

Meeting of the Norwich Energy Committee
Tuesday, 11/22/22, 7 pm, via Zoom

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

Guests: Melanie Michel, Lily Terry

1. The 10/25 minutes and 11/22 agenda were approved by consensus.

2. Updates on existing projects

A. Electrify Everything: the committee did outreach on 11/19 at Dan & Whit's, again with good traffic and success in providing information to residents. Improvement ideas: a way to ID us as Energy Committee volunteers? Have forms for people to join the Norwich Neighbor Network? More out-of-towners at D&W; nearly none at the transfer station.

B. Energy Coordinator (IREC) report

Geoff Martin is leaving this position as of 12/2 (to work for Norwich Solar Technologies); Linda reported on the disposition of his projects:

- replacement parts for the EV charger at Dan & Whit's are in hand, repair work to be scheduled with D&W staff;
- energy reviews / recommendations for Tracy Hall and the DPW building from energy consultant Marcus Jones are to be submitted by the end of November; Geoff is meeting with Marcus on 11/28;
- Geoff reviewed with Linda the spreadsheet he uses to ensure that solar net-meter credits don't pile up on any individual Town account with GMP, to ensure a smooth transition with his successor;
- TRORC staff will ensure continued work for the two groups following up on actions prioritized for multi-town collaboration: Climate Action Guidelines / Pledge and Residential Building Energy Standards. Each is meeting next on 12/2.

C. UVTMA report: Norm reported that Advance Transit is getting some electric buses, and bike racks strong enough to hold e-bikes; also that Dartmouth is running a campus shuttle service with later hours, to serve students living off-campus.

D. Updates on A36 items: on 11/9, the Selectboard voted not to replace an oil boiler at Tracy Hall; their agenda for 11/22 includes discussion of "Emergency work location for officials and staff Tracy Hall" (in case of boiler failures this winter, and useful prep for future work on Tracy Hall).

3. Planning/review NEC activities: discussion of energy topics, which to prioritize, messaging strategies, guidance to residents and recommendations for Town operations. Comments and ideas included...

- produce a "Weatherized" sticker like the Solarize Norwich one, to make more visible the less-visible action of weatherization
- emphasize testimonials and storytelling, case studies – in list serv posts, on web site, at in-person outreach
- invite Norwich Neighbor Network participants to write short blurbs for list serv posts
- link to other local campaigns
- continue face-to-face events

- ask other IREC towns what they do
- from Efficiency VT list of certified contractors, compile information on actual availability of local contractors
- at outreach events, get contact information to enable better follow-up
- emphasize LOCAL information on web site; design choices not crucial for user traffic
- Vital Communities has developed some good resource pages, be sure to link to them
- aim for activities that involve students, to provide an antidote to climate anxiety
- encourage residents to calculate household carbon use, involve kids – use the “carbon handprint” concept: “While a carbon footprint is combination of the negative impacts one's action has on the environment, a carbon handprint is all of the positive things one does to affect their footprint. The goal is to grow your handprint larger than your footprint.” <https://www.climateone.org/video/carbon-handprint-vs-carbon-footprint>
- explore possibilities with the new environmental educator at Marion Cross
- collaborate with other towns on joint events (like EV Show and Tell in April 2022)
- expect to advocate for actions to reduce Town fossil fuel use, rather than needing to make specific recommendations

Discussion on sorting through and prioritizing these ideas to will continue at the next meeting.

4. Other business, new projects

5. Public comment and correspondence: Melanie Michel noted that she is participating in The Climate Change Leadership Academy at Vital Communities; as part of that, she is available as free labor for a future NEC project.

6. Adjourned at 8:35.

Given that the fourth Tuesday in December is 12/27, Charlie will see if the NEC can meet on 12/20.

submitted by Linda Gray