

Meeting of the Norwich Energy Committee
Tuesday, 1/24/23, 7 pm, via Zoom

Attending: Linda Gray, Garret Heaton, Charlie Lindner, Erich Rentz, Brad Wible, Eva Rosenbloom

1. The 11/22 minutes and 1/24 agenda were approved by consensus.

2. Follow up on November planning discussions – calendar for 2023 and new ideas:

* Agreement on the proposed calendar (Feb / Eat Low & Local, Mar / solar, Apr / solar-batteries-resilience, May / transportation-ebikes, June / electric yard equipment, July / EVs, Aug / heat pumps, Sep-Oct / Button Up – weatherization, Nov / Household “handprint”, Dec / energy audits).

* Agreement to seek out personal narratives for each topic; develop a set of prompts to answer; start with members of NEC and Norwich Neighbor Network, people at outreach events; need only 2-3 per topic **Garret and Brad will draft the prompts**

* Agreement to compile info on local contractor availability **Charlie will ask Melanie Michel if this is a suitable project for her climate program with Vital Communities; if not, Linda and Erich will work on**

* Agreement to pursue MCS collaboration on carbon handprint (the positive things one does to affect their footprint). **Charlie and Linda will follow up with new MCS environmental staff person; Eva will contact “handprint” originator about elementary-level activities**

* Discussion about a role for NEC if additional solar projects are proposed in town: through planning/zoning staff, learn of proposals, reach out to surrounding neighbors to outline solar’s role in state climate plan, to explain permitting process, to compile questions; general agreement that this could be helpful.

* Discussion about [GMP's proposed new program](#) for solar projects benefiting low-income customers; **Erich and Garret will review tariff details.**

3. Updates on existing projects

A. Electrify Everything:

* Charlie continues with weekly posts to the list serv.

* The Hartford Energy Commission is planning an event for 4/1, Energize UV, at the Listen Center Dining Hall in White River Junction with EVs at the adjacent Hartford town offices parking lot. Their description: energy and climate experts from all over the Upper Valley together in the same room with residents who have questions or concerns about how they can live a greener, more energy efficient life...energy professionals ranging from solar developers, representatives from Efficiency Vermont, MileageSmart, Drive Electric Vermont, Cover Home Repair, WRAP, Trailblazers, Vital Communities and others. They want to collaborate with area energy committees; Linda will attend a planning meeting 1/26; multiple volunteers will be needed.

B. Energy Coordinator (IREC) report

A new person will start in February, Jeff Grout of Randolph. Activities have continued in the two groups following up on actions prioritized for multi-town collaboration:

* Climate Action Guidelines – a web resource is in development for town energy committees to link to <https://www.trorc.org/programs/energy/intermunicipal-regional-energy-coordinator/climateactionforindividuals/>

* Residential Building Energy Standards – 1) positive response from our legislators in both the House and Senate to a proposal to allow towns to limit the route for RBES certification to HERS rating. The groundwork has been laid for a bill to be introduced this session. 2) promoting resources that our towns

can offer regarding efficiency measures in building projects, including a suite of planning/zoning provisions, development of a checklist, and training for town staff.

Recommendations for Tracy Hall and the DPW building from energy consultant Marcus Jones have not been submitted, as far as Linda knows. [Update: Marcus sent reports to the interim town manager, late December and early January.]

C. UVTMA report: no report

D. Updates on A36 items: see above

4. Other business, new projects, announcements:

* Solar strategy – in response to the select board's concerns of perceived liability, there was discussion of the history of 'solarize' (locally and nationally) and agreement that while the original program aim was identifying solar installers that could facilitate the technical QA, this was no longer necessary; agreement that information on solar installers on the NEC web site can be parallel to information on weatherization and heat pump contractors, ie, pointing users to other directories. For solar, the resource would be the REV directory; Linda will let Solarize listed installers know. Garret offered to update the Norwich Solar Map with 2021 and 2022 installations.

* Linda will share photos of display boards that fit around the base of the CITGO pole at Dan & Whit's, for planning for future campaigns.

* Agreement to ask for 2 weeks in May, for 2023 e-bike loans; details of loans to be discussed in February or March.

* Norm Levy has contacted Charlie to resign from the committee, as he has lost enthusiasm for planning and meetings; he will remain available as a volunteer.

* Agreement to invite REV to the February meeting, for a presentation about reforming Vermont's Renewable Energy Standard.

5. Public comment and correspondence: none

6. Adjourned at 8:30.

The fourth Tuesday in February is 2/28.

submitted by Linda Gray