

# Norwich PC Solar Siting Subcommittee

## March 17, 2026 - Minutes

**DRAFT**

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

Public attending: Linda Gray, Jim Antal

Meeting started at 6:33

**1. Approved Agenda - unanimous**

**2. Public comment – none**

**3. Review Act 174 Mapping Constraints**

We reviewed the maps in the packet which show renewable energy generation potential for solar, wind and biomass and discussed the accuracy and utility of such maps.

This led to the discussion in #4 about potential constraints and how they should be mapped and combined. For example, how to rank a specific area when multiple constraints apply? Can we create a map of PV potential that combines factors like distance from 3-phase power, slope, size of clearing required, wetland buffer, and Ag. soils? Laaspere to discuss mapping options with True.

Current renewable energy generation in Norwich is part of the background data being collected by the EPWG, so that map will be incorporated into the appropriate section by that group.

**4. Preferred and Potential recommendations**

The basic activity of renewables generation siting is to divide the area of the town into three categories - Preferred, Potential and Prohibited – relative to the possibility or desirability of renewables siting.

To satisfy the needs of an enhanced energy plan, our siting criteria should enable Norwich to meet our state established targets for new renewables generation. Since our last plan was created, the state has substantially lowered Norwich's goal. We will get the exact number for the next meeting (True). The first step is to check whether this goal can be reasonably satisfied using preferred areas, moving into potential areas if necessary.

Preferred

Starts with a list from state guidance which includes:

Impervious surfaces	Parking lot canopy
All roof tops	Formerly developed areas
Landfills	Former gravel pits

What else might we add?

How do we convert areas into specific sites and estimate possible generation?

#### Potential

Renewables generation is not prohibited in these areas, but projects must use special consideration and be designed to minimize and mitigate impact.

To map the potential areas, we need a full list of constraints. This list includes:

Floodways	Wetlands
Vernal pools	Priority forest blocks
Scenic areas	Steep slopes
Agricultural soils	

True will pull together the full list of these constraints for the next meeting.

#### Prohibited

The discussion focused on how to strongly and legally make it clear where we do not want renewable generation in Norwich and exactly what type of language can be used for this prohibited category. The legal case history references “clear, written community standards” and gives examples. We need to understand how to balance between verbiage that sounds like zoning regulations which has been deemed improper by the VT Supreme court and vague language like “... we discouraged...” that would not be useful in a specific case.

We will then convert prohibited categories into specific mapped areas in Norwich.

As we have discussed before, per state regulations, any restrictions or guidelines for renewable generation development must apply equally to all types of development. For example, there cannot be special restrictions on PV compared to residential construction.

### **5. Approved minutes of October 29, 2025 - Unanimous**

#### **Meeting adjourned at 8:04**

Next meeting planned for April 21, 2026, at 6:30

The goal is to complete our work in about three more meetings and submit the output to the PC, where it will be integrated with the rest of the Energy chapter contributed by the EPWG and then fit into the complete town plan re-write activity.

*Minutes submitted by Jaan Laaspere*