

Sharon Energy Committee

Remote Access Meeting

Monday, May 24th, 2020 @ 05:30 PM

2021-05-24 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 17:38 (5:38 PM).

1. **Public Comment Period**

No public. No comments.

2. **Approve previous meeting minutes**

Last meeting minutes approved: 2021-04-26 17:15

3. **Intermunicipal Regional Energy Coordinator updates**

Ryan provided an update on his work with the IREC and the other Towns involved. The Steering Committee met with some representative of GMP to discuss the treatment of RECs and renewable energy goals. The meeting came about as we are poised to consider community solar arrays for our Towns and residents – we need to have a complete understanding of how the energy generated is treated so that the projects are represented accurately to those who wish to participate. That is – is the energy that is generated counted as renewable or is it simply part of the utility's electricity mix? The issue is that by not retaining RECs (1 REC = 1 MWh of renewable energy generation), they can be transferred to someone else (in a different state, for example). As a result, that renewable energy generation is not counted in Vermont toward our state's goals. Instead, it is counted in the other state, who did not have to invest in renewable energy generation themselves, thus allowing them to continue to rely on conventionally generated electricity (e.g., fossil fuel or nuclear, which have higher greenhouse gas emission or other risks associated with their continued use, respectively).

Generally, if you one opts to give their RECs to GMP, one cannot actually claim that they are using renewable energy – that claim has been transferred to the utility. The PUC has set the rate structure such that net metering projects are expected to transfer the RECs to GMP: the PUC has dis-incentivized individual projects from retaining the RECs produced by their own array). GMP explained the difference between *retaining* RECs and *retiring* RECs: RECs that are transferred from to GMP are retained by GMP and often retired. RECs that have been retired are “counted” directly as renewable energy. These credits have value on the energy marketplace and GMP sometimes sells them to improve their balance sheet once they have met their statutory renewable energy production. We were all generally on the same page as GMP, agreeing that accelerating

access to renewable energy was important. We left them considering that they have a very prominent seat at the table with the PUC and had the best chance of furthering the common goals than we do as individual citizens.

Audits of Town buildings were completed in April. We should expect an overview report soon from EEI next month. Ryan also mentioned that Geoff had sent a Green Procurement Policy that he developed for each Town to consider adopting. Ryan needs to review it and send the document / comments to the SB for their consideration. A greenhouse gas emission inventory is also forthcoming from Geoff.

4. **UV E-bike Library Planning**

Ryan gave an overview of the development of the E-bike lending Library in Sharon, which is set to start May 31st. He got permission to use the pavilion behind the school and to store the bikes in a locked outbuilding from the Principal. Ryan went over the dates and commitments needed to help staff the events and mentioned that he would send out a schedule / spreadsheet so that we could all sign up for specific times. The web reservation system was recently opened (May 24th).

5. **Legislative Update from Jill**

Jill explained that the legislature has adjourned for the session and apparently they feel like they accomplished a lot, though she did not have specifics to share. Dee mentioned environmental groups were generally happy with the weatherization and low-income housing funding available for the next fiscal year.

Dee explained that she attended a VLCT webinar where they discussed how much VT towns would receive as a result of the American Rescue Plan federal stimulus package; some money also is coming directly from the State (that may be from the same Federal stimulus package). There would be some money available for investments toward infrastructure. Ryan wondered if some of the infrastructure funds could be used to facilitate or expand on any energy upgrades for Town buildings suggested by EEI in their forthcoming report to the Town. Dee mentioned that some money for direct payments through businesses/peoples that were adversely effected by COVID and suggested the Food Shelf and Seven Stars would be worthy recipients of some of the capital that may become available. She also mentioned that the Town needed a "champion" for public water and/or septic system in the Village to encourage development in the Town center. She thought this could/should fall to the EC and would be a worthwhile investment for the Town.

Jill also mentioned some exciting upcoming webinars that she would disseminate from the group.

6. **Real carbon solutions**

Ryan shared how he has enjoyed observing the leaves of his labor in the trees that he planted this year. Dee lamented the lack of rain so far this year.

Dee's son graduated from UVM and he provided her with some trees he had grafted.

Jill provided an update on the community tree-planting initiative. She has been communicating with Eric Cornell about getting some nut trees planted at the school. Apparently, the Conservation Commission had some funding available and they decided

to buy some butternut trees for the project and try to get them in the ground ASAP. Jill is setting up a meeting with Keenan to do a walk-about next week and look for viable places to plant.

7. **Other business**

Ryan gauged members' feelings about meeting in-person. Most were generally agreeable to meeting outdoors. He decided to punt the decision-making until next meeting, which will remain remote (by phone).

8. Next meeting scheduled for Monday, June 24th, 2021 (2021-06-28 17:30)

Ryan adjourned the meeting at 6:09 PM.

DRAFT