Climate Smart Communities Task Force Meeting Minutes

July 5, 2023 Town Hall, New Lebanon

Present: Kristine Cottom,  Julie Fraad, Bob Gilson, Deb Gordon, Adelia Moore, Frieda Pearce, Elizabeth Poreba, Steve Powers, Bruce Shenker,  Cathy Wilkerson

Absent: Winfried Fuchshofen

The meeting was called to order at 6:35

After  approval of the minutes, Steve provided updates:

50 solar panels for Town Hall should be hooked up by August. They will provide. more than 22,000kwh /year which constitutes 89% town hall and garage usage. The expense is covered by NYSERDA . A tax credit might also be available.

There has been no progress on the EV Campaign- despite repeated calls to the Ford dealership.

720 lbs of batteries have been recycled through the battery recycling program boxes in 6 locations. That total  includes the 2 boxes Bob picked up today.

Bruce reported that progress has been slow in the 2022/3 Comprehensive Plan’s expectation that the CSC develop a plan for alternative methods of transportation and routes to promote multi-modal transportation; i.e a rail trail extension. A company is available to do a study, but Tistrya advised that it didn’t make sense to do a study if there are some land owners who have categorically refused to allow the trail on their property. Deb suggested that the study be done anyway, in order to open up doors for the future. Besides, it was agreed, that there must be ways to route the trail around the property of those who object.

Steve and Bruce will install the three bike racks purchased last fall.

After the community meeting about it, the proposal for a walkable downtown has gone to the committee to consider the relative costs of the various proposals. for medians and sidewalks.

Cornell student Michelle Parks is meeting with Steve and Marc every week in order to assemble paperwork required for the 2023 Road to Silver.

Son of Cornell professor, Rebecca Brenner, Morgan Brenner and Marc are looking in the feasibility of an a level 3 EV charger, in addition to the current charger, which has had minimal use so far. Tesla’s decision to standardize its plug may necessitate an adapter on one or the other of the chargers. The rate at the current charger will now be $.35/kWh

Steve is in talks with Didi Barrett’s office for the LVPA water tank. Since the tank Steve has located costs $85,000 and the grant will be for $125,000, there will be additional money for the LVPA. The tank will be filled from a nearby well; it also collects rainwater.

In June, the plastic film recycling bin at Town Hall yielded 15.5 pounds (8 bags) , which Bruce delivered to Chatham. Julie will now take over the monthly collection. Another collection bin would be helpful, but it is not clear where it might go. The matter of which items are acceptable and which are not is still unclear to some. Steve reported that manila envelops with bubble wrap inside are not allowed, but plastic envelopes are. The basic rule is, nothing dirty or wet. Further clarification can be found at <https://nextrex.com/view/grassroots>

Steve has obtained permission from the Town Board for the CSC to have an Instagram account. He, Liz, and Bob will be administrators. He has also learned that information about the Shaker Swamp can be posted on the FB/Instagram page because the organization gets public funding.

Steve asked for volunteers to work on the CSC booth at the Music in the Park event on July 16. Adelia, Julia, and Bruce said they would help. Julie suggested voter registration in addition.

Liz and Adelia volunteered to be present at the Aug 6 event at Shaker Mill Inn 12-5pm . Cathy offered to bring, and monitor, a food scrap bucket.

Apropos of town events, there was some discussion about ways to avoid plastic water bottles, plates, and cups. Steve said he would bring large jugs of water and paper cups to the events. Adelia said she would make a sign to remind attendees to use paper cups or their reusable bottles. She also said she would meet with Chris of Maverick’s to discuss possible alternatives to plastic plates and cutlery at town events.

Steve read a report from Peg on the work of the CAC. They are seeking to adapt some of the DEC recommended water guidelines to our rural, all-well town. They will make a presentation concerning a Conservation Overlay for the Aquifers and to the Town Board in Dec or January.  They are also working out some educational pieces for the fall.

They are about to test the Rte 20-22 corridor to potentially support the Waste water feasibility study grant.

Regarding Trees for Tribs, volunteers have spent about 45 hours so far in 2023 tending and watering and weeding and staking and removing some tubes They have put up a sign describing the project and are still figuring out more educational signage.

The CLC camp program was postponed due to weather and will be rescheduled.

 Cathy said that about 8 buckets of food scraps are being brought to Chatham weekly. Egg shells and coffee grounds are coming from Maverick’s . Kitchen scraps are being collected from K-Shack and the Farmers Market. Trailer Park collection is on hold. Mark Turner provides buckets and takes scraps for pigs. The chef at Mario’s has indicated some interest in the program and collection may begin there.

Frieda reported that the art workshop turning trash to treasure will take place at the New Lebanon Women’s Group September 8 meeting. The elementary school program is on hold until fall because of staffing requirements.

Adelia said that the next Repair Cafe will occur as part of the Green Fair at Kinderhook July 29.

Steve read a report from-Larry saying that the bike program has received 22 more bikes and their storage facility is completely full. Steve said he would reach out to the high school as well as other organizations to find families that might need the bikes.

Next meeting: Aug 2 , Shatford Park weather permitting?

The meeting was adjourned at  7:26.

Respectfully submitted, Elizabeth Poreba

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