

Stowe Energy Committee: March 24, 2022 Minutes

DRAFT

Present: Catherine Crawley, Elizabeth Soper, Scott Weathers, Marina Meerburg, Rick Weinstein, Sarah Evans

Meeting called to order at: 5:30 p.m.

Review & Approve Minutes

The Board reviewed the minutes of February 24, 2022. There were no changes.

On a motion by Marina Meerburg, seconded by Rick Weinstein, the Committee approved the minutes as presented.

Working Group Reports

Transportation Subcommittee: Marina reported that she had spoken with Rob Moore of Lamoille County Planning Commission. She discussed the current traffic concerns on Route 108 in Stowe, and noted that any "fix" should be energy efficient, and that a bigger parking lot is not the answer as it will not reduce the amount of vehicles on the road and emissions. She strongly suggested electric busses or commuter parking. It was noted that there has been much discussion on Front Porch Forum with some community members who had great ideas that should be followed up on. It was reported that the Selectboard and Town staff are monitoring the discussions and thinking about options, and it was suggested that the subcommittee reach out to Charles Safford, Town Manager to keep them in the loop in any discussions on transportation.

Town Energy Plan

The Committee recently met with the Planning Commission to discuss the Town Energy Plan and how best to incorporate it into the overall Town Plan to make it stronger on energy conservation. The Committee discussed removing references specific to electric energy and focus instead on renewable or sustainable energy, particularly in section 12. They also discussed a town ordinance to implement solar-ready buildings for all new construction by 2030.

On a motion by Sarah Evans, seconded by Marina, the Committee approved the changes made based on feedback from the Planning Commission discussion. These changes will be sent to Mila Lonetto, Planning Commission chair, and Sarah McShane, Planning and Zoning Director for next steps.

Committee Charge

Catherine updated the group that currently the Board is comprised of seven members, with one of those members being a high school student, Sarah Evans. Sarah is graduating this year and will not renew her term on the Energy Committee, but it has been suggested that her seat be designated in the Committee Charge as a reserved seat for a student at Stowe High School. Sarah will work with Catherine to try to recruit a youth from SHS to replace her on the committee.

On a motion by Elizabeth, seconded by Marina, the Committee approved the inclusion in the Committee Charge for the Stowe Energy Committee one reserved seat for a Stowe High School Student.

The committee also discussed adding a section to the Committee Charge on budget, which is currently \$2,000 per year. It was discussed that the amount given to the Committee is to be allocated by the Selectboard in their annual budgeting process, but that there should be a statement on accepting those funds and how to use them.

On a motion by Marina, seconded by Sarah, the Committee approved language in the Stowe Energy Committee Charge stating that the Committee will use funds allocated annually by the Town of Stowe budget to fulfill its charge. All spending will be done through the municipal staff as assigned in accordance with Town of Stowe policies.

Other Business

The Committee thanked Sarah for her service to the Town and the Committee over the last two years, and will be meeting in person in April to celebrate her.

Catherine noted that she had followed up with the Town of Hyde Park on Window Dressers project and let them know that the SEC will support their project but would want Hyde Park to take the lead, and she is waiting to hear back.

Catherine also noted that she recently met with Charles Safford to discuss potential spending of ARPA funding, which Charles indicated will be put into the General Fund surplus at this point. Marina suggested using ARPA funding to convert the Nichols campground into a commuter parking lot. Sarah suggested using funding to help the Stowe High School convert to LED lighting. Both ideas were discussed as possibly being presented to Charles and/or the Selectboard.

Catherine also reminded the Board of the upcoming Energy Incentive Webinar hosted by Lamoille County Planning Commission on March 31st.

On a motion by Marina, seconded by Elizabeth, the meeting was adjourned at 6:30 p.m.