

Meeting of the Norwich Energy Committee Tuesday, 11/19, 7 pm, Tracy Hall

Attending: Rob Gere, Linda Gray, Aaron Lamperti, Suzanne Leiter, Norm Levy, Charlie Lindner

Updates on "Save 20% in '20" challenge:

- members of the Norwich Congregational Church are pursuing the "climate stripes" scarves project (a way to start conversations on climate actions); the yarn bomb panels can be on a column at the front of the church for 2 weeks in Jan. along with 20in20 posters and info.
- Charlie Lindner has not had a response to his contacts with MCS staff
- discussion about getting information on food/climate that we are confident in promoting and what a food-related campaign might include. Agreement that Suzanne Leiter and Norm Levy will work together to identify consensus recommendations on food choices for individuals, reliable resources to include on the NEC web site, and proposals for food events/activities, possibly following the Solarize model to offer a discount at local farms. Our goal is to discuss in January for a campaign in March-April.

Update on transportation:

- a celebration of the new EV charging station, bike racks, and fix-it station is scheduled for 11/23 (10:30-noon), with an EV show-n-tell and a bike repair demo by Vital Communities staff. Jim Masland and Tim Briglin will attend; Norwich Women's Club board members and Selectboard members have been invited.
- Susan Hardy is ensuring that all bike-related invoices are in and that the NWC funds get to the Town; she and Norm will prepare a grant report for the Norwich Women's Club.
- Linda Gray reported that an Upper Valley-based e-bike loan program is in development; this will make it possible to do the e-bike loans at least once each year.

For Button Up, Charlie will post several more times to the list serv, highlighting the free walk-through with EVT. The Board of Norwich Senior Housing is also interested again in reviewing weatherization for the buildings and possibly solar. Linda will join an EVT staffer on a walk-through on 12/2. Such walk-throughs are available to any business, and EVT contacts will provide us with info to share with the Norwich Business Council; Charlie and Norm will attend the NBC January meeting.

The Thetford Window Dressers program <https://windowdressers.org/> is taking volunteer sign-ups; Linda will forward the sign-up email; members who are available and interested should volunteer, so that we can understand better how the program works.

On the energy review of Town facilities, the energy performance contractor, Energy Efficient Investments will present options to the Selectboard on 11/20. The preliminary options for having Town buildings operate fossil-free could cost \$2-4 million. Discussion highlighted the need to calculate savings #s as well as cost #s; and to weigh the cost in the context of the climate crisis (ex: \$4 million in one year for road repairs from the July 2017 storm). The recommendation to the Selectboard is to form a working group to

delve into the initial options and recommend a proposal for the Selectboard to include on the warrant for Town Meeting (or a later election in 2020).

The energy chapter of the Town Plan draft includes our recommended language on preferred siting and on Policies/Goals/Actions. The Planning Commission will begin the adoption process in January.

Aaron reported on the Hartford brainstorming session 11/8, re their grant proposal to VLITE; he will share a summary when it is sent to him.

Given the time that will be needed for the Town facilities proposal, members agreed to NOT push for a vote on funding a part-time staff energy coordinator. There are 2 proposals: 1) an Interlocal Contract among 3-4 towns to share a position; or 2) 7 towns to chip in for a staff position through TRORC. Proposal 2 (more costly due to TRORC overhead) is not the approach preferred by the NEC but is being promoted by Nick Clark from Thetford; if the Norwich Selectboard chooses to include it on the warrant for Town Meeting, the NEC is neutral.

Linda reminded members that the VECAN conference is 12/7; registration at \$45 still available through 11/22; and can be reimbursed from the NEC budget.

There was brief discussion about the current PUC rulemaking process on net-metering and whether distributed energy resources (ie, residential solar) are so well-established now that incentives should be ended. Agreement to invite Joel Stettenheim of Norwich Solar Technologies, who is active in state-wide discussions on net-metering, to the December meeting and devote the bulk of the meeting to the topic.

The next regular meeting will be Tuesday, 12/17/19 (early, due to the holiday).

submitted by Linda Gray
