Climate Smart Communities Task Force Meeting Minutes  October 4, 2023 via video link

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

Absent: Winfried Fuchshofen, Adelia Moore

The meeting was called to order at 6:33

Voting not being permissible via video link, minutes were not approved,

Steve provided updates:

• 1used EV has been purchased by a resident, four more needed for the campaign

• Over 100 pounds of batteries were turned in on Town Clean up Day. This includes batteries that had been dropped off in collection boxes.

• A meeting with Tistrya is planned for discussion of the Town’s expectations for the CSC to develop a plan for alternative methods of transportation and routes to promote multi-modal transportation throughout Town, with a focus on the old railroad bed.

• Michelle Parks of Cornell meets with Steve weekly to update him on what is needed for the Road to Silver. -She has asked for a flyer informing residents about the Town Hall’s solar panels, which Cathy and Frieda will produce and Facebook posts about buying local and about New Lebanon’s number 1 standing in the region in the latest Clean Energy Communities Leadership Round, which Liz will write.

• Alejandra Plaza Limon, a former student from Cornell has offered the Town her services for a two-month internship to help the town to work on its Climate Action Plan as well as, perhaps, its Energy Audit. Steve will request permission to accept her services at the next Town Board meeting.-      •

• The water tank grant for the LVPA-is in progress

• Julie turned in 37 pounds of plastic bags last week, for a total of 174 pounds. Since 500 pounds are needed by next month to get a free plastic bench, Steve is going to ask for an extension. He noted that less plastic is being turned in, probably because the Town Hall is now locked. Bob suggested that the bottle collection center, which is always open, would be a good additional site.. Steve said he would inquire.-

• On Sept 8 Steve and Tistrya spoke about benchmarks at a conference on Locally Sourced: Capital Region Climate Policy and made some good contacts, particularly the head of NYSERDA’s CEC program.

• Partners for Climate Action have encouraged the town to apply for Hudson Valley Building Decarbonization Grant. The money could be used for 6 more heat pumps for-Town Hall. Steve will get estimates for this and fill out an application for a grant.

Frieda- reported that the September 8 Trash for Treasures event with the Lebanon Valley Women’s Club had to be postponed because of a storm that took out many members’ electricity. Because it is not easy for Judith to get to New Lebanon on Fridays, its new date has not yet been determined.

Cathy said her composting report has yet to be edited. Basically egg shells and coffee grounds are collected from Maverick’s while food scraps from the Farmers Market go to Mark, a local pig farmer. The project is sustainable and useful but very small. Chris pointed out that giving scraps to a local pig farmer is a food waste solution suitable for rural communities. Cathy noted that the USDA does not allow it for commercial use.

Steve shared a report from Peg regarding CAC’s efforts in two areas: Shatford Park and water testing.

Regarding the Park, it seems unlikely that the plants that are in the ground will have significant effect on erosion in the near future. Peg has asked the DEC's Trees for Tribs program for information on additional fixes for the heavy stream erosion. The CAC will share potential erosion control options at a future meeting of the Town Board.

Peg Munves and Donald Lamonaca have been implementing the Drinking Water Source Protection Plan. Over 60 residents have requested water testing for pathogens and 53 tests have been completed. A total of about $5,415 has been spent so far out of the $30,000 in ARPA funds allocated to the testing. There will be at least one more testing date in October.

Bruce said the latest Repair Cafe in East Nassau was small but successful, with about 60 items being repaired by 13 repairers. There are already plans to have a Repair Cafe at the Climate Carnival next summer. Happy customers have donated about $800, which is used to buy pizza for the repairers.

Steve reminded members that volunteers are needed for the Climate Carnival

Bike Repair continues to bring bikes to families. Two high-end bikes that would have been too expensive to repair were auctioned off for $50.

Liz said the Free Store is probably going to move into the Community Center this month. Deb said the Town Board and the LVPA have come to an agreement about the use of the space.

Steve reported on a workshop he attended on potential vulnerable areas in town. Vulnerabilities were mapped and marked according to importance. One important take-away is that 3 out of the Town’s 4 trailer parks are on flood plains He will present these findings to the Town Board and attend another workshop on this subject in the future.

Next meeting date – Nov 1

The meeting was adjourned at 7:09

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Poreba

--