



First Annual
Local Energy
Committees
Conference
June 20, 2009

Track #2: Session 2
Built to Last – Anatomy of a Resilient LEC

Montpelier, Vermont Energy
Committee Story
Cheryl King Fischer

Session #2: Maintaining a Productive LEC

- You've formed your Local Energy Committee and have had a few enthusiastic brainstorming sessions – now you're having trouble getting traction or results. These are realities of any civic organization. This session designed to continue the work of Session #1 will hit this reality head on with tools for:
 - > ***Developing an inclusive mission statement***
 - > ***Running a good meeting (include Right to Know)***
 - > ***Building strong partnerships with municipal staff/committees***
 - > ***Setting reasonable goals and managing expectations***
 - > ***Impact of HB189 on state support for LECs***

Montpelier Energy Committee Accomplishments - 2005 to Present

- Organized the committee
- City Joined ICLEI
- Community Greenhouse Gas Inventory
- Citywide Energy Summit – 12 Actions Teams formed
- Three Action Teams implemented their strategies, two others adopted a different strategy, but moved their topic forward
- City in middle of master planning process – calling now upon the Energy Team to help develop the Energy plan component.

Community Energy Summit

March 5, 2007

TWELVE ACTION TEAMS FORMED

1. BIKES
2. COMPOST COMPADRES
3. DISTRICT ENERGY
4. ENERGY COOPERATIVE
5. GREEN BUILDING ORDINANCE /CODE / INCENTIVE GROUP
6. GREEN BUILDING RETROFIT
7. GREENEST CITY IN USA
8. LIGHTBULBS
9. LOCAL ENERGY GENERATION
10. LOCAL FOOD
11. MONTPELIER TRANSPORTATION
12. REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION

Post Citywide Energy Meeting Realities

Each team left the meeting with the following established:

Point Person: Jon Budreski, jbudreski@solarworksinc.com

Team Goal: Establish a market for renewable products (i.e. B20) that are not widely available/accessible.

Initial Actions: Research B20 / Other Coops / Financing Options / Costs of Fuel Distribution / Invite Noatak (per Leigh).

Next Meeting: Thurs Mar 29th 530pm to 615pm at SolarWorks, 64 Main St., Montpelier

TWO YEARS LATER

1. **BIKES**
2. **COMPOST COMPADRES**
3. **DISTRICT ENERGY**
4. **ENERGY COOPERATIVE**
5. **GREEN BUILDING ORDINANCE /CODE / INCENTIVE GROUP**
6. **GREEN BUILDING RETROFIT – Wood Pellet Project**
7. **GREENEST CITY IN USA**
8. **LIGHTBULBS**
9. **LOCAL ENERGY GENERATION**
10. **LOCAL FOOD**
11. **MONTPELIER TRANSPORTATION**
12. **REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION**

What Montpelier's Energy Team did WRONG

- Did not establish a core leadership team
- First two years – no one would volunteer to be chair, instead had “defacto co-chairs”
- No formal process to define governance
- A core leadership team did not plan meetings or set tight agendas
- Great citywide Energy Summit, but little formal follow-up by the committee or its leadership
- Thought all 12 Action Teams would go forward
- People fell by the wayside – took their passions elsewhere.

Some Lessons Learned

Process is as Important as Projects

After Brainstorming:

- Establish Structure and general governance rules
- Have a strong leadership team willing to organize and steward meetings and projects
- Most volunteers will give time, do tasks, BUT THEY DO NOT WANT TO HAVE TO ORGANIZED OR DIRECT PROJECTS!!

More Lessons Learned

- Define the Purpose(s) of your Committee
- Okay to have a BHAG [BIG HAIRY AUDACIOUS GOAL_(S)] but establish priorities
- Don't need a mission statement, but do need shared goals
- Develop specific strategies and tactics for each priority/project then form sub-committees to move each idea forward

Some More Lessons

- Do one project at a time UNLESS you have volunteers willing to take full responsibility for organizing and overseeing different projects

Inclusive Mission Statements for LECs

**New Hampshire Handbook on Energy
Efficiency and Climate Change**

Go to

<http://www.carboncoalition.org/community/EnergyCommitteesResources.php>

**Click on the Energy Committee Guide
download and go to page 12 for model
mission or purpose statements**

“There go my people...Guess I
must follow” Pogo????

Sharing the Responsibility of Leadership

- “There are different leaders for different purposes. We have to retain some ability to move and to be flexible. We can’t presume current leaders will be future leaders. Someone may be a leader on issue X, not on issue Y, and then reemerge as leader on issue Z.”

Jim Abernathy, former Executive Director of the Environmental Support Center

Seven Tips for Working in Groups

1. Relationships between group members come first.
2. To Go Fast, It Helps to Go Slow.
3. Pay attention to the tension between what the full group may need and individual participants want.
4. Power dynamics are always present.
5. Every group develops a culture.
6. All groups progress through predictable and unavoidable phases.
7. Opportunities for groups reflection are necessary for learning and improvement.

Tips on Running a Good Meeting

- 1. Start on time**
- 2. Clarify roles and rules**
- 3. Follow the agenda**
- 4. Be fair but firm**
- 5. Keep it going – stick to times allotted and adjourn on time, *ALWAYS***
- 6. Summarize Agreements and Next Steps**
- 7. Thank your Committee**
- 8. Affirm Next Meeting**

Four Reasons Groups Stay Together

People and/or organizations participate in groups when they:

1. Feel they belong, are valued, able to contribute, receive real benefits and can affect outcomes.
2. Work toward goals they understand, believe in and have participated in creating.
3. Have clear and appropriate ways to make decisions and carry out the work.
4. Have adequate resources to sustain their work.