

Stowe Energy Committee Minutes

October 28,2021

Present: Cap Chenoweth, Marina Meerburg, Liz Soper, Catherine Crawley, Scott Weathers, Rick Weinstein and Michael Lazorchak

Absent: Sarah Evans

Guests: Meghan Rodier and Melanie Riddle, LCPC

Marina made motion to approve minutes, Scott seconded, minutes were approved by full committee

Project Updates

Button up continues through October. Committee participated by sharing information via FPF

Free Energy Audit Walkthroughs: Jen from Efficiency Vermont joined via Zoom. Starts on Tuesday, 11-2. Have pretty good amount of appointments but need more specifically on 11/3 and 11/10. Scott asked committee members to make one last pitch to get other businesses on board. Presently there are 8 businesses participating. Ad in paper this week. Scott will participate in one audit week of 11/8 and take pictures. Will report back in November meeting on project.

Mow Electric: Catherine and Cap will present on 11/8 at Selectboard meeting. Committee was asked to review document that will be presented. Need to correct the cost from 3.5K to 35K. Committee felt it was important to have Bruce Godin at Selectboard meeting. Charles should ask Bruce to be there. Committee also felt there should be a recommendation that all town lawn tools should be electric. Marina made motion to approve document, Liz seconded, document approved. Catherine will send to Charles tomorrow.

Budget Priorities: Committee was asked to approve another document that included priorities for 2023 budget. Committee will have a 2K budget. Cap made a motion to approve document, Marina seconded, document approved. Catherine will send to Charles tomorrow.

Strategic Planning: Melanie and Megan from the Lamoille County Planning Commission(LCPC) joined the Committee meeting to speak to planning. Stowe already has an enhance energy plan. Question was whether or not we wanted to develop a Climate Action Plan such as other towns have created. LCPC has some funding this year to support towns on specifically implementation – such as helping us to run workshops. Melanie suggested that since Stowe already has an enhanced Energy Plan that the Committee should take a closer look at that plan, review other town Climate plans and see if we can incorporate more climate specifics into implementation of actions. Suggested we pick one or two specifically to work on. Was noted that Stowe's Town Plan was adopted in 2015 and the process for updating will probably start soon. Lamoille County regional plan also being updated over the next year. Opportunity for Committee to add more on climate. As well State Climate Action plan will be out in December. We could also use to enhance communication and education to citizens.

Liz indicated that the concept of Stowe having a Climate Action plan was more a statement of commitment. That the town is committed to the work of carbon reduction and putting money and capacity towards this. Also communicating with citizens.

Marina indicated that we need to show that Stowe has made a difference on the climate front. Believes that commuter parking would be something we could get traction on. Need to find way to cut down traffic in town, reduce cars heading to mountain, etc..... LCPC suggested doing a public workshop on transportation.

It was suggested that we go through current Energy Plan and determine status of each action. Michael could help with this.

Michael indicated one thing Stowe Electric could look into was siting an electric bus in Stowe. Suggested we work on tangible easy goals that can then lead to movement on bigger projects.

Committee decided to continue this conversation at November meeting. LCPC willing to continue to attend and provide some support. Catherine will resend Energy plan and Climate Action plans as homework for next meeting.

Other business:

Update on Incentives: Michael reported out that incentives for the coming year will be very similar to last years. Cold climate heat pumps are being targeted at low income – tough in Stowe since most low-income folks rent. Need to be a Stowe Electric customer to actually get incentives. Most people come to SE for heat pump incentives. Very few EV's or electric bikes. Committee needs to do more to promote and get word out.

Next meeting will be on November 18 vs. 25th which is Thanksgiving.

Cap wants to speak at next meeting about his conversations with bike shops regarding E-bike initiative and as well provide a short tutorial to Committee on Cold Climate Heat Pumps.