

Norwich PC Solar Siting Subcommittee July 22, 2025 - Minutes

Final

Subcommittee members present: Mary Gorman, Ernie Ciccotelli, Jaan Laaspere
Steven True, Norwich PD/ZA

Public attending: Mary Albert, Linda Gray, Paul Manganiello, Robert Gere, Jim Antal,
Lynnwood Andrews, Annette Smith

Meeting started at 6:32

1. Approved Agenda - unanimous

2. Public comment for items not on the agenda

Jim Antal commented that federal level changes make the conversation about encouraging renewable energy even more important.

3. Correspondence - none

4. Subcommittee charge / charter

We discussed how to best capture the role of this group with possible edits to its current charter or creation of a new shorter charge statement.

This group has a planning role rather than an advocacy role. We work to make sure the Norwich town plan clearly and accurately captures the desires of residents relative to solar siting and works effectively within applicable state laws.

The group noted there is a draft charge for this subcommittee included in the current version of the Selectboard handbook. This is a placeholder that has not been submitted or reviewed by this group or the PC. It will be replaced by the charge we create.

Gorman will review statements made in this meeting and the handbook draft and propose a statement of subcommittee charge for discussion at our next meeting.

5. Review of work ahead

In reviewing possible next steps for this group, we explored methods for improving the regulatory language in the town plan and correcting statements that do not fit current state laws, including 5.100.

The group agreed to update the town plan's energy chapter into an enhanced energy plan. We will use this vehicle to implement a balanced approach that clearly states what sites and areas in Norwich are preferred for solar installations and which are not desirable and do so using regulatory language that sets a clear community standard. This planning exercise will include participation of town groups such as the Energy Committee, Conservation Commission and interested residents.

Resources are available for creating an EEP, including an analysis from TRORC and detailed state guidance. Steven True will pull together these EEP resources to provide a starting point for our next meeting.

We discussed background on current state law with 5.100 limiting net-metering projects and increasing the ground mount simple permit maximum size to 25kW. Norwich's PV installation target remains and could be achieved with larger commercial projects combined with maximum residential rooftop utilization.

The group discussed criteria for preferred PV sites and areas. We brainstormed possible locations such as parking lot canopies, gravel pits, interstate medians, co-development with agriculture, town building rooftops, etc.

We learned that for a project such as a canopy over the Montshire parking lot - new 5.100 regulations require the power generated must be used on site or there must be a commercial contract with utility.

Laaspere will include preliminary mapping results into next meeting packet.

6. Approved minutes of December 17, 2024 - Unanimous

Meeting adjourned at 8:10

Minutes submitted by Jaan Laaspere

APPROVED 09-16-2025