

Meeting of the Norwich Energy Committee
Tuesday, 8/23/22, 7 pm, via Zoom

Attending: Linda Gray, Aaron Lamperti, Charlie Lindner, Erich Rentz, Brad Wible (7:10)
Guest: Rob Gere

1. The 7/26 minutes and 8/23 agenda were approved by consensus.

2. Committee vacancies, select new Chair/ Vice Chair: with chair Aaron Lamperti's appointment to the Selectboard, he will resign at the end of this meeting; as vice chair, Charlie Lindner will serve as chair through next spring. Erich Rentz expressed his willingness to serve as vice chair, which was approved by consensus. Another committee member died in July, there will be a second vacancy; there was discussion of interested residents and agreement to encourage them to apply for appointment.

3. Updates on existing projects

A. Electrify Everything: Charlie proposed 9/10 or 9/24 for outreach again at Dan & Whit's; either date works for committee members, there was agreement that the topic should be explaining the wide range of new incentives in the Inflation Reduction Act. Agreement for outreach on 10/22 as well, with the topic TBD, possibly the annual Button Up campaign with Efficiency VT.

There was discussion about Green Mountain Power's incentive for home batteries that share access with GMP, and the 30% tax credit for solar and battery installation.

B. Window Dressers: Linda reported that inserts orders are well over our goal of 250, with about 100 orders with a full or partial subsidy, and about six households still to be measured. The Community Build will be 10/13-19, at the church on Dartmouth campus. Our collaboration with Thetford means that we will have experienced Thetford volunteers for the Build and in the rotation as shift supervisors.

C. Energy Coordinator (IREC) report

Linda reported that Geoff Martin's recent Norwich-specific work has included

- providing recommendations to the Planning Commission on energy-related provisions for the Town's revised land-use regulations;
- working with Town Manager Rod Francis and energy consultant Marcus Jones on energy reviews of Tracy Hall and the DPW building;
- following up on problems with the EV charger at Dan & Whit's.

For all 7 towns, he's monitoring state and federal funding opportunities, and proposed rules related to the medium- and heavy-duty vehicle emissions and electric vehicles.

In addition, working groups are forming for the two actions prioritized for multi-town collaboration. The two topics are Climate Action Guidelines / Pledge (a version of our Electrify Everything activities) and Residential Building Energy Standards. The first group will meet 9/2 at 9 am; the second will meet at 11 am on either 9/2 or 9/11 (date to be confirmed next week). Linda will attend both and report back.

D. UVTMA report: Norm Levy absent, no report.

E. Updates on A36 items: none.

4. Questions from the Selectboard: The Selectboard has asked all commissions, boards, and committees to answer these questions: 1. What is the committee's charge as you understand it? 2. What

are your committee's current initiatives (provide timelines if applicable)? 3. What are your committee's goals and/or principal activities for the next three years?

Charlie shared a draft response. Answer 1 is straightforward: The NEC charge was approved by the Selectboard 6/2018 and is at this link <http://norwichenergycommittee.weebly.com/committee-charge.html>

There was general agreement on the draft answers to 2 and 3, with suggestions to add references to advising on how to spend ACA funds and to VT emissions stats showing how much emissions are due to individual usage; to list NEC activities as they relate to the charge; to highlight outreach to residents as the work of NEC volunteers and Town operations follow-up as the work of Geoff Martin; and to explicitly state that the NEC welcomes the opportunity to work with the Selectboard.

Charlie will revise the response, circulate it to members for comment, and then submit to the Selectboard.

5. Other business, new projects, announcements:

Linda described discussion of possible changes to the area e-bike loan program. One idea is that, rather than moving through towns for 2- or 3-week loan programs, the bikes could be permanently available at 3-4 locations in the area, with individual towns hosting "demo days" on a regular schedule. Demo days would keep up awareness of e-bikes, participants could borrow overnight from the closest permanent location. This is just one idea under discussion; others are welcome.

Linda was cc'd by Brie Swenson, Rec Director, on an email from Local Motion regarding school biking programs. Marion Cross School staff seem open to more activities; Linda will share with the IREC collaboration group, to see if schools in several area towns might pursue such activities, and if energy committees could help. Charlie noted that Amy VanderKooi, formerly at the Montshire Museum, is the new environmental ed coordinator at MCS.

There was brief discussion of getting a local farm interested in trying "agrivoltaics," ie, solar mounted high enough for farm activities underneath. Some crops benefit from the shade, some need less water in the shade; with droughts more frequent, this could become more important.

Aaron resigned from his position on the committee.

6. Public comment and correspondence: None.

7. Adjourned at 8:10

The fourth Tuesday in September will be 9/27.

submitted by Linda Gray