

Meeting of the Norwich Energy Committee
Tuesday, 9/26/23, 7 pm, via Zoom

Attending: Rob Gere, Linda Gray, Charlie Lindner, Erich Rentz (chair), Brad Wible

1. The 9/26 amended minutes and the 10/24 agenda were approved by consensus.

2. Updates

a. WindowDressers debrief: at the Community Build 9/28-10/4, 268 inserts were made, for 38 households, with about 115 volunteers; 34 inserts were provided at no/low cost. Linda noted that the number of volunteer slots filled has gone down each year over the past three; there was discussion about possible reasons. Linda proposed 200 inserts as a target for next year and noted that the Thetford Energy Committee is interested in a collaboration, which committee members supported.

b. Button Up: the outreach originally scheduled for 10/21 was cancelled due to rain; Charlie proposed 11/4 or 11/11 as new dates; agreement on 11/4. The NEC can also have an outreach table at the fire station on Halloween. After discussion, it was agreed that Rob and Linda would staff a table with Button Up handouts (and candy) 4:30-6:30. Linda will contact Norm Levy to see if he can help.

c. Future Events: none

3. Selectboard Correspondence:

- A narrative from the NEC is due soon, for inclusion in the Town Report for FY 23; Erich will draft, and Brad will review.
- Erich contacted the Town Manager about the liability waiver for WindowDressers volunteers; town counsel identified that some language was missing (which was corrected by WindowDressers) and the Town Manager received a copy of the certificate of insurance.
- Linda confirmed with the e-bike loan organizers, re the liability waiver on e-bikes, that the NEC can't be the host organization in Norwich unless the liability waiver provided by town counsel can be used.
- Charlie noted that, as well as the submission for the Town Report, a budget spreadsheet will be due soon; the NEC has been allocated \$1400-1500 since it first got a budget. Linda described two expenditures she made for the WindowDressers Community Build (a trash can, which will be used for future Builds; and pizzas for a volunteer lunch); members confirmed that she should submit for reimbursement.
- Erich submitted a letter to the Selectboard to correct the record in response to the September letter from Doug Wilberding.
- Erich explained the amendments that Selectboard chair Marcia Calloway requested to the 9/26 minutes.

4. IREC (Energy Coordinator) report: Linda reported that Jeff Grout is working on:

- Tracking and allocating net-metering credits across Town accounts with GMP
- Getting the EV station at D&W completely functional
- Getting a 12-month extension of the network and maintenance coverage for the EV station at D&W with no further payments (in light of the 12-months spent on repairs).

The packet for the 10/25 Selectboard meeting includes a suggestion from Pam Smith that funding for the IREC position could be cut if savings are needed; agreement from committee members to support retaining the position during budget development.

5. UVTMA: Rob reported that the next meeting is 10/26 and asked that the committee give him guidance on transportation needs / issues for Norwich. There was discussion about how, and whether, to get feedback from Norwich e-bike users and borrowers to help the Planning Commission and Selecboard respond to the VTrans survey about a future planning study for a bike corridor along the length of Route 5. Agreement for Rob to draft an email for Erich to send to the Town Manager offering to provide help/support on Route 5 Bike Corridor matters.

6. Other business: Charlie reported that the moderator of the list serv contacted the NEC to ask that posts be more Norwich-specific. The moderator praised a post about the thermal camera available from the library and was concerned about posts that highlighted state webinars or national resources, noting that those posts are being cited by others as reasons they should be allowed to post on national topics. Charlie proposed that he email to explain the NEC charge, that our efforts to provide reliable resources (say, Button Up or Rewiring America) is part of that. He will ask for a follow-up conversation with the moderator to provide him with the facts he needs to make a distinction between NEC posts and the other posts with national references. Consensus from the committee for Charlie to proceed.

Charlie proposed that at an upcoming meeting the committee discuss goals and plans for the next calendar year.

7. Public comment and correspondence: none

Adjourned at 9:15. The fourth Tuesday in November is 11/28.

submitted by Linda Gray