

History of Thetford Energy Committee – 2001-1018

Precursor to TEC – in early 1990's, EarthRight Institute helped several Thetford residents (including Chris Hebb, I think) form a committee to use it's "Guide to Town Energy Planning in Vermont" to write an Energy Chapter to it's town plan, as required by the state in late 1980's.

2001 – Sustainable Energy Resource Group helped form Vermont's first town energy committees in Thetford and Norwich. Chris Hebb, Ellen Blumberg (and others) were on first TEC.

2002 – Advised on energy improvements to Treasure Island, Latham Library, Thetford Elementary School and Town Hall.

2003 – Began selling CFLs at discounted rates to residents at town meeting – see total sales below. **Rewrote on town energy plan.** More work on town hall and Treasure Island. Recruited 47 families to SERG Energy Club – discount fuel buying and conservation/efficiency advice.

2004 – Began streetlight project (see final results below. Efficiency V program), completed town energy plan, conducted assessment of town garage use, CFL sales continue, 58 families in SERG Energy Club.

2005 – Formed Thetford Home Energy Assistance Team (HEAT) to educate and assist homeowners to weatherize, promoted carpooling and tire inflation, streetlight project continued, CFL sales continue, 68 families in SERG Energy Club (after this, SERG was forced by IRS to close its Energy Club which it saw as a function of a Coop, not a 501c3).

2006 – Promoted biodiesel for town trucks, installed weatherization measures at town garage, promoted carpooling and tire inflation, continued CFL sales and streetlight project.

2007 – Community Education Series: info letter mailed to whole town; **established energy section at Latham Library with resource kit including watt meter to borrow;** weatherization workshop (this workshop was a model copied in following years by Efficiency Vermont and spread throughout Vermont as the Button Up workshops); 4 evening films; Step It Up, breakfast, hike and forum at Congregational Church with Bill McKibbin. Continued CFL sales and streetlight project.

2008 – Local Food Initiative with numerous well-attended workshops on root cellars, raising chickens, gardening, raising fruit, composting and soil fertility. **Presented Idling Reduction resolution at Town Meeting that was rejected.** Began volunteer weatherization upgrades to RMCA and TCCC (results below). Continued community education workshops, forums and films and CFL sales.

2009 – Distributed info through Zoning Administrator and worked with Planning Commission to develop regulations promoting efficient new building. **Recruited over 50 volunteers to go door to door to install energy saving devices in 52 homes (Efficiency Vermont's Community Energy Mobilization Program) and install weatherization measures at TCCC.** Continued community education, and streetlight project.

2010 – Completed TCCC weatherization work (foundation repair and drainage, air sealing, window rehab, added insulation in foundation, walls and attic and new heating system). Reduced air leakage by 80%; anticipated energy savings 83%. 55 volunteers contributed 490 hours work. Promoted and passed at town meeting, Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) loans. Continued community education and streetlight project. **This was the final year of CFL sales at town meetings.**

Overall, we sold 1,169 CFLs at discounted price, which should save over 60,000 kWh in electric usage, \$73,000 in electric spending and 568 tons of CO2 release over their lifetime of usage.

2011– Received federal stimulus grant to purchase LED streetlights for town. Received grant for Thetford Home Weatherization Incentives Program that helped 16 families weatherize their homes. Recruited 50 Thetford HEAT volunteers who went to 650 Thetford homes to educate on and promote weatherization programs. This program received the 2013 VECAN Project of the year award and was the model for Efficiency Vermont's Home Energy Challenge that was run statewide in years after Thetford's program. As part of this program we held the Thetford Energy Expo and developed case studies of numerous Thetford homes that had been weatherized. Promoted passage at town meeting of Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) loans. Continued community education.

2012 – Completed Streetlight project, which removed half the town's unneeded streetlights and replaced all others with LED, cutting town's electric usage for streetlights by 20,000 kWh/year or 89% from 2004. Promoted smart meters and the new Vermont Residential Building Energy Standard. Developed bicycle park and ride facilities. Continued community education.

2013 – Participated in the Efficiency Vermont Home Energy Challenge and received an award for getting the highest percentage of residents in Vermont committing to energy improvements. Installed bike racks around town. Assisted the Thetford Elementary School in researching a PV project and held a workshop for residents on PV. Provided free bike tuneups. Continued community education.

2014 – Collaborated with the Strafford Energy Committee on Vital Communities Solarize project, which resulted in 42 Thetford homes installing 221.25kW of solar PV – tripling the town's residential solar. Helped Thetford Elementary School install a 140 kW array. Conducted our first Volunteer Assisted Weatherization project, saving a low income Thetford resident over 21% of her fuel use and \$488 per year on her fuel bills. Assisted in town hall weatherization with an award from Efficiency Vermont that should save over \$450/year in fuel use. Began researching community solar arrays.

2015 – Promoted community and residential solar. Raised money for a second VAW project and to distribute free LEDs to low-income residents. Agreed to help pilot the Vermont Community Energy Dashboard.

2016 – Completed our second VAW job, saving a low income resident 27% fuel use and \$500/year energy savings. Distributed 430 free LEDs to low-income residents. Worked with Vermont Law School Energy Clinic to consider developing a community solar array on the closed Post Mills landfill.

2017 – Worked with Wolfe Energy and Strafford Energy Committee to promote the Thetford Strafford Community Solar. Helped get Green Mountain Community Economic Development Corporation to work with the town to develop the Post Mills landfill PV project. **Began work with Two Rivers Ottauquechee Regional Commission on an Enhanced Town Energy Plan.** Helped 12 families get free home energy walk-throughs through Vital Communities Weatherize project. Began planning 2018 Sustainability Programs.

2018 – Conducted very successful Sustainability Programs. Finalized launch of Thetford Strafford Community Solar, providing solar at discounted rate to the town and participating residents.