usp=sharing>)

Action Step 5: Everyone access Andrea's pitch document on Google docs and add goals and objectives. Use the edit button to add comments. Don't actually edit the document.

Group discussed meeting more frequently. Decided to meet every three weeks, instead of monthly.

Next Meeting: Monday May 14, 5:00-6:30 at Community Barn Ventures, 44 main St, Middlebury.