Climate Smart Communities Task Force Meeting Minutes  April 5, 2023 Town Hall, New Lebanon

Present: Deb Gordon, Winfried Fuchshofen, Bob Gilson, Adelia Moore, Elizabeth Poreba, Steve Powers, Cathy Wilkerson

Julia Fraad (pending new member)

Absent: Kristine Cottom, Frieda Pearce, Bruce Shenker

The meeting was called to order at 6:35pm

After approval of the minutes, Steve provided updates:

• The County Heat Pump Campaign is still up and running, having had successful webinars and planning more. It has already met its goal and the County will receive a $15, 000 grant

• The EV Campaign has failed so far to find any residents who have bought an EV. Members were asked to report if they hear of any residents making such a purchase.

• The battery recycling program continues, with  634 lbs sent in and another 75 in Steve’s garage. Bob will now take over this program

• As per the Town’s Comprehensive Plan CSC expectations, the CSC was requested to submit a draft updated Hazard Mitigation Plan to the Town Board. We will take action on it once the County completes its Plan.

• The CSC is also tasked with developing a plan for alternative methods of transportation and routes to promote multi-modal transportation throughout Town, with a focus on the old railroad bed. To this end, Bruce and Steve are working on the rail trail, trying to reach owners who own the rights of way. This trail would be a great benefit by giving students a route to town alternate to the road. However, the public could not use the section by the school during school hours. There may be ARPA funds for a study, but the project cannot go forward without agreements with the land owners.

• Collaboration with NL schools continues to develop:

1) On May 4, 5th and 6th graders will start meeting every other Thursday after school for “Nature Explorers” activities organized by CSC members.

2) Cornell students Jillian Morley/ Xinyu Han/Yaqi Li & Yeguang Cheng will begin a battery recycling project in HS and Jr High, with a pizza party for the class that collects most batteries.

•A Cornell grad student, Emiriana Stanishja, will work this summer to finalize the paperwork for Silver Certification.

• The Walkable Downtown Committee gave a presentation on March 23 and has collected more than 200 surveys about residents’ preferences for downtown improvements. They aim to collect about 400 surveys.

• A Green Purchasing plan for the town-is being implemented. Steve is gathering an inventory of town purchases to submit to the DEC.

• The Town Board tabled the question of stipends for non-advisory board members.

• Steve has submitted a request for a Federal grant for a water tank for the LVPA.

•-Moy and Larry will conduct a Bike Repair demo on May 20 in the Pavilion.

A discussion of Earth Day Clean Up Day, April 22, ensued. Cathy has distributed posters. Since the posters were printed, Steve learned of an organization (<http://www.computerrehab.org/> ) that rehabs old computers and gives them out to those in need. We will be collecting computers at the Pavilion on Earth Day. Also, a bag will be available for collecting plastic bags for Nextrex (<https://nextrex.com/view/grassroots> ) a company which turns polyethlene films into new plastic products. Liz will compose text for a new poster describing these additional activities as well as mentioning that refreshments will be provided after the clean up by Maverick’s.

Bob noted that the areas cleaned up last year actually still look a little cleaner than other areas.

Cathy updated the Taskforce on the composting project.

She will be enlisting volunteers to help build bins out of pallets provided by Country Squire. After they are built, about May 12, collection of eggshells and coffee grounds without filters will begin. Mark Turner will provide wood chips and it is hoped that volunteers from a nearby trailer park will provide food scraps.

The bins must be surrounded by a stockade fence.

Steve moved to request additional funds from the Town Board for constructing the bins and fence if the amount needed exceeds the CSC budget. APPROVED

Taskforce members are invited to an April 21 10:30 demo of the County’s digester for CAC at the Greenport transfer station.

Peg reported via Steve that Trees for Tribs could use volunteers as spring work begins. Steve added that the CAC has been tasked by the Department of Health with testing some wells, not for PFAS but other contamination. ARPA money has been allotted for this.

Adelia reported that Frieda is working on presenting a “Trash to Treasure” workshop at the library since there was not much interest from the Lebanon Valley Senior Group about such an  event .

On another note, she reported the next Repair Café-will take place in New Lebanon on April 30 12-4. 23 fixers will be on hand.

She said she may need additional local volunteers. She asked members to consider volunteering and also to spread the word about the event.

Bike Repair continues to add to the -200+ bikes it has refurbished or repaired to date; and is working on requests for many families. A new location for bike storage is needed

Liz said the Free Store continues to be visited.

She added that she had met with Michelle Hoffman at the library about a project for introducing patrons to induction cooktops. but neither the Library nor the CSC has the funds for this project, nor the bandwidth for its potential problems. Adelia suggested more inquiry into the Massachusetts libraries where this program is working.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:55.

Next meeting date – May 3