

Norwich Energy Committee meeting Tuesday, 8/25, 7 pm, Tracy Hall

Present: committee members Linda Gray, Norm Levy, Meghan Wilson; Neil Fulton, Town Manager; Bruce Genereaux, Green Mountain Community Solar; Steve Usle, Prudent Living; Bob Walker, SERG

Minutes

- Bruce Genereaux, Norwich resident and principal at Green Mtn Community Solar, introduced the company, which has been in operation since summer 2014. It offers off-site solar to interested individuals, businesses, and non-profits. Participants make one payment, purchasing solar panels at \$3.80/watt, and get a 30-yr license from GMCS to join one of their net-metering groups. Participants are eligible to take the 30% federal tax credit. GMCS retains the Renewable Energy Certificates, unless the customer pays 20% extra to retain them.

If participants move away, they have the option of selling their panels back to GMCS, to another utility customer, or to receive a monetary payment worth 90% of the utility net-metering credits. GMCS now has 2 sites in operation (Groton and Chester, VT), a third planned in Groton, and permitting in process for 3 more sites.

- Vt energy code for buildings and how NEC might promote in Norwich: Linda provided a summary of the current process, in which Planning/Zoning staff give information from the State about the Vt Residential Energy Building Code to homeowners who are building a new home or doing a renovation/addition that involves heated space. There is no follow-up enforcement, although the state code does require homeowners to file a certificate of compliance with their Town Clerk.

Bob Walker, SERG and Thetford Energy Committee, described their initiatives in Thetford: 1) the TEC has a cover letter promoting the Vermont Energy Star Home program, which the Thetford zoning administrator hands out, along with info on the Residential Building Energy Code and a pamphlet on the Energy Star Home program; 2) the TEC attempted to get their Planning Commission to adopt regulations requiring a certificate of occupancy, which would create the opportunity to confirm compliance with the building energy code, but the Planning Commission did not do this; and 3) the TEC encourage the Planning Commission to adopt in their latest Town Plan an increased density bonus for Planned Unit Developments that that are built with high energy efficiency.

Consensus agreement that, at the least, NEC can borrow the language from the Thetford cover letter, obtain Energy Star Home program pamphlets, and arrange with the Norwich planning/zoning staff to include in their handouts to permit applicants.

- Norwich solar updates

--at Exit 13: Linda and Neil (and state reps Masland and Briglin) attended a meeting with VTrans staff, who confirmed that solar could be safely developed in the "infield" of the south-bound ramp of Exit 13 and agreed that the next step would be to meet with the FHWA VT director to discuss a partnership with the Town as a user of the solar electricity. This meeting is still pending; Neil will follow up shortly.

--contacts w/ Norwich businesses: Norm attended a recent meeting of the Norwich Business Council, and will attend again in Oct or Nov with staff from Norwich Technologies and Solaflect; Norm is in process of setting up a meeting with King Arthur Flour staff;

--contacts w/ Fire District: Norm will attend the 9/21 meeting of the Prudential Committee

- contact re Sr Housing energy improvements: Linda will attend the 9/15 meeting of the Sr Housing board to learn about their current energy status and encourage improvements

- how to pursue Weatherization 2015-16: Linda reported that there is money remaining from the NEGEF grant that the NEC rec'd in August 2014, and NEC has permission to carry it over. It was budgeted for a town-wide mailing related to home energy efficiency. Linda will discuss with HEAT Squad staff re details (timing, message, targeted action).

- other: Neil reported that the GUVSWMD has selected a developer for a ~5MW solar project on the District's land in Hartland; the selection is public on 8/27. The 500 MW project will sell its power directly to the utility; a 500 kW net-metered project may be included as well. In addition, he is gathering cost estimates for a Dept of Public Works building and including solar in that information.

Next meeting is Tuesday, September 22, 7 pm, Tracy Hall