

Stowe Energy Committee Meeting Minutes
5:30 pm August 26, 2021

Meeting (in-person and Zoom) called to order at 5:37 pm

Present: Catherine Crawley, Elizabeth Sopher, Cap Chenoweth, Scott Weathers, Marina Meerburg, Richard Weinstein, Michael Lazorchak (Stowe Electric), Chris Jolly (Town of Stowe)

Absent: No committee members absent

Item 1: Cap moved to approve the minutes from the previous meeting with a 2nd from Rick. Approved unanimously (Marina abstained as she was not at previous meeting).

Item 2: Energy Audits Project – Application has been submitted to and received by Vermont Council for Rural Development (VCRD). This program will provide free energy audits to businesses through Efficiency VT. Anecdotally there is high demand within the program, with \$20k available and appx. \$75k in applications submitted to VCRD. If Stowe Energy Committee is awarded one of the available grants (\$1,000), the grant money would be used to purchase gift certificates to Stowe businesses. Business who participate in the free energy audit will become eligible for a raffle for a chance to win one of the gift certificates. Brief discussion on what an outreach campaign might look like. SAA is a valuable resource to engage, but not all business are SAA members. FPF, Town Website, Town email list serve are other available options to spread the message. Word on whether SEC is awarded the grant may come as early as next week, but the program will not be implemented until November so as to accommodate businesses' busy period surrounding foliage.

Item 3: Affordable Housing Proposal – SEC is in support of the affordable housing project on Maple Street that is scheduled to be discussed at the 9-13-21 selectboard meeting. It is unclear whether the SB will make a motion in regards to this project at their 9-13-21 meeting, but SEC will have a letter of support for this initiative that is addressed to the SB. The letter of support is currently in draft form and there is a strong desire within the SEC to approve a letter of support and present it to the SB prior to their vote on the project. Catherine will touch base with Charles Monday to gauge when the SB will make a motion and vote on their support of the affordable housing project and timing and deadlines associated with getting this letter of support to the SB. Given the SEC is uncertain of what the SB's formal course of action may or may not be at their 9-13-21 meeting, Liz moved for the SEC to defer their comment on and completion of the letter of support until a later meeting. Scott seconded. All in favor.

Item 4: E-Lawn Tools – Currently Parks Dept is using an electric string trimmer and push mower in the village and on maple street. Parks staff enjoys the quiet and ability to be more aware of their surroundings but is not happy with the cost or performance of the

batteries, only getting appx. 2 hr of run time per battery. In contrast, Dave Hammond (City of Burlington) has indicated that they just purchased their 2nd 60" commercial ride-on mower and they have been very satisfied with their performance and have found ways to manage the battery life and work a charge stop into their crew's day to get appx. 7 hrs of mowing time per day. The Town has four commercial mowers up for purchase in the near future and the SEC would like to see a Town policy for purchasing electric mowers. Cap to run a cost-comparison of the purchase price and operating costs associated with gas vs electric commercial ride-on mowers with data to be provided by Chris.

Item 5: IPCC report and town resiliency. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has released their 6th Assessment Report and outlook is grim – climate change is “widespread, rapid and intensifying.” Discussion ensued: SEC considered the need for and interest in a community action plan, a request to the selectboard to do more and the need to be more proactive at the town level, including the possibility of hiring a consultant to develop a climate action plan for the town. SEC discussed the need to identify the town's vulnerabilities in the face of climate change and the need to identify ways to be more resilient. Burlington and Montpelier have local climate action plans and they might be willing to join an upcoming SEC meeting to discuss what their respective communities are doing. Shelly Martin (LTS experts) grew up in Stowe and might be interested in discussing the SEC's concerns and options in addressing climate change.

Item 6: Other business –

- 9-3-21 (12:00) is efficiency VT's video testimonial of “Buttoned Up VT”
- Budget FY 23: the SEC will have a budget under the Public Works Dept in the proposed FY 23 Budget. SEC needs to provide description and details to Charles by 11-9-21
- Planning Commission is looking for volunteers – interested individuals should touch base with Meela by 9-1-21.

A motion was made to adjourn by Marina. Seconded by Cap. All voted in favor.

Meeting adjourned 7:05 pm