

Meeting of the Norwich Energy Committee Tuesday, 12/22/20, 7 pm, via Zoom

Attending: Linda Gray, Susan Hardy, Aaron Lamperti, Norm Levy, Charlie Lindner, Erich Rentz

Guests: Linda Cook, Rob Gere, Pam Smith, Doug Wilberding

Linda Gray gave the statement of Act 92 compliance. The 11/30 meeting minutes and the 12/22 agenda were approved by consensus.

Norm Levy reported on the Energy Saving Project with Vital Communities: two mailings have been sent to mobile home owners, including a questionnaire. Norwich has only about 20 mobile homes; there have been no Norwich responses. Among the other towns participating there have been 40 responses; energy committee volunteers in those towns are following up with homeowners to help them pursue weatherization, etc. Norm has posted printed flyers and brochures in town, and will make regular posts to the list serv. Linda has added to the NEC web site language and a link to the relevant Vital Communities web page. <http://norwichenergycommittee.weebly.com/financing.html>

Aaron Lamperti and Charlie Lindner reported that there has been no activity on Green Fleet issues.

Linda Gray reported on e-bike plans. She is gathering information on a storage shed option for the library, if the bike built for the conversion workshop <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iiNqrihZdRk> were to be accepted as part of the library collection. She reported that there is \$262 remaining in the grant budget for the workshop, and there was agreement to pay Karl Kemnitzer an honorarium for his central role in the workshop.

The coordinating committee for the Upper Valley Lending Library has begun to plan the 2021 schedule for town loans. To cover annual operating expenses (bike maintenance, transporting from town to town, web reservation system), that committee agreed that participating town energy committees should contribute up to \$300 each and that local bike shops would be approached for sponsorship. There was consensus for the Norwich Energy Committee to contribute up to \$300 for this. In 2021, each town can expect to have a 5-week loan period. Previous discussion indicated that NEC members felt that 3 weeks are sufficient. Linda reported that she has approached the chair of the Sharon Energy Committee about sharing; he is interested and we'll have further discussion about details. Rob Gere noted that Hanover Adventure Tours is open to supporting the loan program, perhaps including storage and offering extra loans.

Discussion of use of the funds approved by voters in March 2020 for the Regional Energy Coordinator, a position hosted at TRORC. The 2020 article specified that the money go to that position for FY 20-21. To do anything else with the funds (ie, different use, different FY) requires another vote.

Linda proposed that the NEC recommend that the Selectboard include an article for Town Meeting 2021 asking voters for approval to use in FY 21-22 the money already raised for this position. She has checked with energy committee contacts in three other towns still in the group; they are all pleased with the work by Geoff Martin as regional energy coordinator. She suggested this as the best near-term way to use the funds, a simple change (carry over to next FY) to explain to voters, and no tax impact, since the money has already been raised by this year's tax rate.

Committee discussion included these points: include the list of Norwich-specific tasks for this position, collect details of projects that Martin has worked on for other towns (ie, what did we miss out on this FY?), and get confirmation early in the process from TRORC that Norwich could rejoin the group of towns in FY 21-22 at the funding level approved for FY 20-21. There was agreement for Linda to pursue these points and draft a recommendation for the Selectboard.

Discussion of “Electrify Everything” activities for 2021:

- Linda has information about electric lawn equipment from a Charlotte, VT, contact
- Sustainable Hanover recently asked for EV drivers to volunteer to share their experience with people considering an EV purchase; we could follow that model and/or collaborate with Hanover, and extend the idea to homeowners who have installed heat pumps
- Norm’s investigation of an EV loan program has hit a dead-end so far
- identify a project suitable for a NWC grant
- review the ReWiring America web site <https://www.rewiringamerica.org/>; possibilities there for lining up a speaker?
- Aaron will complete a case study
- possibilities for providing a “home energy navigator” for a Norwich homeowner
- Linda will revise the NEC web site, keeping the resources from “Save 20% in 2020” but orienting them to “Electrify Everything”

Announcements:

- Linda, Charlie, and Aaron have volunteered for the Hartford Climate Action Team, to learn specifics about town climate actions and to observe their planning process
- save the date: VECAN meeting 1/11 noon
- the VT Climate Council meets 1/4, 8 am <https://aoa.vermont.gov/content/vermont-climate-council>
- VECAN conference videos are available <https://vecan.net/conferences/13th-annual-vecan-conference-2020>

Public comments: Linda Cook requested that links be included in the meeting minutes.

The next regular meeting will be Tuesday, January 26, 7 pm, via Zoom.

submitted by Linda Gray