

Sharon Energy Committee Meeting

Monday, November 25th, 2024 @ 06:00 PM

Sharon Town Office

15 School Street, Sharon VT 05065

2025-01-27 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: Dee Gish (EC) and Ryan Haac (EC, Chair)

Ryan called the meeting together at 18:10 (6:10 PM).

1. **Public Comment Period**

No comments

2. **Approve previous meeting minutes**

Dee made a motion to approve the minutes from the prior meeting (2025-01-27 18:00). Ryan seconded.

3. **Shared Energy Coordinator updates**

Ryan provided the following updates and information from the SEC group:

- Some members of the group, with Harry's assistance, have been exploring simple Level II chargers to get EV infrastructure into our towns that do not necessitate major infrastructure projects. Bids for installing chargers under recent grant-funded programs, which we were not able to get due to unfortunate eligibility requirements and other external factors, have seen bids of \$30k to \$50k for freestanding chargers with a new utility service and monthly service fees. The SEC group is looking for solutions to make that easier and cheaper. We have found chargers that do not charge a monthly subscription fee and do not require connected internet access to permit consumers to pay for the energy transferred; though it does require a smartphone application to work via Bluetooth. Until service stations work chargers into their payment and credit card processing infrastructure, paying for charging via smartphone applications will remain the norm. Through a collaboration between the group and a local electrician, we determined a ballpark installation cost would around \$5k, though potentially more for a new interconnection service. Ideally, a charger could be installed where there is an existing service, as opposed to creating a new interconnection, because

the new service generates additional customer charges and other monthly fees from GMP. We are watching to see how this progresses in Strafford. EV charging installations are eligible for 30% Federal tax credit (that was expanded to organizations without tax burdens in 2023).

- From the MERP Energy Audits in 2024, we found out that vermiculite insulation was present in the walls of the Town Office and very likely contains asbestos. The presence of asbestos leaking into the first floor and basement is a problem. At Ryan's request, Harry sought information and got a referral to a Vermont contractor that does vermiculite remediation work. The quote for the site visit and workplan (<\$1.5k), which includes bid package development, is less than the amount of MERP Mini-Grant funding remaining. Ryan agreed to bring the quote and idea of utilizing the remaining Mini-Grant funding to the Selectboard for their approval to move forward. This is the first step into understanding the risks and potential remediation measures for the health and safety concern of asbestos material in the Town building.

- The MERP Level II Energy Audit performed at the Town Garage provided some baseline professional information on the status and options for the structure. Ryan would like to start moving this conversation forward with the SB so that Harry can assist with scoping and information gathering.

- Ryan also reported that an eBus was delivered to WRVSU late last year and is being prepared for use in Sharon

4. **Sharon Skill Swap**

The 2nd Annual Sharon Skill Swap is happening in the Sharon Village on February 22. The event is based at the school but utilizes other buildings throughout the Village, including the Library. It brings our neighbors together to share skills and interests in a constructive and fun event. The event is hosted by the Energy Committee in conjunction with Sharon Connects.

5. **Continue Discussion Regarding Committee Direction, Name, and Scope**

We discussed services that the EC could provide, such as helping connect folks with funding available for weatherization. For example, there is currently funding with Efficiency Vermont for residential repair work that needs to be done to support weatherization but it will no longer be available at the end of the year. Ryan will distribute some information about this opportunity.

Dee suggested looking into collaboration with VEEP for an educational event.

We noted the lack of collaboration among town groups and wondered how we could catalyze more collaboration.

Ryan spoke of his desire to broaden the mission of the group to issues of local awareness, such as the overly opportunistic (“invasive”) plants, local alternatives to global supply chain systems, and expectations around future climate volatility and the implications thereof.

The discussion was continued to the next meeting.

6. **Updates on Actions, Goals, and Initiatives**

None discussed.

7. **Other Business**

We considered having a topic at future meetings be a time capsule, where we look at some of the content that was generated by previous iterations of the Energy Committee that are in the meeting room at the Town Office.

Following up on the Village Scoping Study, it was not within the scope of that study to recommend a specific speed limit but rather to look at the physical arrangement of the Route 14 / Route 132 and their intersections. Ryan found out that Act 181 and potential updates to the Vermont State Standards may allow Sharon to dictate the speed limit in the Village Center in the near future. He shared that he thinks that reducing the speed limit through the village to 25 mph does a great deal to improve pedestrian safety in the village without the hefty price tag of modifying the physical infrastructure, though he conceded that improved crosswalks are clearly necessary on Route 132 near the Town Office, at a minimum.

8. The next meeting was scheduled for Monday, February 24th, 2025

Ryan made a motion to adjourn. Dee seconded.

The meeting was adjourned at 19:08 (7:08 PM).