

# Norwich PC Solar Siting Subcommittee

## January 16, 2024 Minutes

FINAL  
Approved  
02-26-2024

Members present: Ciccotelli, Clement, Laaspere

Public participating: Linda Gray, Rob Gere

Meeting started at 6:35

1. Approved Agenda
2. Public comment for items not on the agenda - none
3. Correspondence – Rosamond Orford letter commenting on aesthetics and screening of ground mounted solar systems.

#### **4. Enhanced Energy Plan**

At the last meeting this subcommittee decided to focus our work in the coming months on updating our town energy plan to qualify as an enhanced energy plan (EEP). This project received the support of the full PC at their Dec 12, 2023, meeting and aligns with the subcommittee's charter working under the Planning Commission umbrella.

The packet for tonight's meeting contained a document entitled Municipal Enhanced Energy Planning in Vermont which helped frame our conversation as we began specific planning for this project.

As part of our initial publicity, we will emphasize that an enhanced energy plan means the desires of the town, such as solar siting criteria, preferred sites and screening requirements, would be given added influence in official PUC proceedings.

Recent topics of discussion in this subcommittee, such as the ridgeline protection district, scenic inventory and lessons learned from recent solar siting projects, all fit appropriately into the overall project of an enhanced energy plan. Plan topics include town energy use, solar siting and screening, building codes, aesthetics criteria, transportation, and capital budgeting. Clearly these include many topics residents care about, and we hope to involve diverse interested parties.

There are a great number of resources and experts available to help towns with such energy plans. Many of our neighboring towns have EEPs and the TRORC regional commission is quite knowledgeable.

It is the subcommittee's strong desire to maximize public participation and we discussed the methods of doing this. We will maintain the current subcommittee structure of three core PC members with a broad, inclusive, and informal involvement of the public. More definition of official delineated membership, voting

ability, etc. is not necessary since the Planning Commission will review all subcommittee output and vote on any proposed plan.

We decided to create a stand-alone document to start with, which would be incorporated by reference into the town plan. The project is expected to take approximately 6 months, with more clarity on this schedule as the exact work plan is crafted.

Laaspere will contact Peter Gregory at TRORC to find a resource and possible attendee at our next meeting to answer questions and help kick-off the project.

We discussed using our next meeting as a public participation focused project kick-off meeting. This meeting was tentatively set for Feb 20, depending on availability of a TRORC or other EEP expert resource.

We decided to create a very short summary - a few sentences and bullet points describing an EEP and how it is important to town residents. This summary will be used to announce the proposed kick-off meeting.

Clement and Ciccotelli and any attendees will send suggestions to Laaspere by 1.22. Laaspere will craft a short message and send it to interested town groups – Selectboard, Energy, Conservation, Historic Preservation, Listers and to the list serv.

We will add links to adjacent town's EEPs and other resources onto the subcommittee's section of the PC web page and reference those in the post for people who want more background.

## **5. Approved minutes of December 5, 2023 - Unanimous**

Our next meeting will be February 20, 2024, assuming an appropriate resource on enhanced energy plans can be found to attend on this date. This will be a publicized public meeting to introduce this project to the public, answer questions and solicit ideas and participation.

6. Adjourned at 8:20

Minutes submitted by Jaan Laaspere