

Town of Essex
Essex Energy Committee
Minutes (Revised)
Wednesday, November 10, 2021
7:00 PM - Live (81 Main Street, Essex Junction)

Present for EEC: Will Dodge (chair), Natalee Braun, David Skopin, Irene Wrenner, Michael Fink, Dottie Bergendahl, and Phil March.

I. Administrative

Irene moved to approve the minutes of 9/10/2021 and 10/20/2021, seconded by Natalee. The minutes were approved by unanimous vote.

II. Substantive

A. Button Up Recap, Part 1. The Committee members discussed having spoken with approximately 200 people at Lowe's on October 23/24 (Saturday and Sunday) for Button Up. General consensus was that the net effect was a better turnout, with more effective results, even than the event at Essex Experience in 2019. The indoor venue helped prevent a rainout issue as happened with Essex Out and About. Key items included those Phil March had prepared: lists of websites, projects and aisles, etc. The committee members are grateful for Phil's work, as this information was the most useful literature available. Donuts from Quality Bakery (thank you!) and kid toys from Green Mountain Power and VEC (thank you!) were also very helpful.

Committee members discussed a variety of ideas for improving on the venue for 2022, including: (i) providing links to names of all contractors; (ii) improving each member's familiarity with EVT website; (iii) potentially making videos available during the event; (iv) chart to help determine low income status; (v) improve information on how to get an energy audit (virtually or in person); (vi) full vetting of the "schwag" / giveaways in advance; (vii) improving knowledge / fluency on questions involving window replacements; and (viii) smaller donuts. Some discussion was had on whether to involve Lowe's staff at the next meeting.

Action Items : Continue dialogue with Efficiency VT, Chittenden County RPC, and potentially Lowe's to improve upon this year's successful event.

B. ARPA Priorities. Will relayed the results of the discussion through one of the Regional Planning Commissions regarding Improving Public Buildings via ARPA, and noted that energy-specific items such as ventilation, HVAC, and modifications to allow for safe distances is funding-eligible. The Committee members discussed the status of the Essex Rescue net zero building at Essex Way, as well as important furnace / air-handling equipment issues at the Brownell library. It was noted that Village / Town separation may complicate some aspects of energy planning, but that it was still possible to conduct special research projects for ARPA and inform staff / elected officials.

C. Vital Communities Climate Migration Panel. Phil, Natalee and David attended videoconference on migration from outside VT during the pandemic, but aside from a little information on updating old houses, there was very little on construction of sustainable communities.

D. Status of Essex-to-Colchester Multi-Use Path. Will provided a brief report to the effect that according to VTTrans External Affairs, completion of the Project is delayed based on outstanding utility work.

E. Other Business. Natalee and Will reported that there has been no follow-up with Rotary International since this summer's presentation.

Regarding electrical tools purchase by Public Works, Tom reported that most are not commercial grade and therefore not viable for most projects. Tom shared that diesel costs in the Town will be tempered by pre-buying in bulk. Irene mentioned projected Town and Village budget increases.

Meeting was adjourned following a motion by Dottie, seconded by David.

Next Meeting : December 8, 2021 at 7:00pm
[Subsequently postponed to December 15, 2021]

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