

Stowe Energy Committee Minutes

November 30, 2023

Draft

Present: Catherine Crawley, Elizabeth Soper, Marina Meerburg, Cap Chenoweth, Robi Artman-Hodge, Julia Biedermann

Visitors: SED Wendy Crosier _____, SED Michael Lazorchak

Catherine called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

Review/approve Minutes of 10/26/23

Marina Meerburg made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Robi Artman-Hodge. Motion carried.

Window Dressers Community Build Recap

Wendy said it was a pleasure working with Cap and Catherine along with people of the community and it was the biggest build that Window Dressers has ever had with 263 orders already for next year. It is a huge accomplishment and she said it is on its way to becoming an annual event. She will be developing a guide to fine tune the project for the future. Catherine said it would be interesting to get facts about the product ie – longevity, durability etc. Wendy said the quick answer was up to seven years. She said there are creative ways to sustain the life of the inserts and they are working together with the engineer students at UVM on these ideas.

The committee thanked Wendy for all her involvement and direction with the Window Dresser project.

Catherine congratulated Michael and his team for obtaining a grant from the VT Art Council and asked Michael to speak about that and also how the Committee can help with the SED Micro Grid Project in Moscow Village.

Michael outlined the details for the project.

Survey

Catherine thanked Liz for putting together the initial report draft and recommendations. Liz said the survey result graphs are a good way to show the results. She said there would be better time spent on the key issues and recommendations that the Committee would like to bring to the Selectboard and public. Liz said the key energy issue which came out was transportation. She reviewed the percentage results of this issue. Catherine said she didn't feel it was necessary to further review more of the draft since they all had time to do so. Cap asked if there should be action items added to the report. Marina

agreed and said the Committee would have to follow up at some point. There was discussion regarding suggestions to alleviate the transportation issue such as a commuter/visitor parking area outside the village and ways to alleviate the high school circulation issue. Catherine said it would be difficult to mandate action based on the limited number of respondents but it was still important to show the five key points that came out of the survey. Liz said the survey was important to the Committee to find out what issues the respondents were interested in and focus on those issues and transportation was definitely one of those issues.

Marina made a motion to approve the report as written to the Selectboard as presented and forward with a note that the Committee is available for further discussion. Liz seconded the motion. All in favor.

Catherine thanked Liz for working on the report.

Schools

Julia in speaking with the leaders of the environmental student group said they were interested in improving the insulation in the school building. She said there is a lot of wasted energy in the building and it was a good topic of discussion for the students. Julia noted that even though the bond vote did not pass, there are still things that need to be changed in SMHS and the idea of these changes should not be forgotten.

There was discussion whether the Energy Committee should reach out to the School Board after the failed vote since there were still items that required attention. Liz said she had sent to the School Board a tool kit designed for school boards from a group called Undaunted which is trying to get schools to be more energy efficient – weatherization, solar, etc. The toolkit shows and gives ideas in ways in which schools can raise money and other avenues to assist. Catherine asked if the Committee was interested in drafting a letter to the school board encouraging the board to revisit the bond issue and continue to look into important capital energy improvements such as weatherization, etc. Liz suggested to Julia that the students could also possibly bring the tool kit to the school board to have a conversation as well. There was consensus for Catherine to draft the letter. The Committee thanked Julia for bringing the topic to their attention.

Municipal Energy Resilience Program

Catherine provided updates to this grant program. First, Chris Jolly reported that all the paperwork has been submitted for the Level 2 grant and assessments and that the Town was waiting to see which consultants would be assigned to the Town. Also, Tori at Lamoille County Planning Commission said the statewide assessments are rolling out slower than anticipated and predicting January for Stowe.

The \$500,000 implementation grant is still undergoing internal approvals and is not open at this time. The Committee reiterated that it will work with the Town and LCPC to apply for the grant.

Other Business

Committee has been invited to the community party at Spruce Peak on Dec. 6th.

Reminder that the 16th annual Vermont Energy Climate Action Network Conference is next week.

Marina made a motion to cancel the December meeting. Next meeting Jan. 25 seconded by Liz. Motion carried.