

Renewable Energy Benalla (REB) Action Group

MINUTES

Wednesday, 17th March 2021, 10am at Uniting Church Meeting Room

1. Welcome

2. Present: John Lloyd, Kevin Smith, Frank Dunin, Larissa Montgomery, Bev Lee

3. Apologies: Adrian Howden

4. Review of minutes of 3rd February, 2021 meeting

Moved: Kevin Smith 2nd: Frank Dunin

5. Business Arising

5.1 Pamphlets

Still some boxes of pamphlets left, rental pamphlets left, Adrian was going to collect the boxes. Will just need to check that they are still relevant.

5.2 Indi Stronger Community Grants

Adrian met with new president of Men's Shed. They are well advanced with the new shed. Have placed a request with Bendigo Bank to see if they may qualify for a grant for Solar for the new shed but they may not be eligible as the population of Benalla could be too high (different grant program?). If not they would be interested to see what we can do to assist.

Drill Hall, currently leased by the Gymnastic Club. Issues with roof structure, not suitable for solar.

Bev discussed with Waminda and passed on the information.

6. Action Groups - report on action plan to implement key strategies

6.1 Waste to Energy update

Waste to Energy is still awaiting return to office at EPA to talk with the section looking after the Dandenong plant.

6.2 Community energy project

Solar Panels for Munro Ave kindergarten

Installation: Installation date: April 9th

Loan Agreement with NERPSA: NERPSA only require a loan of \$5000, rather than full amount of \$5575, as they can claim a refund of GST. Quarterly Repayments: 16 @ \$300 plus final payment of \$200.

Loan Agreement documents sent to NERPSA Manager to be signed and returned for signing by BSGF.

Copy of signed document will then be sent to NERPSA.

Proposed date to advance loan to NERPSA - April 1st. First quarterly payment due 1st July.

Official 'Switch-On' Ceremony

Thursday 29th April at 2:10pm so that parents can attend after picking up children at 2pm.

Purpose - to acknowledge major contributors to the project and publicise the Community Energy Project.

Major contributors/donors: FRV/Winton Solar Farm, Sue & Sandy Campbell, SolarGain (in-kind contribution)

Helen Haines will be key-note speaker. Mayor and councillors to be invited and Steph Ryan.

Launch of fund raising for next project - we plan to have identified the next community building.

Change of date for switch-on ceremony - now Thursday 6th May

Peter Maddock has recommended we use RAISELY website for online fundraising.

6.3 Energy efficiency

Virtual House Tour: There seems to have been some misunderstanding about Adrian's son producing a 'Virtual House Tour' as he has worked on a series of slides.

Energy Efficiency Workshops - Are we going to conduct these workshops again?

There has been some talk in the past about getting some case studies from places that have undertaken some energy efficiency upgrades.

Who will do something about that?

Could Heath do some regular messages and/or short videos? Energy efficiency tips, solar and energy use during the day (Kevin), AusNet information available to monitor your energy use etc.

6.4 Community Engagement

Concentrate on CEP promotion for now. Could then follow up with regular messages/tips etc. as above.

7. Action Plan and responsibilities

7.1 Mt Bruno minigrid

Mount Bruno microgrid could be difficult as the hub is at the end of a three phase line with the rest SWER source. Tony is having problems at present as the shed is imbalanced and kills inverters and this has to be solved so they can use their panels. He is happy to talk with Mondo regarding the micro grid and battery proposal. How can we assist to get the rest of the possible connections together to hear what Mondo proposal is?

Lakeside Drive is another potential location.

7.2 Solar Garden investigation

Kevin has still been looking into solar gardens and keeping in mind for Indigo Power community energy hubs. Will also wait to see if Council might support such a project.

7.3 Renewables Expo

Probably not enough people power at the moment so will put on hold for now.

8. Grant Opportunities

8.1 Victorian government funding for Neighbourhood Batteries

Information sent around prior to the meeting <https://www.energy.vic.gov.au/new-energy-technologies>

8.2 Victorian funding to establish Community Energy Hubs

NECEN and Indigo Power involvement, ZOOM meeting tomorrow to discuss potential application for the region (Hume). See attached report.

9. General Business

URGENT: Finding more members for REB - John will say something at the next BSFG meeting. Could also promote during CEP project launch.

Larissa leaving Council, still happy to assist in volunteer capacity where possible.

10. Next Meeting

To be determined. Suggestion- Wednesday 14th April 5pm

DATE DECIDED – Tuesday 4 May at 5pm Uniting Church Meeting Room.