

Norwich Energy Committee
June 24, 2014, 7 pm
Minutes

Members present: Linda Gray, Rob Sydney, Jonathan Teller-Elsberg

Members absent: Alan Berolzheimer, Doug Iverson, Norm Levy, Sarah Reeves, Jonathan Streeter

Others present: Bill Bender, Carol Campbell, Margery Cantor, Neil Fulton, Jack McKenna, Libby Robbie, Jean Baer (7:20), Andy Friedland (7:35), Joel Stettenheim (8:10)

Listening session on Solaflect installation (Union Village Rd.)

Libby Robbie expressed her reservation about placement is her only reservation, wants to see more local input on placement, particularly in historic districts and close to roads.

Neil Fulton explained that Vt towns have only the authority granted to them by the state; regulation of solar installations is by the Public Service Board.

Linda Gray showed the group a series of photos of utility poles (by the cemetery, along Union Village Rd and Main Street, in front of the Norwich Inn and Tracy Hall), pointing out that, while they are unattractive, they are mostly oblivious to us.

Various NEC members spoke about the important role of residential solar in mitigating the worst climate changes and acknowledged others' concerns about aesthetics.

Jean Baer, who lives at 31 Pierce Lane, expressed surprise that she did not know in advance of the installation, but that she does not find it ugly.

Bill Bender, head of Solaflect, noted that Vermont's regulatory system for solar is a key factor in Vt having 7 x as much solar installed as NH. He welcomed feedback, noting that they don't want to annoy people with their installations.

Andy Friedland expressed support for the solar installation.

Update on Weatherization campaign with HEAT Squad

The committee spoke with Bruce Whitney of HEAT Squad by phone. They have talked with 2 local contractors (Eric Solsaa and Frans van de Ven) about a campaign following the "solarize" model – a discount with a deadline for commitment. The contractors propose a 10% discount for their work on each home in the campaign. There was discussion of whether it's feasible to launch a campaign this summer. It was suggested that we do a pilot effort this summer with a target of 10 homeowners (drawn from our "warm leads" list from the 2013 Home Energy Challenge). The pilot would involve NEC identifying 10 interested homeowners by 7/15, with the contractors doing audits in July-August, and the efficiency work in Sep-Oct. Then do a public campaign in the fall, for work to be done summer 2015.

Linda Gray to follow up with Bruce by phone to pin down further details.

Update on Select Board strategic plan re: energy

Linda Gray reported that Steve Flanders outlined that the Select Board would take action on the proposed energy goal (75% reduction in GHG emissions from 2012 levels by 2050) after reviewing the results of the town survey that closes 6/30. Those in attendance were urged to be sure to respond to the survey.

Update on Smart Commute survey and next steps

Linda Gray reported that she had met with Vital Communities staff working on the Smart Commute program and Phil Dechert, town planner. VC staff shared the survey results from 184 respondents, higher than their goal. Highlights include that 72% did not know about the Google maps option to plan a trip on Advance Transit, 78% were unaware

of the Go Vermont rideshare program. 74% drive alone, and for 92% most trips are under 20 miles (one way). VC staff will prepare various items to highlight and publicize over the next year, and will survey again next spring.

Update on Solarize campaign and additional activities

The low-key solarize effort so far this year has led to about 15 additional residential installations. (To get to 90% renewable energy by 2050, the target is 36.) Norwich Technologies and Solaflect are interested in a more formal campaign this summer-fall. Committee members will meet with them to discuss details.