

Leelanau County Energy Futures Task Force  
Meeting Minutes Thursday, August 1, 2024  
Munneke Room, Leland Library

Members Present: Tom VanPelt, Russ Packard, Lois Bahle, Joe DeFors, Bronwyn Jones, Kama Ross

Members Absent: G.Allgaier, L.Brookfield, J.Dindia, E.Gustad, C.Hessell, M.Lautner, P.Wolcott

Chairman Joe DeFors opened the meeting at 9:30 am.

July minutes were reviewed with no changes.

**General Announcements:**

Joe will not present an Energy Brief today, instead allowing for more time to discuss our report to the BOC due in October and the future of the task force.

Concern was expressed over a divided Board of Commissioners and how they will react to the solar grant if awarded.

To help neutralize criticism, Russ Packard and Joe DeFors have decided and are announcing today that they will not take any monetary compensation for their advisory roll that was written into the grant proposal.

Joe briefly discussed the recent (and 2nd) Leelanau Enterprise Forum article from citizen Gary Hoskings. In a discussion with the editors they assured him there would not be any more coverage of the EFTF unless new issues come up. In an effort to establish an actual dialog, Joe contacted Mr. Hoskings asking to meet in person. Mr. Hosking has not responded to the offer.

A question was raised about bonding for the solar project if awarded. Joe sent a note to the Treasurer and Finance Director soliciting their thoughts. Treasurer responded "It would be my recommendation that the County's Counsel include language in their contracts for this purpose." Joe will follow up with Administrator Lewis (who was not included in the original email thread) to solicit his thoughts. Will copy in Gwenne and Kama.

Joe is still working on a small project to quantify how many homes and businesses are using clean energy in Leelanau. We have requested data from our utilities. Cherryland Electric responded quickly with the requested information. Consumers Energy has not yet (request first made in May). Task force member Eric Gustad is assisting with communication to the correct folks at Consumers.

## **Workgroup Reports:**

Clean Energy - Russ Packard. EV charging for the Government Center. Russ has contacted and is seeking quotes from contractors. Two contractors came for a site visit recently. The plan is for power to be connected from the sewer system building which is only about 30 feet from the parking location where the chargers would be installed. This location has been reviewed and supported by Jerry Culman facilities director. Russ is meeting with a third local contractor at 1 pm today.

Hoping to have options/choices for different systems for the group to consider at our next meeting before going forward. Discussion on utility incentives and rebates that may apply to the project - all will be researched. Ty Wessell has encouraged the group to look at GB Tribal 2% grants for primary project funding. Next grant is due in November.

Education/Energy Efficiency. Next Leelanau County Senior Services article for Connection newsletter. Next newsletter coming out in September will highlight heat pumps. Bronwyn will be emailing out draft next week for edits. Lois wants to look at battery issues and the acceleration of good research.

Clean Transportations, Joe reporting. Courtney Hessell who is now on maternity leave, is working on a Community Energy Grant for EV charging infrastructure for the Grand Traverse Band. He does not believe it has been submitted yet.

A parallel project to the EV charging project for the government center is underway to identify whether some county departments might benefit from the use of hybrid or EV vehicles. The concept of a shared "pool" vehicle has also been discussed and will be researched. Joe will continue his research and interviews with county department heads.

Tom Van Pelt believes there may be some grant funding available soon through the local energy cooperatives infrastructure projects. They are waiting on dollar amounts and rules for dispersing grant funds. He will track and report on these developments.

## **Discussion: End of Year Report and Future of the Task Force**

End of the year report to the BOC will be on October 1, 2024 at the executive session meeting (both verbal presentation and written report delivered).

What have we done? Each workgroup has provided information about efforts and successes for report. We will review the report at our September meeting and revise before it is presented and final.

Discussion on how we might expand our educational efforts. New outlets for written material? Continuing our public education speaker series. Leelanau Energy had approached the Enterprise for a dedicated space on a regular basis to provide energy

information to the public they were turned down at the time (unless purchasing paid space). Bronwyn will reach out to the Glen Arbor Sun to see if they would dedicate space for our group at no cost. Using the same article that is written for the LCSS would be easy.

Green Home Institute has great online educational webinars but we would like an in-person event. Suggestion that Geofurnace Heating and Cooling owner is respected nationally - perhaps a good speaker for a follow up to heat pump technology information in fall newsletters.

Other opportunities desired. Bronwyn mentioned NMC Extended Ed./Adult Education Short Course on energy - easy to set up, the college does all the advertising, with a vast audience. Leelanau Summinairs may be another way to reach a new audience. And several other libraries do programming for adults and kids.

Discussion about the task force design and organization for the future. We intend to include this in recommendations section of BOC report. Are current meeting dates/times still best? We can do internal survey to determine. Is size of group (14) still right? (there are concerns about lack of attendance/participation of some members). Joe asked if current workgroups are the best organizational structure going forward (most present thought they were). Consensus was also that we were happy with "task force" designation - no desire to be elevated to an official county committee. The group strongly agreed that we should request an approval for furtherance of the task force for three additional years.

Kama will find out about group membership making decisions with the county administrator to make sure we are clear on expectations for next year.

No Public Comment

Meeting adjourned at 11 am.

Submitted by Kama Ross (Gwenne not present)