

Ryegate Energy Committee Unapproved Minutes from 8-7-23

In attendance: Members - Alice Allen (zoom), Carl Bayer, Donna Waelter, Gail Brown (on zoom?), Kate Davies, Michael McLellan, Peter Sinclair; Public Andy Smith, Regina Hazel

If Gail got on zoom, which took some time, all members were accounted for. Michael gaveled the first meeting of the Committee appointed by the Select Board at their last July meeting at 8:05.

Mission Statement - Discussion whether or not the Mission Statement sufficiently reflected the intent of the Town Plan. Kate recommended that we review the Mission Statement for the next meeting.

Ryegate Fair - Carl and Michael reported setting up with our partners Efficiency Vermont and the Heat Squad. Lots of discussions about weatherizing and renewables. Heat Squad got three requests for audits, we got 5 requests for Window Dressers. East Ryegate Villagers have caught on to the possibility of inserts for their porches.

EV Charging Stations - We discussed the need for a Level 2 charger in town, currently supported by GMP and Level 3 chargers at P/H. Carl reported on another attempt to work with Global Partners, supported by Jane Kitchel, and assigned again to Peter Murphy of AOT. He reported this to the Planning Commission and agreed to send all copies of the emails. There was not a strong need identified for a Level 2 Charger in Town, but yes for Global Partners to be pursued.

Old Business - Renewable Energy at Ryegate Corner - Andy reported that two applications have been submitted and the lengthy process and the backlog at AOT. He also offered that Manosh has added an engineering element to their business.

Weatherization of the Town Office - Andy reported on the steps taken so far, the last one being the Vault. He did not think the warm winter would give us a good accounting of savings. We discussed whether or not completing insulating the sills in the rest of the basement and insulating the ceiling above the first floor would make a heat pump viable, while saving on fuel. Should contractors be asked to make that estimate or the Heat Squad? Andy expressed concern about hiring contractors during this period.

Window Dressers - Covered by the Fair note. Michael reported that we have measured 60 in Ryegate so far, with the goal of 300 for the 4 towns. He has included Groton and we have had calls from Newbury and Topsham who will be on a waiting list. They can be referred to Bradford Window Dressers. Carl and Michael meet with the Coordinators of the other 3 towns monthly for updates, planning and sharing information.

Trails = Michael reported on the condition and situation. There are about 25 volunteers from Barnet and Ryegate, but not much done yet. The Mullen Trail ends at a beaver pond during the summer, The Morrison Trail still has a gate (Andy pointed out that permission for a gate is required from the Select Board). The Meader Trail is surveyed but not available for use. Michael has tried to engage Justin Lemieux at the Morrison Trail, who wants a sign and signage at the turn off, not there yet. Andy said he was also thinking of one at the Barnet boundary. The Franklins don't want the surveyed Meader Road used close to their house or at all. They may be willing to meet with CVT for a resolution, but won't resolve with the Select Board or locals. The CRT is focused on the Bayley Hazen and sees the other trails as spurs, not their initial responsibility. Carl suggested we go back to Mike Thomas for help.

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Blue Mountain Community Solar - Michael reported that after losing our free developer due to disagreement in town about Community Solar, he and Carl have agreed to work for a while with the Genereaux's to encourage the families on our list of potential subscribers to meet with them. We encourage others to help identify local subscribers, on their other projects (they average 25 families). BMCS is not a project of the Committee, but the goal is to give as many families the option of local solar energy.

Regional Energy Committees - Michael continues meeting with them every few months sharing information and ideas.

New Business - Carl reported on meeting with Kristin Kelly, Communications Director and Madeline Classen- Murray Resiliency Program Coordinator both of GMP to consider Ryegate for one of their Resiliency Hubs (about 3 per year) and other initiatives related to battery storage, micro grids and solar arrays. As with the AOT MERC program we are not a priority town, due to our demographics. Carl hopes they will make the determination where we fit into their programs, rather than us making a request. An example would be battery storage at BMU.

Public Comment - Regina gave us some advice about sticking to our Agenda and Town Policies at meetings. As an example since the first Monday in September is Labor Day, we will have a Special Meeting on Tuesday September 5.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:15. Respectfully submitted, Carl