

Meeting of the Norwich Energy Committee Tuesday, 3/23/21, 7 pm, via Zoom

Attending: Linda Gray, Susan Hardy, Aaron Lamperti, Suzanne Leiter (until 8:15), Norm Levy, Charlie Lindner, Erich Rentz

Guests: Linda Cook, Rob Gere

Linda Gray gave the statement of Act 92 compliance. The 2/24 meeting minutes and the 3/23 agenda were approved by consensus.

Following voter approval of spending for the shared town energy coordinator for the upcoming FY, the committee discussed priority tasks for the coordinator. Linda Gray shared recommendations from Geoff Martin, the coordinator. He suggested aiming for three identified priorities, thinking about tasks that volunteers (ie, the energy committee) can readily do vs. those better suited to a staff person. He noted that in his first year, he has worked on compiling energy data for towns, green fleet recommendations, and procurement policy. For five of the six current towns, the Steering Committee rep is from the town energy committee; for Woodstock, the rep is a town planning staffer. Geoff meets monthly with the full Steering Committee and individually with each town's rep. There is ample opportunity to amend priorities during the year.

After discussion, there was consensus on these priorities: data on municipal energy usage, and making its compilation routine and as automatic as possible; green fleet issues; helping the Town benefit from federal and state grant opportunities; reviewing the contracts and use for the Town EV charging stations; and helping outreach to residents extend across multiple towns. This is more than three, but green fleet / grants / outreach are likely to be of interest to other towns. Linda will convey the Committee's recommendations to the Town Manager.

Norm Levy reported that the Energy Saving Project with Vital Communities has ended.

There was discussion about the schedule for the e-bike loan program, 6/13-7/4, with final agreement on:

- test rides on Sun-Mon-Tue
- some test ride appointments for 60 minutes, some for 30 minutes
- overnight loans Wed-Thu
- overnight loans Fri-Sat

Linda will revise the schedule spreadsheet and circulate it. Linda reported that Hartford may need volunteer help during their loan (4/18-5/9); Linda will let Committee members know details.

Linda has posted about Eat Low & Local and will continue at least weekly through the end of April.

There was a brief recap of the GMP workplace EV-charging program; agreement that the Committee would not start a special effort with employers, but would look for ways to prompt Norwich employers to support EV-driving employees.

For "Electrify Everything" Linda reported that a webinar on heat pumps with Efficiency VT is lined up for two days (same content): 4/21 noon and 4/28 evening; she will invite other area committees to publicize to their residents, too. She set up a Google Form for experienced users of electric technologies and a web-site form for people to ask questions; there are 16 members of the experienced cohort; the first list-serv post generated three inquiries. All four 2020 solar-installers have agreed to be partners in 2021; she is awaiting updates for the web pages on pricing.

For a May presentation, Erich Rentz will coordinate scheduling with Miranda Bergmeier for a Zoom time and with speakers Steve Wisbaum on electric lawn equipment and Lynnwood Andrews/Chris Rimmer of the Conservation Commission on how to reduce mowing (area and frequency).

Aaron Lamperti revised the home case study on his mother's house; it's ready to be included on the NEC web site. A case study of Sharon and Bob Racusin's home is almost complete.

Presentation plan: April – heat pumps, May – lawns, June – e-bikes, July – solar.

Norm Levy is continuing to seek collaborators for a web site posting EVs for sale in Vermont. He's hoping to work with Burlington Electric Dept.'s preferred EV dealer network, but may end up contacting dealers directly on the idea.

Other business/announcements :

- Linda learned from VT Rep. Tim Briglin that in the state budget for FY 21-22, there will be \$5 million available for efficiency projects for municipal buildings, under the Dept. of Buildings & General Services; Aaron has been in some meetings with staff from this dept. and can stay updated.
- by email, Selectboard chair Roger Arnold proposed that the Energy Committee review Town parcels for solar hosting; Erich Rent volunteered to follow up.
- Linda reminded members that the Selectboard will make committee appointments at their meeting 3/24; Aaron, Linda, and Norm have terms that are ending and they have re-applied. The Selectboard will also consider appointment of public members to the Article 36 Task Force.
- Linda will get graphic panels printed for the sandwich-board, for Electrify Everything and for Solarize; total cost will be under \$200.
- WindowDressers workshops can proceed this year, with measuring teams able to start by early August. Sustainable Hanover wants to collaborate on this project; Linda will meet in late April with contacts from Sustainable Hanover and the Norwich Congregational Church. Other volunteers from the Lions Club, other churches, and area employers are likely.

Public comment: Rob Gere thanked committee members for their work.

The next regular meeting will be Tuesday, 4/27, 7 pm via Zoom.

submitted by Linda Gray