

EGREMONT GREEN COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes

June 13, 2023

Members present Emily Eyre (Chairperson), Juliette Haas, and Marj Wexler. Member present via Zoom: Bonnie Greenwood and guest, Mary McGurn.

Chairperson, Emily Eyre, opened the meeting at 4:30 p.m. She welcomed the group and asked for a motion to approve the May 16, 2023, minutes. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Sustainability Report-Juliette

Juliette reported that the Discover Books bin will hopefully be installed at the Transfer Station this week.

Juliette reported that Egremont has submitted the DEP RDP Grant application in the amount of \$5250 that can be spent on any recycling-related projects in the town.

Juliette attended the annual National Grid Energy Summit in Worcester, MA recently. She was updated about Green Communities and other incentives that the town can use for town energy upgrades. Juliette is going to apply for a Green Communities Grant in October to upgrade the HVAC heating system in the Town Hall building with Air Source Heat pumps. Peg McDonough attended the meeting as well. She was looking for funding for the new building that the town wants to build for the Building and Grounds Superintendent. There are some National Grid incentives that fund efficient heating systems in the new building. It is Egremont's hope that the building will be a Zero Net Energy building with extra solar credits from the highway garage solar array going to this account. If we have an all-electric heating system, we can apply those credits to that building to be "Zero-Net Energy". Juliette also discussed upgrading the lights at the Town Hall. In 2009, the town hall lights were upgraded to T-8 fluorescent lights. The next upgrade will be to upgrade the lights to LEDs. This will also be a National Grid upgrade and will cost the town nothing.

Old Business

Decarbonizing Your Home Event: Juliette gave an update regarding the speaker event "Bringing Climate Action Home: Your Road to Energy Savings and Tax Incentives" which is scheduled to take place on Wednesday July 19, 2023, at 5:30 pm with two speakers: Larry Chretien with Green Energy Consumer Alliance and Juliette Haas, Town of Egremont. The Chairperson of the Green Committee will welcome everybody and introduce the speakers. Juliette will give an introduction on Decarbonization, electrification of systems, why it is important in meeting Climate action goals and the roles that the residents can play. Juliette wants to talk about empowerment and the things everyone can do in their homes to reach these goals. She will speak about what she did in her home to make it Zero-Net Energy and the "low hanging fruit" that can be an easy way to start (energy conservation, increased efficiency, lower consumption, get a home energy assessment, window replacement, lighting upgrades, more efficient heating/cooling systems and eventually incorporating renewables). Following Juliette, Larry can talk about the IRA existing and future incentives for big ticket items or more expensive projects. Larry will also speak about electric vehicles (rebates, incentives, costs and when to buy).

The committee discussed that promotional materials for the Decarbonizing Home event should include a description of the event, speaker name(s), what will be discussed such as: tax incentives, what's available to residents, energy savings, and climate change. The title will tentatively be "Bringing Climate Action Home: Your Road to Energy Savings and Tax Incentives". Emily, Robin and Marj volunteered to help with publicity and creating a flyer. When a draft flyer is ready, they will forward it to Mary McGurn for review and uploading to the town website.

The decarbonization meeting may be a "Hybrid" meeting with in-person and Zoom attendance. Mary McGurn suggested that we use "Zoom Webinar" for the meeting. Juliette would like to find a volunteer to run the Zoom part of the meeting including letting people into the meeting and screen sharing for any *PowerPoint* presentations. Juliette will send an email to the *NeighborNet* requesting a volunteer from the public to assist with Zoom. Marj and Emily (if she's here) volunteered to set up the room, provide refreshments and snacks, and then clean up the room afterwards.

Blue Recycling Bin Distribution: Juliette reported she will be picking up the bins next week. Discussion of the date of distribution ensued. The committee decided that the bins will be distributed at the Transfer Station on Saturday

July 8th and Sunday July 9th from 10:00 – 1:00 pm. We will need two or more green committee volunteers on Saturday and Sunday July 8th and 9th at the transfer station. Marj has requested Sunday. Emily will reach out to the members and create the volunteer schedule. At that time, Town Transfer Station stickers may be distributed along with the “flyer” for the Decarbonization Meeting on July 19th.

Helping Seniors Sign Up for Community Choice municipal aggregation energy program: Discussion was held about the Green Committee assisting Council on Aging (COA) members (seniors) to enroll in the town’s Community Choice municipal aggregation energy program in the fall (September) – during the COA’s lunch program. Juliette spoke with Peg Muskrat with the COA about possible dates in September (usually the first Wednesday of the month). Green Committee members can be available to assist seniors in signing up for the program either on the phone or on-line.

BioMap Presentation Update: Emily sent an email on June 6, 2023, with information on the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife “BioMap” presentation on Monday, July 10th at 6:00pm. The meeting will take place via Zoom (Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89175387345?pwd=N2NxdmtHeHQxM0RTakl3YVByVEt0Zz09>). Alec Kaisand and Sarah Wasserman will present information on BioMap and new updates, as well as give a demonstration of the new website and interactive mapper. Please feel free to explore the map and resources in advance of the presentation at mass.gov/biomap. BioMap is an important tool to guide strategic protection and stewardship of lands and waters that are most important for conserving biological diversity in Massachusetts.

New Business

List of Resources: Emily discussed creating a list of issues and organizations that members of the Green Committee are following on-line and posting the list on the Green Committee’s website. We could direct residents to visit the page via the *NeighborNet* every few months. Emily led the discussion about what we would include in this list. The committee members agreed that this would be a good resource for citizens. It could be titled “What our members are reading” or something similar. All EGC members should submit websites or other publications that are good resources for pollution prevention, sustainability, energy efficiency or reducing waste etc. We will compile these resources and categorize them under “Keywords” or “Subjects of Interest” and then list the resources below. Mary McGurn will help the committee with design and placement on the Green Committee website.

Composting Information and Article for July Newsletter: Bonnie reported that she had spoken with town resident, Molly Cliff regarding how to compost in the backyard. (Molly had submitted a question about composting to the EGC’s email address.) Bonnie discussed creating the compost pile, types of materials to use, and different kinds of bins or systems. Emily suggested that this would be good information for the town Newsletter and EGC website. Bonnie will put together an article on “Composting 101- How to Compost in your backyard” and send it to the committee for review. Emily and Marj will edit the article. The deadline for the July Newsletter is June 26, 2023.

Great Barrington Board members to tour Egremont’s Transfer Station: Emily reported that green advocate, Nan Wile, and Board of Health member, Dr. Ruby Chang, are going to tour our Transfer Station next Tuesday, June 20th. They are very interested in all the various collection items/bins, CMRK bin, Discover Book bin and the community composting site.

Other Business

Juliette announced the “Overcoming the Solid Waste Crisis” Meeting on July 12, 2023, 5:30 pm at the Berkshire Innovation Center, Pittsfield. She plans to attend and if any other members want to carpool, they should contact Juliette. This panel discussion will explore the benefits of product stewardship that emphasizes the responsibility of manufacturers in reducing the environmental impact of their products. Please see Juliette’s email from June 12, 2023.

The next meeting was set for Tuesday July 11, 2023, at 4:30 p.m.

A motion was made to end the meeting and was passed unanimously. The meeting concluded at 5:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Bonnie Greenwood