

Meeting of the Norwich Energy Committee
Tuesday, 4/23/24, 7 pm, via Zoom

Attending: Rob Gere, Linda Gray, Tom Griggs, Charlie Lindner (7:10), Erich Rentz (chair), Brad Wible (7:10)

1. The 3/26 minutes and the 4/23 agenda were approved by consensus.
2. Committee Roles & Organization: tabled until additional members were present; meantime, Tom was welcomed as a new member. Tom noted that his career was not in energy fields, but he has gotten familiar with home energy options from his work on his own house, since moving back to Norwich (where he grew up). After other committee members arrived, Erich was nominated and elected as chair; Rob as vice chair.
3. Upcoming events:
 - a. Recap on Earth Day EV Expo (4/21): this event took place in Lebanon, Charlie and Linda helped with set-up and the first hour of activities. There was a good roster of EVs and e-bikes, and non-profit info tables; attendance was reported at about 300 or more. Agreement that support for area events like this is worthwhile; Linda noted that there will be an EV event in Bradford on 5/4, associated with the opening of a Level 3 charging station there; she will get more info so that we can publicize.
 - b. VEEP Community Energy Workshops collaboration with NPL: the adult workshop on transportation is scheduled for 5/18, 10:30-12; a kids workshop on wind energy is scheduled for 5/16 at 3:30. Library staff picked this topic, based on the interests of the kids who are regulars. Linda spoke with the VEEP presenter, who suggested that we line up EV owners for Q/A during the workshop. Tentative roster is VW ID4 from Rob, Chevy Bolt from Linda, Tesla from Garret Heaton, Nissan Leaf from Norm Levy. Linda will follow up with Garret and Norm, and some Norwich e-bike riders. Tom will contact Advance Transit for materials to share, perhaps demo the real-time arrival app. NEC will leave publicity for the kids workshop to the library, do publicity for the adult workshop via web site, list serv, sandwich board.
 - c. E-Bike Loans: Linda reported that Vital Communities staff has not yet received a legal / insurance okay for the Norwich version of the liability waiver. There was consensus to move on to non-loan promotion of e-bikes, such as collecting from Norwich e-bike users stories of how they regularly use their bikes, including e-bikes at the 5/18 transportation workshop and when we do outreach at the transfer station, inquire with Sweetland Farm about extending their loan period with support from NEC volunteers. Linda will convey our decision to Vital Communities staff and inquire with Sweetland.
 - d. June Lawn Equipment: agreement to target Saturday 6/15 for outreach at the transfer station; Charlie will inquire with DPW about the date. NEC members will bring electric equipment; Charlie will ask Matt Stuart of Rooted Gardens/The Electric Lawn about bringing equipment.
 - e. Solar and Battery Event: discussion about highlighting this or another topic (home heating, or home electrification) for July outreach. Agreement to review two calculators (RMI Green Upgrade and Rewiring American VT-specific calculator) to gauge whether NEC volunteers could use them to offer help as “home energy navigators” to individual residents; further discussion at the May meeting.

f. WindowDressers: Linda confirmed that orders and measuring for 133 inserts are complete. We can accept orders for about 90-100 more inserts; she and coordinators in Hanover and Thetford will do another round of list-serv posts.

g. NHS fair, 9/21: Charlie has confirmed to NHS that we will participate again.

4. Dan & Whit's ChargePoint station: Erich summarized that parts for the station have been replaced two times, most recently 3/29, yet the station is still going offline frequently. The electrical panel and the breaker size seem like the next element to diagnose. To schedule this work by an electrician, Brennan requests that three quotes be obtained for his review; Harry Falconer is working on the quotes. Discussion about various aspects of operating the charging station: whether the Town should cover this cost, whether the Town should seek to transfer ownership to D&W. General agreement that it would make a transfer more attractive to D&W if the station is consistently functional; if it costs ~\$500 to achieve that, it would be worth it. Erich moved, Linda seconded that the NEC explore the transfer of the charging station to D&W; approved unanimously. Linda will ask Harry to pull together information on station expenses and revenue.

5. IREC (Energy Coordinator): Linda reported that Harry Falconer has been working on the ChargePoint station and following up on the assessment of Tracy Hall through the state-run Municipal Energy Resilience Program. The assessment is expected in May. Overall, Harry is using the recommendations from the Article 36 Task Force as his guide for Norwich-specific work; the committee endorsed that.

6. Other Business:

Charlie noted that VECAN has scheduled a Spring Summit, for 6/1 at VT Law and Graduate School and recommended that members plan to attend.

Linda noted that she had the opportunity to meet a staffer from Rewiring America and hopes to get one of their heat pump costumes.

7. Public comments, correspondence and announcements: none

6. Adjourned at 8:50. The fourth Tuesday in May is 5/28.

submitted by Linda Gray