

# **Norwich PC Solar Siting Subcommittee**

## **August 24, 2023 Minutes**

Members present: Ciccotelli, Clement, Laaspere

Public participating: Jack Cushman, Jim Antal, Rob Gere

Meeting started at 3:04

1. Approved Agenda
2. Public comment - none

### **3. Select officers**

Clement was selected as moderator, Laaspere as note-taker

### **4. Background information collection**

To do its job this committee will need to collect and assimilate a great deal of information in the form of statutes, PUC rules, town and regional regulations, project examples, etc. The group discussed how best to input, collate, and make this data accessible. This needs to be done in accordance with OML guidelines. Once collected it could become a common reference for the committee, other groups and townspeople.

The PC website could be the location for this reference material, but it cannot be used as a free-flowing location for public discourse.

We decided that all material would be introduced by first being included in a meeting packet. Members and the public can add to any meeting packet using the planning and zoning email, referencing the solar siting subcommittee.

Once in the packets, we will develop methods to reference material in a more comprehensible form. For example, we could create a searchable, annotated table of contents on the web site with links to topical material in the packets.

Clement agreed to check with the Town Clerk on the process for editing the website and with the SB Chair and Town Manager to understand the OML constraints on this activity.

### **5. Generating input for committee priorities**

In the interest of maximizing public input and engagement, we discussed methods to encourage participation, including reaching out to interested parties

and groups, use of the listserv, public hearings, and lessons learned activities for recent projects.

One initial topic needing input is the charter for this committee.

Clement had a document for a state level group with a similar purpose to our committee. She will include this in the packet for our next meeting.

Thoughts from other members and the public are requested to help craft the committee's charter. These can be included in the packet for the next meeting. Drafting the committee's charter/charge will be an agenda item at that meeting. Once drafted, it will be submitted to the full PC for confirmation.

Jim Antal urged that "the problem to be solved" in the committee's charge be stated positively relative to enabling renewable energy in Norwich.

## **6. Subcommittee membership**

We had extensive discussion about how best to encourage public participation and engagement, including possibly with adding official members to the subcommittee. Diverse perspectives with strong opinions are expected and welcome.

It was decided to not add other members to the subcommittee. Instead, the 3 members will serve as the core group of an open and engaged broad group of townspeople. The subcommittee's activity will result in recommendations to the Planning Commission with that group making the final decisions. Since the subcommittee will not be a voting body, formal membership is less important.

The subcommittee committed to maximizing broad participation in our work, including all perspectives as long as parties adhere to basic ground rules:

- Respectful discourse
- Open mindedness (a firm point of view is valuable, as long as it is combined with the ability to listen, consider diverse perspectives and learn)
- Jointly searching for solutions which are appropriate for Norwich and aligned with the subcommittee's charter

## **7. Public comment** – Included in previous discussion

Next meeting will be September 19 at 6:30 on Zoom

## **8. Adjourned at 5:00**

APPROVED 10-17-2023