

Egremont Green Committee Meeting Minutes
April 10, 2023

Attendees: Committee members: Emily Eyre, Marj Wexler, Bonnie Greenwood, Pat Konecky, Juliette Haas, and Sharon Waskow. Guests: Mary McGurn, Lucinda Vermeulen, and Stephen Lyle.

The meeting was called to order at 4:35 p.m.

The March 14 minutes were approved unanimously.

Sustainability Report: Juliette reported on a meeting in Pittsfield led by the Green Energy Consumers Alliance. Juliette followed up with Larry Chretien, one of the event speakers, asking him to speak at our upcoming decarbonization event. The EGC event is tentatively set for June 15 at 5:30 p.m. at town hall. Committee members agreed to hash out a title for the event during the coming weeks and finalize at our next meeting. The event will be accessible by zoom.

Juliette handed out an info sheet from the Green Energy Consumers Alliance called Federal & Massachusetts Clean Energy Incentives. The handout contains a link for calculating how to qualify for the green energy benefits as well as a thorough listing of available financial incentives. The Green Energy Consumers Alliance website has information about qualifying for EV or solar panels benefits that is very consumer friendly.

Juliette would like to speak about her zero net energy home at the decarbonizing event. Another possible speaker is our DOER Regional Rep Chris Mason, who would join us and contribute to the discussion.

Juliette is researching the best dealer for recycling batteries. We currently use Call to Recycle for rechargeable batteries at no cost. We would like to add single-use batteries - alkaline and lithium. Juliette is checking with Call to Recycle and with Cirba Solutions. The intent is to have boxes for battery recycling at town hall and at the transfer station.

There is room at the transfer station for Discover Books recycling bins. Juliette will request approval from the Select Board to start this program. A box would be located near the CMRK boxes. Discover will repurpose the books or recycle them if they can't be distributed for reuse.

Marj provided updates about plans for the Egremont Recycles day event. She is checking with Jim Golden about having the pizza party at the North Egremont Firehouse. Several people have volunteered to assist the Green Committee members with trash sorting. All the roads will again be covered.

Bring your own containers efforts: Juliette asked our FDA certified food inspector about whether people can bring their own containers to stores for takeout. Apparently, there are many different and confusing categories about what can or can't be used safely. Sharon noted that the deli counter at Guido's accepts personal containers. The staff there wear gloves and put a paper on the scale before weighing the product. Big Y and the Co-op will not do that. Guido's April handout encourages several green store policies. The NYC health department agrees with this [which is "this"?] policy. Juliette suggested writing letters to Big Y and the Co-op to encourage them to take the extra steps to let people bring their own containers. We could sign a letter from the Green Committee. Sharon suggested we support efforts of the Three Towns (Sheffield, Egremont, and Lee) working with local supermarkets on similar efforts starting with the placement of reusable bags for produce.

Emily noted that Peg McDonough had shared information regarding BioMaps, which is an important tool to guide strategic protection and stewardship of lands and waters that are most important for conserving biological diversity in Massachusetts. This information relates well to the work of the Municipal Vulnerability Project. Peg is now in the process of seeing if there is sufficient interest in South County to merit bringing a speaker from Boston to present how BioMap's new web-based framework uses innovative analyses, the most up-to-date data displayed at multiple geographic scales, and the latest climate resilience science. She is reaching out to several local organizations/committees to sponsor the event.

Emily raised Barbara Kalish's idea about creating art from trash. Sharon spoke with Barbara, who would like to wait a year for this project. Barbara asked if we could take pictures of our trash collection on Egremont Recycles day so she'd have ideas for using trash at next year's trash collection day. Juliette noted that in the past Egremont organized art from transfer station trash done by school students and others. We will have pictures taken on Egremont Recycles day.

Marj received a report from CMRK about Egremont's recent use of their collection bins. During the last quarter of last year, over 6,000 tons were collected. This year's first quarter collection was 5,350 from the transfer station pickup. Marj will check whether this weight is just from the transfer station or also from people's homes.

Stephen Lyle suggested that we discuss the importance of any new housing resulting from the Comprehensive Plan to ensure that new construction meets energy efficiency standards.

Juliette noted that our electric aggregation price is just under \$.11 per kwh. Last year National Grid significantly raised rates to \$.33 per kwh. Our town's fourth quarter report indicates that Egremonters saved \$311,000. Based on the number of meters in town, this averages \$130 savings per household. Juliette reported that when we negotiate aggregation contracts, we look at price as well as the green component. Our energy supply currently consists of mostly, but not entirely, renewables. National Grid just lowered their rate to \$.14. We're locked in with our current aggregation contract until January 2025. Juliette noted that this past winter many people reached out to her about joining the aggregation. The aggregation program was structured to

allow people to opt out. However, households working with another energy supplier were not included unless they specifically requested a change-over. Currently we have 769 meters in the aggregation. Emily suggested that perhaps the COA could help people make the change.

Our next meeting will be on May 16 at 4:30 p.m. It will again be set up for hybrid attendance.

Meeting was adjourned at 5:37 p.m.