**Renewable Energy Benalla (REB) Action Group**

**MINUTES**

**Wednesday 9th December, 10am at Uniting Church Meeting Room**

**1. Welcome**

Special welcome to new members Heath Whiley and Kim Lukey.

**2. Present:**

John Lloyd, Kim Lukey, Heath Whiley, Frank Dunin, Adrian Howden, Bev Lee, Kevin Smith, Larissa Montgomery

**3. Apologies:**

None received

**4. Review of minutes of July 15th, 2020 meeting**

John gave a verbal report on the minutes which were previously circulated via email. Main item was cancelling the incorporation.

*Motion: That the minutes of the meeting of 15th July, 2020 be accepted*

Moved: Kevin Smith 2nd: Frank Dunin All in favour

**5. Business Arising - Future of REB**

5.1 Discussion of issues/questions about re-invigorating REB

 Used the discussion paper that John had previously circulated to work through how we might re-invigorate REB. Also discussed whether 100% renewable by 2028 was achievable and if not should this be removed to take pressure off the group. Most thought 100% renewable was not achievable in the timeframe.

What successes do you think REB has had? What has REB done well?

* Community energy project progressing
* Production of pamphlets, development of website
* Although low number of attendees, the energy efficiency workshops were well run
* Liaison with solar farms, particularly FRV

What could REB have done better? How could we have done better?

* Low Facebook numbers and could do better
* BZE transition strategy, haven’t progressed very far
* Publicity and community engagement
* Focussing on one thing at a time, when there is so much going on

What can we do to ensure that we do things better from here on?

* Publicity and community engagement. Instagram might be more relevant for younger people. Need to make regular and engaging posts on Instagram and Facebook with photos, videos etc., tell local stories.
* Videos for case studies
* Photos for engagement. Before and after photos. Heath may be able to assist with getting photos.
* BBN award, could REB organise instead of BSFG
* Public events, need a way for people to engage with REB
* Larger scale PV – e.g. solar garden (Haystack example)
* EDGE Project – potential for Mt Bruno area as an edge of grid
* Micro-grid funding round 2 – as above

Looking to the future, John's long term involvement cannot be guaranteed beyond 9 months or so as he is planning to move away from Benalla. So we will need someone willing to take on chairperson role.

**5.2** Plan of action and responsibilities:

* Create an Instagram page – Kim and Heath to create, Bev and Peter will assist with information
* Launch of Community Energy Project – John to progress with CEP and advise as timing of install is known (potentially launch in combination with an expo)
* Scope an expo event – Bev and Larissa
* Investigate potential for Mt Bruno mini grid - Adrian
* Investigate potential for a solar garden – Kevin
* Short video for case studies – start with one business (Church Street Surgery?) and one household. Are there some young local people that might do videos, Peter Holmes may have contacts or young people volunteering for CEP Project. Larissa to ask Council’s youth coordinator about young video makers.

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

**6.1** Waste to Energy update

Investigations have stalled somewhat due to Covid. Did receive information from EPA however too long and difficult to interpret. Adrian will write again to Melbourne to get some figures on materials.

 **6.2** Community energy project

Funding received from FRV Community Grants, $5,000. Will allow the Munro Avenue project to go ahead. Munro Avenue will enter a loan agreement and pay back based on savings. Solar Gain have offered to support project and have quoted system, including monitoring. Have a bit of work to do before the install will happen. Have a couple of younger volunteers that may be able to assist with publicity etc.

 **6.3** Energy efficiency

John circulated report before meeting. Was disappointing that didn’t have more people attend the workshop series last year. Adrian’s son has produced a virtual tour – Adrian will send John the link again. Could consider doing online sessions as well. Need to consider how we could work with businesses as well. Check with Peter how many pamphlets there are and how we can distribute. SV energy efficiency. Promote on councils website. Energy efficiency assessments – John has been talking to Geoff Lodge about how we might be able to go about doing them.

**7. Request to BSFG to adopt Transition Strategy as policy document**

John has spoken to Peter Holmes about BSFG formally adopting as a policy document. Will follow up with Peter.

**8. Presentation to Council**

Seeking support for implementation of Transition Strategy. Meet with CEO and Larissa first. Will consider in new year.

**9. Preparation for possible future funding**

Identify priority projects that could be the basis of possible funding applications.

Ideas:

* Mt Bruno micro grid
* Solar garden
* Expo (Larissa to speak to Michelle at Alpine)

 Identify possible sources of funding. Research priority projects and undertake preliminary preparation of applications. Larissa to create a template for potential projects.

**10. Next Meeting** : To be determined.

**Meeting Action Table – to be updated at each meeting**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Action | Responsibility | Notes / update |
| 1 | Create Instagram page | Kim, Heath |  |
| 2 | Launch CEP Project | John & CEP group | (potentially with expo or other event) |
| 3 | Scope expo event | Bev, Larissa |  |
| 4 | Investigate Mt Bruno mini-grid feasibility | Adrian |  |
| 5 | Investigate solar garden | Kevin |  |
| 6 | Identify potential young videographers | John (check with Peter H, CEP volunteers)Larissa (check with youth coordinator) |  |
| 7 | BSFG adoption of Transition Strategy | John |  |
| 8 | Presentation to Council | John, Larissa |  |
| 9 | Create project planning template | Larissa |  |
| 10 | Identify potential sources of funding | All |  |