

Town of Northfield, Vermont

Northfield Energy Committee

Minutes of August 6, 2019

Present: NEC Members - Jane Pekol, Denise MacMartin, Gail Hall, Sarah Wolfe, Nicholas Laskovski
Guest – Deb Sachs, Go Vermont!
Public Participants – Ken Goslant, Select board member

The meeting was called to order at 6:40 p.m. by Chair Jane Pekol.

Guest Presentation, Deb Sachs, Go Vermont! Deb presented extensive information on a number of initiatives happening in different communities throughout the state. The group brainstormed various ideas for next steps/projects for NEC, and how to best use the Go Vermont! grant. Deb's summary is attached for the record.

EV Charging Station: Discussion of where things stand with the EV charging station grants. The next grant applications will be solicited in spring 2020 and NEC plans to work towards submitting for that deadline. Select board member Ken Goslant voiced his support for a public EV charging station in Northfield, concurring with NEC members that a location downtown (with the police station parking lot being first choice) as the best location.

Common Connections Event: Jane and Denise will attend this event and cover the NEC bike decorating portion, then cover an information table at the park. There was additional discussion about broader efforts to make communities more walkable. Select board member Ken Goslant reported that there is some work on this, although it was unclear what this consists of. NEC will follow-up to see what is already happening and what role, if any, would be appropriate for us to play.

Night on the Common: The group decided that this event, coming up on August 27, would be a good opportunity to survey the community regarding transportation. Deb Sachs will supply us with a template that we can use, and we can adapt to reach others through Survey Monkey or another electronic format.

Select Board Agenda: NEC is on the Select Board agenda for Tuesday, August 27. We will report on our Go Vermont! grant and the work we have been doing with GMT for increased ridership and awareness regarding the bus.

The next meeting is August 20, 2019 at 6:30 PM in the Brown Public Library Community Room.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Denise MacMartin
NEC Secretary

TO: Northfield Energy Committee
FROM: Deb Sachs, Go! Vermont Business Outreach Coordinator
RE: Community Engagement on Public Transportation options
DATE: August 7, 2019

Thank you for inviting me to join your Northfield Energy Committee (NEC) meeting last night. I appreciate your work and focus on public transit, specifically the GMT commuter line. While engaging the community, the Energy Community has determined how valuable maintaining the Northfield Community Shuttle is and is excited to use the Go! Vermont grant for increased outreach and engagement.

As a secondary focus, the group had a healthy dialogue and brainstorming session on how to promote more about carpooling and vanpooling. The NEC listened more about what other communities and groups are doing to encourage use of more efficient modes of transportation (i.e., walking, biking, carpooling and vanpooling)

The group is interested in coordinating another Ride the Bus to Work Week this fall/winter, a big part of how the Group plans to use the Go! Vermont funds from the grant.

In preparation, the group wants to learn other best practices or resources, how we could use to expand the local impact.

1. Explore and encourage Northfield schools to participate in the Way to Go! to School Challenge
2. Encourage Northfield High School to explore the September 27th Vermont Scrounge-Athon-- forming a group of 4-10 students to work with a mentor to improve upon a real-time transportation ap for student transportation (e.g., how do we make Go! Vermont's rideshare ap better for linking student ridesharing)?
3. Conduct a community transportation survey (Deb to provide template)
4. Schedule and participate in a Zoom call to learn the mechanics of how to use the Go! Vermont rideshare ap and Trip planner tools.
5. Request more copies of Go! Vermont resources for exhibit table at special events
6. Build a list serv to help organizers and volunteers to stay informed about special transportation events, walking Wednesdays, walking school buses, safe routes to school travel plans
7. Host a bicycle repair station (request from Local Motion to use Bike Smart trailer)
8. Engage the Northfield Electric to offer a similar electric assist bike rebate program to Northfield customers.
9. Explore South Burlington's "Penny for Paths" program for town meeting consideration.
10. Support businesses including Darn Tough Socks to address employee transportation challenges.

Group Questions:

- 1) *How are other towns/regions successfully raising awareness of public transit options?*
 - a. Middlebury Safe Routes to School and the Addison County Bike Walk group maintain a listserv of more than 100 to notify volunteers and decision-makers of happenings. Several walk/bike safety events happen annually, special rides, walk and roll to school days, and regular planning meetings represented by all modes and volunteer members and groups to help inform and make the community more friendly to all modes of transportation. Middlebury will be the site of the statewide Bike Walk Summit in May of 2020.
 - b. Upper Valley--Greater WRJ is active in breaking down barriers to riding transit, by mentoring folks on how to ride the bus. Campaign materials help reduce the uncertainty and unease about taking the bus.
 - c. Newport and St. Johnsbury Creative Workforce Solutions is actively working with area businesses to form new vanpools. Go! Vermont partnered with CWS to highlight a five year old vanpool and captured interviews of riders shown on public access television. Go! Vermont participates regularly in job fairs as a transportation consultant on where and how to ride the bus or find a carpooler. See sample poster developed in collaboration: Job Fair, commute assistance all in one.
 - d. Craftsbury hosted a community dinner and sustainable transportation presentation. The Energy Committee invited several surrounding town energy committee representatives. The Energy Committee with community representatives generated several ideas; hopes to secure an electric vehicle to take folks to appointments or shopping Wednesdays, like the GMT Community bus.

- 2) *What resources exist that we could use or re-create for Northfield?*
 - a. Several developed resources online at www.connectingcommuters.org under the Resources tab. Go! Vermont is available to help tailor resources for use by the Committee.

- 3) *What more can we learn about the Agile Mile app and how we could help get an uptick in usage for that tool?*
 - a. Deb will conduct a zoom meeting to learn the mechanics of Trip Planner and Rideshare ap tools.

- 4) *Are there any other solutions, resources, and ideas that you have and could share!*
 - a. Keep communications open with Go! Vermont staff and partners. Deb is available and on hand to assist.