

Sharon Energy Committee

Remote Access Meeting

Monday, August 24<sup>th</sup>, 2020 @ 05:15 PM

2020-08-24 17:15

**Draft Minutes**

*This meeting was held through teleconference and in compliance with the Vermont Open Meeting Law for electronic participation.*

Energy Committee members attending: Dee Gish, Ryan Haac, and Jill Wilcox

Guests present: Ana Mejia (Vital Communities)

Children present: Sol Antonio

Ryan called the meeting together at 17:17 (5:17 PM).

1. **Public comment period**: No comments.

2. **Approve previous meeting minutes**

Wednesday, May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020 (2020-05-27 17:00) and Monday, July 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020 (2020-07-27 17:15) minutes approved by Dee, seconded by Jill.

3. **Mobile Home Energy Savings Project**

Ana provided an overview of the program that Vital Communities (“VC”) is running this fall/winter. She pointed out that mobile homes are (particularly older ones) are not energy efficient and are expensive to heat in the winter. Further, according to a recent survey in Vermont, almost  $\frac{3}{4}$  of mobile homeowners (in Vermont) were designated as low income (i.e. 80% or lower than the area median income). As a result, these folks typically have a very high energy burden, that is, energy expenses are a large portion of their income.

VC is providing reimbursement to weatherize mobile homes and also testing the effectiveness of roof insulation and insulated skirting of mobile homes, with COVER providing the labor and on the ground expertise.

The program piloted in Springfield and Hartford last year. Knocking on doors was a success (prior to the pandemic) in Springfield; a virtual campaign was piloted with Hartford; outreach materials and best practices were developed. There is an AmeriCrops VISTA member to help with this project at VC.

Program structure: Postcards will be sent to residents to introduce the program. This will then be followed with a direct mailing that provides information and offers for direct engagement (e.g., Q&A webinar, informal information sessions). The EC can also offer help to participants with their applications to get work completed or direct assistance. Also, we may be able to extend the audience by reaching out to Capstone to have them directly mail out the brochure to their members/participants to notify them about other programs that would benefit that audience.

Although the goal is to sign up for weatherization services, another goal of the program is to make sure that folks who are eligible are aware of fuel assistance, which can directly reduce their individual energy burden. Training for the program would begin this summer and outreach would span through the fall.

Ana left the meeting and the EC members discussed their participation and ultimately decided to participate, with Ryan serving as the point person. Jill agreed to reach out to Hartford's EC to get some direct feedback about the virtual program.

#### **4. Intermunicipal Regional Energy Coordinator ("IREC") update**

Ryan explained that Geoff Martin started in the IREC on August 17<sup>th</sup> and has hit the ground running. With the help of Town staff, Ryan has collected documents and information on the status of Town buildings and their related energy expenses for Geoff to collect, analyze, and draw up action items around. More to come next month as the position progresses.

#### **5. Legislative update from Jill**

Jill informed us that the VT Legislature returns this week – they have to pass the State's budget in 5 to 6 weeks. The Global Warming Solution Act is also on their plate. The Senate approved the House bill but removed the funding mechanism, so now it goes back to the Senate to draft the comprehensive bill. The Town of Sharon sent a letter to the Governor in support of the bill back in June. The Senate is setting up a working group of farmers to discuss regenerative agriculture. Jill also mentioned S337, which deals with expanding Efficiency Vermont's mandate from a utility whose goal is to decrease electricity to one that can also help decrease our reliance on fossil fuels. Also in the works is a workforce development bill that has sections for bringing working professionals up to speed with climate.

#### **6. Other Business**

Ryan mentioned that he received confirmation from the library that the shared thermal imaging camera lending program can proceed. He will get the materials together and transfer them to the library, as well as write an entry in the library's newsletter to notify the library community directly.

#### **7. Next meeting: Monday September 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020 @ 5:15 PM (2020-09-28 17:15).**

Ryan adjourned the meeting at 6:19 PM.