

**Mount Ascutney Regional
TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Meeting Minutes of February 22, 2023

A meeting of the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) was held via Zoom and in-person at 6:00 pm.

Attendance

TAC members present: Kristi Morris, Springfield; Wayne Wheelock, Baltimore; John Saydek, Cavendish; Diane Foulds, Windsor; Eric and Barbara Bye, at-large

Others present: Otis Munroe, MARC; Tiana Smith, Green Mountain Power (GMP)

Kristi Morris opened the meeting at 6:00 pm.

1. Welcome and Introductions

All present members of the TAC and guests introduced themselves.

2. Green Mountain Power Electrification and Sustainability Programs

Tiana began by providing some background information and data on GMP's energy supply and on Vermont emissions. Vermont has the cleanest electricity in the U.S., making electrification here all the more beneficial. VT utilities don't make money off of kWh sales so electrification isn't profit-driven.

Tiana then reviewed GMP's electrification programs. GMP provides electric vehicle (EV) rebates, free level 2 chargers, and EV charging electric rates. For businesses, GMP provides EV charger and fleet electrification incentives. GMP is in the process of electrifying its own fleet including some of the heavier duty vehicles. GMP is putting fast chargers up at their district offices, including Springfield, for their own fleet that are also open to the public. In addition to its EV programs, GMP provides energy storage (aka home battery) programs. There are currently 20 MW of energy storage distributed across GMP's customer base. This helps control peak usage and therefore cost and emissions. Home energy storage also serves as a backup during storms. A newer development allows EVs to also serve as energy storage – called bidirectional charging. For example, the F-150 lightning is the equivalent of 10 Tesla power walls. Diane asked how long a home battery can power a home during power outages. It depends on usage, for ordinary usage it lasts six hours but when only powering critical loads it can last days.

Next, Tiana discussed GMP's resilience programs. GMP aims to implement resiliency zones in three communities per year. Communities are identified using the CDC social vulnerability index and GMP outage data. Each project is different and have included microgrids, home battery storage, and community battery storage.

Diane asked about upcoming EV charging funding and programs. In April a state program that makes \$7 million available for community benefit, multifamily, and workplace charging projects will roll out. The funding mostly for level 2 chargers but also includes six fast chargers. Barbara asked about the life expectancy of EV batteries. EV Batteries are designed to last 500,000 miles after which they are repurposed for large battery energy storage as are home energy storage batteries. Kristi asked about grid resiliency. GMP has four resilience strategies: storm hardening, undergrounding, home energy storage, and microgrids.

3. Changes to the Agenda

None.

3. Approval of Minutes

Wayne Wheelock made a motion to approve the January 25th minutes. Second by Diane Foulds. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Updates and Announcements

Kristi shared an update on recent legislative activity. The House Committee on Environment and Energy has been considering bills on the household hazardous waste program, land conservation, and bottle redemption. The state is looking for 500 volunteers to test their wells for PFAS. The home heating bill will arrive in the House after March. The family leave bill is still in the works in the House.

Otis shared that the VTrans Project Selection and Prioritization Process (VPSP2) will not take place in its usual form this year. Inflation has seriously impacted budgets and funding does not go as far as it was hoped. More information will be forthcoming.

Public meetings on the VTrans Carbon Reduction Strategy will be held on March 23rd at 12:00PM and 6:00PM.

The spring road foreman meeting will be on Wednesday, March 29th from 9:00 – 11:00AM. Jim Ryan from the Division of Environmental Conservation (DEC) will be presenting on the new iteration of the Municipal Roads General Permit.

Complete Streets reporting is due February 28th.

MARC is starting to work on an EV Charging Plan. The focus will be on where the region and its towns would like to see new EV chargers. Barbara suggested hospitals and the North Springfield Industrial Park. Diane raised issues Windsor had in garnering interest among housing providers in the last round of multi-family charging grants.

The CT River Joint Commission (CRJC) is running a series on climate migration.

5. Future agenda items & next meeting date

- a. Next meeting: March 22, 2022.
- b. Topic: TBD

9. Adjourn

Wayne Wheelock made a motion to adjourn. Second by Diane Foulds. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm.