

4/4/22 Glover Energy Committee Minutes

Present: Jack Sumberg, Ann Creaven, Angela Daniels, Heather Clark, Mariel Hess, and **guests** Patrick Shattuck, Exec. Dir. of Rural Edge out of Lyndonville, VT. and Becky Masure, Director of Real Estate Development for Rural Edge out of Newport, VT.

RURAL EDGE

- Patrick Shattuck, Exec. Dir. of Rural Edge out of Lyndonville and Becky Masure, Dir. of Real Estate Development for Rural Edge out of Newport join us to share what they do, and to consider possible ways of collaborating with our committee.
- A primary focus of Rural Edge is on maximizing energy efficiency and sustainability when initiating or renovating their housing units.
- They presently have 700 housing units throughout the NEK and have 22 more projects in their pipeline. (2021 Rural Edge Annual Report lists all the properties they oversee. See link below.)
- A priority of Rural Edge is to keep folks in their own homes rather than having to go into a nursing home, and a present legislative priority which Rural Edge is required to follow - tied to ARPA funds - is to move unhoused people out of motels.
- While focus has been on senior housing and housing for those with disabilities and low income, Rural Edge is now making units for the general population to serve identified demographic needs for housing in the NEK based on statewide policy and dictated by state funding priorities.
- On their existing units they regularly do capital needs assessments to stay on top of operational needs, and code and standards compliance.
- Rural Edge properties can have many levels of funding and therefore many levels of restrictions which tend to slow things down.
- They have an Emergency Rehab Program that brings in every resource possible to address both emergency needs and long term needs for private home owners. At any given time there are 30-40 such assessments for rehabilitation of units happening per year. They provide grants, loans or grant-loan combinations up to \$15,000 per household, as well as construction oversight.

- Rural Edge works closely with Heat Squad and meets with them every few weeks to ensure coordination on common projects.
- If a client is eligible for NETO, Rural Edge makes every effort to help their client get on NETO's waiting list.
- See their annual report for 2021 here: <https://ruraledge.org/impact>

Pierce Block

- Rural Edge now owns and has a satellite office in the Pierce Block in Barton.
- Plan was to stabilize building structure, and that is now complete.
- There is allegedly adequate housing in Barton with the several subsidized housing units - so there is no plan to use the Pierce Block to provide more housing at this point.
- There is, however, a plan to do a post-Covid assessment of housing needs, so this may change.
- Rural Edge does intend to keep Kinney's in the block since it provides such an important service to the community.

Potential cooperative efforts:

- Rural Edge will start informing their clients about Window Inserts
- Rural Edge staff will join in on Window Insert Builds as a part of their Staff Volunteer Program.
- Glover Energy Committee will ask Glover Equity Committee to include Rural Edge fliers in every new resident's welcome basket. Ann will pick some up at the Barton Rural Edge Office.
- Home Ownership Center of Rural Edge (?) will be doing outreach for rehab loans including possible grants from Vermont Community Foundation
- Rural Edge will consider tabling at Sutton Energy Fair this summer
- Rural Edge will consider putting an article in "The Chronicle" to let the community know they are there.
- Possible energy efficiency measures - or expansion - of the Glover Senior Housing Unit. Becky Masure reminds us that Housing Units such as the Senior Rural Edge Housing unit in Glover get USDA funds, so any changes, adjustments, additions, etc. have to be cleared with them.

-When the Senior Center comes up for Rural Edge's regular assessment for upkeep and rehab (done after 20 yrs) - it might be a time to consider such things as more efficient heating such as an oil fired [heating system or] pellet furnace or solar panels to offset electricity use/provide net metering. BUT Rural Edge has to apply for USDA MPR program assistance to pursue such changes and there is a very long lag time between submitting application and obtaining the permission - in one case it's been 5 years! And even if permission is granted - at this point it addresses only continuing needs, not transitioning to more efficient energy usage measures.

-Glover - especially given its Village Center Designation - could consider working toward getting another Housing Unit but with Rural Edge's 22 unit backlog - it could be years before any such proposal could even be considered by Rural Edge. Everything is based on "market need" so a Regional Housing Needs Assessment would have to confirm need. It might be more prudent for Glover to consider adding on 6-8 units to the existing Glover Senior Housing Unit rather than aim to build a whole new housing facility.

GLOVER SOLAR ARRAY

-Norwich Solar sent a net-metering agreement and a lease agreement to Glover Select Board to sign after a couple questions were cleared up. Town Attorney, Sarah Davies Coe, will review the paperwork this week to make sure all is in order.

-Glover Select Board will hopefully sign the agreements at their next meeting on April 14th. At that point NS will begin looking for investors.

-We will want to monitor whether our array when up and running is indeed covering our town building electricity usage.

-Hopefully our buildings will use 100% of electricity produced by our array.

-We can access from VEC the usage for each of our town buildings via their individual accounts.

-NS predicts production of 86,250 KW by our array. We predicted ~ 81,000 KW.

-Glover will get 11% off VEC's annual rate once our array is up and running.

-Might want to consider putting in heat pumps - one in downstairs of Town Hall being a place to start.

-ARPA funds might be good source for future energy saving and fossil fuel use reduction efforts - such as installing heat pumps.

NVDA REGIONAL ENERGY MEETING

-Lots of good information shared. Watch online at:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1dHnnOUQbiml_ktcJUIXxL2dXI9TJHuq6/view

NEXT MEETING - Monday, April 18th at 4pm, via zoom