

Meeting of the Norwich Energy Committee
Tuesday, 1/27/26, 7 pm, via Zoom

Attending: Rob Gere, Linda Gray, Charlie Lindner, Erich Rentz (until 8:00), Brad Wible

1. The 12/16 minutes and the 1/27 agenda were approved by consensus.

2. 2026 Early-Stage Planning: The committee reviewed the outline drafted by Charlie.

Discussion included the “Toolship,” a Brandon, VT, project (a solar-powered shed from which residents can check out EGO battery-operated lawn tools <https://brandonpubliclibrary.org/the-toolship/>). Linda gathered information from the Brandon Energy Committee, which the Norwich Public Library staff is reviewing. Establishing a Toolship in Norwich would involve fundraising (\$8500); there was consensus to ask Brandon if the Toolship was created to respond to a documented need, if users are trying the equipment before buying or borrowing instead of buying. The Thetford virtual Ask A Neighbor session was being held this evening; there was interest in reviewing and publicizing the recording and perhaps doing a similar session in Norwich. Regarding inquiries about residential solar and leasing / PPA options, Charlie, Linda, and Erich volunteered to follow up with contacts. Regarding the NEC’s Eat Low & Local guidance, after reading a summary (<https://www.nytimes.com/2026/01/12/climate/climate-emissions-grassfed-beef.html>) of this study (<https://www.pnas.org/doi/10.1073/pnas.2404329122>), there was agreement that point #2 of the 3 guidelines (eat more plant-based foods; if you eat meat, get it from a small-scale pasture-based producer; reduce food waste) should be changed to "eat less meat."

3. Tracy Hall energy upgrades: Erich reported that Aaron Lamperti has drafted a letter to the Selectboard urging more concrete action on the Article 36 mandate for reducing Town emissions. Aaron will be asking other residents to sign in support.

4. Energy Plan Working Group: Brad reported on the first meeting of the working group, which includes Rob as the 2nd energy committee member, 2 from the Conservation Commission, 2 from the Planning Commission, Steven True, town Planning Director, and Bryan Kovalick from TRORC. The energy plan will be incorporated in the Town Plan, will include data on energy use (most from TRORC) and energy goals. They will meet again 2/15 and will review enhanced energy plans from other area towns. They expect to have a draft this spring.

5. UV Regional Collaboration meeting: Charlie and Linda attended this meeting on 1/13, along with counterparts from Enfield, Hanover, Lebanon and Lyme in NH, and Hartford and Woodstock in VT. (Organizers asked to keep the group relatively small for the first meeting, so other SEC town reps were not invited). The main takeaway was firm interest in collaborating among towns. 2026 plans include a Button Up workshop sponsored by Sustainable Hanover in March, the Earth Week Open House tour in April, and an EV event in the fall. In addition, Lebanon has been invited to consider joining in on the Norwich-Hanover-Lyme WindowDressers build.

6. Sustainable Hanover Button Up Collaboration: This webinar will be a presentation by NHSaves, the NH counterpart to Efficiency VT. Content will be relevant to both VT and NH residents; info on financial incentives will be for NH residents, but there is a possibility of adding EVT staff to cover VT incentives. There was consensus for the Norwich Energy Committee to cosponsor.

7. Shared Energy Coordinator Report: in addition to the work described in Harry Falconer's most recent quarterly report (attached), he is supporting the Norwich Public Library with its application for a HUD Public Facilities Preservation Initiative [grant program](#) for public libraries.

8. Other Business: Linda mentioned the VECAN webinar on 1/28, 2026 Climate & Clean Energy Legislative Deep Dive.

9. Public comments, correspondence and announcements: none

10. Adjourned at 8:20. The fourth Tuesday in February is 2/24, which falls during school vacation week. All present confirmed they are available on 2/17 if that's a better date.

Submitted by Linda Gray

Harry Falconer
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Re: SEC Quarterly Report FY26 Q2 – Town of Norwich

Hours billed to Norwich this quarter: 59.5

Hours remaining on FY26 contract: 249

• Privately Funded DC Fast Charging Station

- Construction of Norwich's first electric vehicle fast charging station at Dan & Whit's Store was completed by Next Level Electric in mid-December. SEC helped facilitate the project and found a suitable site host on behalf of the private funder. The total project cost was \$126,112.
- "Fast chargers" must be capable of providing at least 50kw of charging output; the Dan & Whit's charger is rated for 120kw. Recharging times vary based on make and model, temperature, and other factors, but a typical user could expect a charge from 20% to 80% battery to take roughly 20 to 35 minutes. Co-locating fast chargers with local businesses is a great way to promote economic development, since drivers can run errands and spend money at nearby stores while waiting for their car to charge.
- Background: During Q3 of FY25, the Norwich Energy Committee was approached by a local funder who was interested in building an electric vehicle fast charging station somewhere in Norwich Village. SEC offered to assist the funder in finding a feasible site host and equipment installer. SEC first approached the Town of Norwich and the Norwich Public Library to explore publicly owned sites. Both options were ruled out due to physical constraints and infrastructure feasibility challenges. After SEC approached several privately-owned sites, the funder decided to move forward with Dan & Whit's.

• Enhanced Energy Plan for Norwich

- During Q2, Planning Director Steven True approached SEC about helping to create an Enhanced Energy Plan for Norwich. Essentially, Enhanced Energy Plans are a pathway to assert greater local control over energy generation permitting than is typically granted under Vermont state law. By including a greater degree of detail in the energy chapter of their Town Plans, municipalities can apply for Enhanced Energy Plan status from their Regional Planning Commission and the Vermont Public Service Department. If granted, the municipality's standards for the siting of energy generation facilities, such as solar arrays, are given "substantial deference" during the state permitting process. (By default, municipal standards are given only "due consideration.")
- SEC has delegated TRORC staffer Bryan Kovalick, who has substantial experience with the Enhanced Energy Plan process, to guide the Norwich Planning Commission through the process. The first meeting of the Enhanced Energy Plan working group is scheduled for early Q3.

William B. Emmons, III, Chair ~ Peter G. Gregory, AICP, Executive Director
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- **Pedestrian and Bike Counters**

- The Norwich Main Street corridor across the Ledyard Bridge into Hanover is one of the highest potential bike and pedestrian commuting corridors in the TRORC region given the proximity of jobs to the dense residential cluster of Norwich Village. SEC deployed TRORC's traffic counters on Route 10A in Norwich between October 24th and November 7th to record data on pedestrian and bicycle traffic. This data will be useful for future grant applications aimed at enhancing the corridor's bike-ped facilities. SEC plans to produce a report on the collected data before the VTRANS Bike & Pedestrian grant program opens next summer.