

Stowe Energy Committee: April 28, 2022 Minutes

Present: Catherine Crawley, Elizabeth Soper, Scott Weathers, Rick Weinstein, Sarah Evans, Cap Chenoweth

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

Review & Approve Minutes

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

On a motion by Rick Weinstein, seconded by Liz Soper, the Committee approved the minutes as presented.

Amended Committee Charge

Catherine reported that the Selectboard approved the changes to the Energy Committee Charge at their 4/11/22 meeting. This included the designation of one seat on the committee for a Stowe High School Student, as well as having a budget for the committee, which for FY'23 will be \$2,000.

Sarah noted that the student position had been advertised in the local paper, at the school and through newsletters and promoted at the Environmental Club.

Working Group Reports

Transportation Subcommittee: Marina was not at the meeting but Catherine relayed that Marina had met with Mila Lonetto, Chair of the Planning Commission, and Sarah McShane, Planning and Zoning Director, and other stakeholders to discuss combining efforts with the Planning Commission's subcommittee on Transportation.

On a motion by Liz Soper, seconded by Sarah Evans, the Committee approved working with the Planning Commission Subcommittee on Transportation.

Electric Vehicle Experience

Tim Zeigler joined the Committee via Zoom to share his experience with having electric vehicles and charging them at home. He noted that using Vermont and Stowe Electric incentives his children were both able to purchase EVs. However, in order to fully charge the vehicles at home, they would have had to install a 240amp service line to their home, which would include a new panel and breaker. The cost for this installation was cost prohibitive, so they have opted to use a "trickle charge" on a regular outlet, which gives 30 miles of charge over 5 hours of charging. A full charge would require 20 hours. They often utilize the fast chargers at The Alchemist, which cost approximately \$5 for an 80% charge. Mr. Zeigler expressed concern that if it is cost prohibitive for people to charge at home, it will get more difficult to find open chargers in town as more people switch to EVs. This is compounded when tourists are driving up EVs and needing to find places to charge them while in town. Overall Mr. Zeigler reported that the experience of driving EVs was positive, if a learning experience. He said that having more stability in pricing of electricity vs. fossil fuel was an advantage. He also discussed the importance of researching where to charge your EV before purchasing, such as at a workplace. Stowe Electric offers incentives to businesses who install charging stations. Scott raised the concern that renters are at a disadvantage because they cannot install chargers in rental units. Catherine noted that they are working on updating the Town Energy Plan to require new buildings and apartments to be fitted for charging stations.

The committee thanked Mr. Zeigler for sharing his experience and discussed how best to share experiences like this with the wider community. Rick Weinstein said that he would work on an article for the Stowe Reporter. The possibility of holding a community meeting/webinar on local EV-owner experience was also suggested.

E-Bike Demo Day

Cap updated the committee, stating that he had talked with three of the five bike shops in Town about doing one day of demos with dealers and reps present. He discussed using the Mayo Events Field and will look into availability and the process for using the field.

Town Energy Plan

Catherine noted that she had sent the committee-approved Town Energy Plan revisions to Mila Lonetto, chair of the Planning Commission, and that they will be waiting until the Planning Commission is ready to take them up as part of updates for the overall Town Plan. Catherine said she would work on keeping the lines of communication open with the Planning Commission.

Other Business

Catherine updated the committee on the Window Dressers project with Hyde Park, which the Committee had agreed to support but not take the lead on. At this time Hyde Park Energy Committee has tabled this project due to lack of capacity.

Sarah gave an update on her work at Stowe High School, noting that she was working with the Facilities Director to try to upgrade the lighting to LED, but estimates were quite expensive due to the lights needing to be re-wired. Catherine encouraged Sarah to take the issue to the School Board and see if they were willing to back the investment, and to bring data on overall usage cost reductions, etc. Sarah also stated that she was working with the internship director to make internships with UVM focused on renewable energy available to Stowe High School students.

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