

Stowe Energy Committee Minutes; Thursday, February 25th, 2021,
5:30 pm

Present: Tom Jackman, Catherine Crawley, Liz Soper, Sarah Evans, Cap Chenowith, Rick Weinstein, Marina Meerburg, Michael Lazorchak (Guest- Stowe Electric), Denise Greene (Guest- Hyde Park Energy Committee), and Steven Wisbaum (Guest- Eco-Equipment Supply)

Absent: Scott Weathers

Catherine called the meeting to order at 5:34 pm

Minutes: January minutes were approved unanimously.

Discussion on Eco-friendly Equipment for Commercial Lawn Care and Landscaping with guest Steven Wisbaum (Eco-Equipment Supply, Charlotte, VT):

In a slideshow, Steven Wisbaum explained the benefits of eco-friendly lawn equipment and how it reduces greenhouse gas emissions. He noted that mowing 40 million acres of grass in the US results in an estimated 54 billion pounds of CO₂. In Vermont, an estimated 3 million pounds of CO₂ is emitted from seasonal mowing. Wisbaum shared information about different e-mowers and also handheld e-lawn care tools, including string trimmers, leaf blowers, hedge and pole trimmers, and chainsaws. Wisbaum spoke about the various incentives that Vermont's utilities offer to help purchase electric equipment. Wisbaum also described cultural and institutional barriers to the adoption of e-equipment and ways to overcome them.

Wisbaum also described a new *MowElectric!* Campaign. The Towns of Bristol and Rochester have already expressed an interest in signing on.

The Committee is going to explore the campaign further and consider ways we can introduce eco-friendly lawn equipment to Stowe.

Raise the Blade campaign with Denise Greene, Chair, Hyde Park Energy Committee:

A campaign that Hyde Park Energy Committee is pursuing to cut back on mowing and to encourage regenerative agriculture by encouraging residents to not cut under 3 inches. More information is available at lawntolake.org

Liz suggested another option would be to convert lawns to meadows. A master gardener Denise explained how she advises residents about how to do this with their lawns. Catherine mentioned combining forces with HEC and bringing the Raise the Blade initiative to Stowe.

Project Updates:

E-Bikes– Need to confirm with Scott about the liability insurance form Scott signed in reference to hosting e-bikes in Stowe this summer.

School– Confirming a meeting time with science teachers and Michael Lazorchak.

Stonybrook Condos– Catherine went to Stonybrook Condos to view energy audits underway, and she furthered discussion around getting the word out to other condo associations/apartment buildings about weatherization incentives. Catherine noted that this month's Stowe Reporter Energy Column focused on the success of the weatherization project at Stonybrook

Policies– Rick shared that Dept. of Public Service CEP (Comprehensive Energy Plan) will be published by January 2022, and in the past Energy Committees were involved in previous CEPs.

Town Energy Plan. We ran out of time to discuss and will take it up at a future meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 6:51 pm.

Next meeting is on March 25th at 5:30 pm via Zoom.