

Sharon Energy Committee

Remote Access Meeting

Monday, April 26th, 2020 @ 05:30 PM

2021-04-26 17:30

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.

Ryan called the meeting together at 17:36 (5:36 PM).

1. **Public Comment Period**

No public. No comments.

2. **Approve previous meeting minutes**

Last two meetings minutes approved: 2021-02-22 17:15; 2021-03-22 17:15

3. **Intermunicipal Regional Energy Coordinator updates**

Ryan provided an update on his work with the IREC and the other Towns involved. Audits of Town buildings were completed in April. We should expect an overview report soon from EEI, providing existing building performance, “low hanging fruit,” and a list of potential options (with financials) for projects for the Town’s consideration.

Ryan continued that the first WRVSU Energy Committee meeting occurred in April. The school district is going to be looking into auditing energy use and seeking opportunities for renewable energy production to cover their electricity consumption. Geoff’s involvement in the group is supported through the IREC program by all IREC towns in the district, as well as directly by TRORC.

Ryan explained that the IREC committee members have been considering how the group and our towns can have a broad and meaningful impact in addressing climate change in our communities beyond adoption of renewable energy and energy efficiency measures. He clarified that the IREC committee collectively understands our fiscal commitments to our Towns (to ultimately saving money through reducing energy expenses). Unfortunately, current social and economic paradigms do not apply a fiscal value to carbon that is drawn down out of the atmosphere through ecological services, but we have begun to think about how our regional group can have an impact in this area.

4. **Sharon Town Plan – Energy Chapter updates**

Ryan and Dee attended a fruitful special Planning Commission meeting in April to discuss language and renewable energy siting policies in the Energy Chapter. At the meeting, the Planning Commission members suggested that the most effective way to

direct siting was to limit the size and scale of projects and steer development toward areas that are already cleared and close to infrastructure. If approved by the Town, the Energy Chapter will be “Enhanced Energy Plan” compliant. The draft continues being developed and should be completed by summer 2021.

5. **UV E-bike Library**

We discussed the options for a location to base the E-bikes that are coming to Sharon soon. The library and the elementary school were discussed as possible options but ultimately we agreed that due to the infrastructure available at the school, (pavilion, power, and potential places to store the bikes when they were not in use), the school was the best option. Ryan agreed to reach out to the school to gain permission. Ryan mentioned that we would need to set “shifts” for the weekend “Demo Day” periods, as well as for meeting folks in the afternoons some days during the week for the longer-term rentals. The weekend dates include: Saturday, June 5th, Sunday, June 6th, Saturday, June 12th, and Sunday, June 13th (morning - maybe).

6. **Legislative update from Jill**

Jill shared that the legislature continues through the budgeting process and there is also a lot of ongoing work on the Global Warming Solutions Act. Apparently the GWSA is mired in debate about if emissions outside of VT (consumption of energy in Vermont that was produced out of state) should be counted and how the metrics are measured. Essentially, they are having trouble figuring out the parameters and implementation. Also, there is a push to get more public input on the GWSA process– the original bill had not been structured well for public input.

7. **Real carbon solutions**

Ryan shared some of his recent experiences with dividing and propagating perennial plants and also planting a wide variety of food and habitat trees this spring. Jill shared that she was recently pleasantly surprised to find an old witch hazel bush she had planted long ago, hidden away in the woods.

8. **Other business**

Jill provided an update on our community tree-planting initiative. The Principal at SES was open to the idea of planting more food trees on the property, particularly along the interstate. She also talked to Eric Cornell, a local arboreal ally with expertise in food tree planting, propagation, and proliferation, and also Matt Moore, who has been doing educational work at the school in regard to planting and caring for trees. They all share the desire to develop education around tree planting at the school. They decided to postpone plantings until fall to allow more time for the idea to develop into a successfully implemented project. Besides, Jill said, it is good to plant nut trees in the fall.

We talked about Earth Day and Jill shared many great Earth Day “banner drops” that she was aware of from around the state.

9. Next meeting scheduled for Monday, May 24th, 2021 (2021-05-24 17:30)

Ryan adjourned the meeting at 6:31 PM.