

South Burlington Energy Committee

August 25, 2026

The South Burlington Energy Committee held a regular meeting on Tuesday, August 25th in Room 301, 180 Market St. and by Zoom remote participation.

Members present: Jean Sebastien Chaulot, Steve Crowley (Chair), Ethan Goldman, Leendert Huisman, Fred Kosnitsky, MJ Reale (Vice-Chair),

Also present: Bettina Miguez (Climate Action Manager), Lou Bresee (Energy Project Manager),

Member of the public: none

Welcome and Agenda review

Comments and questions from the public not related to the agenda: none

Updates From Committee Members/Events and conferences attended:

Leendert attended Net Zero Fest - VEEP program has valuable educational materials about home insulation, but he is concerned about the continued promotion of wood burning as climate-neutral. He registered for the EAN network summit and a presentation proposal.

The group discussed the conflict between reducing greenhouse gases and replacing fossil fuels with renewables, with differing views about the pros and cons of transitioning from coal and oil to wood heating, like enhanced boiler heating systems.

Steve mentioned that there is an upcoming community leadership summit in Castleton on October 6th and some of the content is on building local resilience in the face of climate change. <https://www.vtrural.org/summit/>

Fred and Leendert are involved with Third Act VT.

Ethan attended a summer conference with the American Council for Energy Efficient Economy where they presented on a hybrid heat pump project with VGS and supported Chris Neme's presentation on the impact of the renewable heating ordinance in South Burlington. He explained that while there was interest in the ordinance, it may not effectively offset gas consumption in homes with hybrid systems, potentially due to swap over temperature issues with dual fuel systems. The team discussed next steps focusing on gathering information about heat pump installations in new homes and researching potential changes to the ordinance or code enforcement to improve effectiveness.

To do: Bettina asked Ethan to present more info on an upcoming SBEC meeting

The group also discussed battery technology and its potential applications, particularly in managing grid imbalances caused by increased renewable energy and electric vehicle adoption. They explored the challenges of battery implementation, including cost-effectiveness and fire safety concerns, while noting that Green Mountain Power is already leading several

battery storage initiatives in Vermont. The discussion concluded with consideration of South Burlington's potential role in battery pilot programs, focusing on identifying industrial accounts that could benefit from battery storage solutions and exploring how the city could support GMP's efforts through streamlined permitting and other measures.

Committee discussed the challenges of stabilizing new electric loads and mentioned that utility companies handle most of this planning internally, with limited city involvement required. They explored microgrids and emergency facility hardening as resilience measures, though noted South Burlington's low outage frequency makes it less suitable for highlighting these efforts.

Staff Reports:

Lou/Bettina provided updates on:

Advisory meeting that included Carrie, about EV charging in multi-unit buildings. GMP has a pilot project with level 1.5 chargers, one of the HOAs is in South Burlington, to see if the slower charging options may be sufficient for many users' needs. The consultant is currently working on policy recommendations and guides based on property inventory and ordinances, with a January deadline.

The building thermal implementation plan is being developed with community engagement activities planned for October, including focus groups and advisory meetings to determine priorities and draft edits.

There are two UVM LIHI grant applications, one focusing on energy code enforcement and another on a renewable diesel pilot program across the state.

Renewable diesel as a transition fuel - While it comes from biological materials like wood chips and plants, it's processed differently than traditional biodiesel and produces cleaner fuel with fewer CO2 emissions per kilogram. It was noted that South Burlington has not made any commitments regarding this initiative yet, as they are waiting to see what happens with the proposal. The discussion revealed that this would be a small pilot project using approximately 50,000 gallons annually, with a grant potentially covering the higher cost per gallon and student analysis of economics and viability.

FY 27 Energy Committee Workplan

Here is the link:
<https://www.southburlingtonvt.gov/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Item/4807?fileID=6654>

Committee discussed 4 work plan items:

Pilot outreach to landlords - this project is on hold because there is a new Assistant City Manager who will be involved.

Renewable heating and hot water ordinance - Ordinance requires new construction to have 85% of human load served by renewable heat, with resistance electric heat being

unacceptable. The group discussed a current exemption for commercial hot water systems that expires in June 2027, and they agreed to form a stakeholder group to evaluate whether the exemption should be extended. The Energy Committee was tasked with identifying stakeholders and conducting research to make a recommendation to council by April or May.

For the hot water issue, it was proposed convening a small group to work on recommendations for the city council, potentially involving Efficiency Vermont for assistance. The discussion included concerns about inspection processes and thermostat access, with suggestions that they should first understand current inspection practices before proposing new requirements.

To do: Start in October 2026 by forming a subcommittee and connect with Efficiency VT.

Link to ordinance:
https://library.municode.com/vt/south_burlington/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTIICOR_CH38UT_ARTICLE._VIIHESEWAHESY

CAP transportation implementation plan - there are shared transportation options and noted that the Energy Committee was more interested in tackling this topic than the Bike/Ped committee.

This can include the CATMA project.

The discussion included Local Motion regarding bike benefits for South Burlington, noting that administration has shifted and there's potential for joint territory coverage. Bettina mentioned that Ilona (Community Development Director) and Andy (Communications Director) are leading a bus riding campaign; Keith was invited to learn about the initiative that will launch in October/November and will need EC member outreach support.

Commercial energy audits??

Committee members decided to move on to next agenda items based on time.

Green Community Festival Update

Upcoming Green Community Festival, which will feature 35-40 exhibitors, 9-10 civic groups, and four paid sponsors. The committee discussed volunteer needs for the festival, including setup, staffing information tables, and traffic direction, with members committing to 4-hour shifts during the event. They also reviewed materials for the festival booth, deciding to focus on balcony solar and resilient adaptation content rather than window heat pumps due to market availability concerns.

Approval of June Meeting Minutes - MJ moved to accept and Fred seconded. Approved unanimously by the group.

Approval of amended July Meeting Minutes - Fred moved to accept and Jean Sebastian seconded. Approved unanimously by the group.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 pm. Next meeting is September 23, 2026.