

Sharon Energy Committee Meeting

Monday, January 23rd, 2023 @ 06:00 PM

Sharon Town Office

15 School Street, Sharon VT 05065

2023-01-23 18:00

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

Present at the Town Office: Ryan Haac (EC)

On the phone: Dee Gish and Jill Wilcox (EC)

Ryan called the meeting together at 18:06 (6:06 PM).

1. **Public Comment Period**

No comments.

2. **Approve previous meeting minutes**

The minutes from the prior meeting (2022-10-24 16:45) were approved.

3. **Intermunicipal Regional Energy Coordinator updates**

Ryan reported the following:

- The original IREC (Geoff Martin) resigned from the position in November 2022 to take a different job. A new IREC (Jeff Grout) was hired in January 2023.
- The budget passed by the Selectboard did not include an appropriation for the IREC. A petition was circulated to add an Article to the Town Meeting Warning to directly request the funds for the IREC from voters. The signature threshold was reached and the item will be an Article on the Town Meeting Warning.
- The Climate Action Sub-Group has completed a first draft website database of funding available for different residential/commercial energy technologies. Ryan will circulate the link to the EC for feedback prior to its wider release to the public.

We also discussed the potential for collaboration with Conservation Commissions and we discussed focusing some of these efforts at Ashley Community Forest.

4. **VCRD Facilitation Scoping**

Ryan reported that we were not awarded the Climate Economy Resilient Communities. However, he has been in further talks with VCRD about interim options of a focused single meeting (this year) or a full community visit process (not until 2024 or 2025...maybe).

We agreed that a targeted meeting facilitated by VCRD could be really helpful in bringing our community organizations together to utilize our networks of services and functions to help our

community prepare for the future. We generally agreed that the best way to organize this collection of groups would be in something like a community resilience organization. Some of the important aspects of a unifying organization discussed were disseminating real-time unified community needs when something needs to be done (emergency, power outages, snow, etc.) and shared goals/resources/events/space.

We also discussed the potential for the Sharon Church's interest in opening their space to be used as a Community Center. Ryan mentioned that he offered to work with the Church to understanding its current state of weatherization and options for providing well-provisioned space. We all agreed that higher utilization of the site could be an important aspect of the Village and the town as a whole.

We also talked about a Community Bulletin Board that was hopefully being donated to the Town by the Alliance for Vermont Communities. We lauded the project and considered locations such as the Town Green and the front lawn of the Library as potential options for the placement of the Community Board.

5. Actions on Climate Change and Real Carbon Solutions

Jill updated us on the Repair Fair in Randolph on Saturday, February 25th. She also mentioned that she has fielded a great deal of interest from other Towns / organizations in holding similar events, as well as media interest. We discussed the possibility of Efficiency Vermont participating (with a table or presentation) at the event with information about available grants. We also discussed requesting an in-person presentation in or near Sharon to inform residents about the funding currently available. Jill volunteered to follow up on these items.

Dee informed us about the March and Rally for Climate and Energy Justice in in Montpelier on February 11th and offered to provide further details.

Jill introduced a drive that "Third Act" was pursuing related to raising awareness of the damage some financial institutions are causing with their investments.

We also discussed the Affordable Heating Act and some of the issues with the proposed priorities in the bill. The Affordable Heating Act is a resurrected version of the Vermont Legislature's Clean Heat Standard.

6. Other Business

We discussed the potential for a Town Meeting Breakfast if Town Meeting is held in person. Ryan volunteered to reach out to Nicole to discuss the EC providing direct support for the meal.

7. Next meeting was scheduled for February 27th, 2023 at 6 PM (2023-02-27 18:00)

Ryan adjourned the meeting at 7:08 PM.