

Meeting of the Norwich Energy Committee
Tuesday, 2/28/23, 7 pm, via Zoom

Attending: Linda Gray, Garret Heaton, Charlie Lindner (chair), Erich Rentz, Brad Wible
Guests: Jack Cushman, Rob Gere, Jeff Grout (new IREC)

Charlie Lindner welcomed members and guests, who introduced themselves.

1. The 1/24 minutes and 2/28 agenda were approved by consensus.

2. Updates

* Eat Low & Local: Charlie has done weekly posts, Linda reported that each has generated one response form, modest but worthwhile.

* Narrative prompts: Garret reported that he and Brad have developed 1) a form to be printed and used at outreach tables to track people who have taken energy actions; 2) a simple “share your story” prompts that he can send to current Norwich Neighbor Network participants. Garret can print the form at home; Linda will share the NNN Google Form link with Garret; Garret will make the “share your story” a Google Form, which will compile responses as they are received; Garret will work with Charlie to incorporate energy stories into future posts.

* Local contractor availability: Charlie reported that volunteer Melanie Michel may be able to compile this; she’s been away, Charlie will be able to discuss with her next week.

* Carbon “handprint” (emission-reducing actions, as opposed to emission-causing actions): Eva was going to seek out information from the originator of the concept, but she is sick and unable to attend this meeting.

* [GMP's proposed new program](#) for low-income customers: Erich reviewed the tariff materials; while much of the program is still fuzzy, it proposes to provide a discount of 3 cents/kWh to qualified customers. Erich described the program as fine, not ambitious; this makes it a bit more financially feasible and therefore more likely to be implemented. It seems that GMP will recruit customers for the program, but the NEC can try to stay updated on this program in case we can help.

* Solar campaign: there was general agreement to aim to use the 4 large display panels that fit around the base of the CITGO pole at Dan & Whit’s; to get laminated panels printed for Solarize, including information about the 4/1 Energize UV event; to do outreach at the transfer station on 4/22; and to seek participation by 2-3 other residents interested in sharing their story.

Re Energize UV, Jack Cushman volunteered as a resource on federal incentives; Brad and Rob volunteered to bring their EVs.

Linda described a proposal from the IREC Steering Committee, for IREC towns to follow up on the multiple topics of the 4/1 event, with each town hosting something that explores a topic in deeper detail, and all towns publicizing to their residents. Charlie reviewed our planned calendar for 2023: 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.

Charlie noted correspondence he had received from Green Driving America about a proposed presentation. He asked for members to review the video example and consider whether we might want to line this up for July. This could be paired with something in-person and could be Norwich’s part of the IREC series.

3. Energy Coordinator (IREC) report

Jeff Grout introduced himself and summarized the main grants that he will monitor for the IREC towns: 1) through the federal IRA, Clean Commercial Vehicles and Renewable Energy projects, 2) the VT Municipal Energy Resilience Program (Norwich scores very low on one factor, but that doesn't mean it shouldn't apply), and 3) Sen. Sanders' Congressional Directed Funding. There was agreement that Jeff should review the forms related to the Sanders program to see whether any Norwich projects were suitable.

4. [UVTMA](#) representative: Charlie noted that we need a new volunteer as liaison; the TMA meets monthly on Thursday, 3 pm, via Zoom.

5. Other business, new projects, announcements:

Charlie noted that he and Linda will meet with the Norwich Historical Preservation Committee 3/24 to discuss clean energy and efficiency in historical buildings and possible collaboration.

Linda gave an update on S. 5, the [Affordable Heat Act](#), which has been passed by two Senate committees and should be voted on by the full Senate soon.

Charlie reported that REV will give a presentation about [reforming](#) Vermont's Renewable Energy Standard at our March meeting.

5. Public comment and correspondence:

There was discussion of Jack Cushman's correspondence on an electric mower model that might meet the DPW criteria; agreement to ask Jeff Grout to see if a demonstration can be arranged for the IREC towns.

6. Adjourned at 8:45.

The fourth Tuesday in March is 3/28.

submitted by Linda Gray