

Thetford Energy Committee Meeting Minutes – 12/18/17, 5pm, Latham Library

Meeting started: 5:40 PM

TEC Members Attending: Chris Hebb, Joel Legunn, Alice Stewart, Manohar Grewal (by Skype), Bob Walker, Mary Bryant, Mike Kiess

Others: Phebe McCosker, Erika Ko, Pete Thoenen

Review and approve minutes from 11/14/17 meeting - Unanimously approved as written.

New TEC Applicants – Meet Erica Ko and Pete Thoenen and discuss their interests in joining the TEC. We have 1 open slot on the TEC at this point, but hope both will be involved as a member or not. Marc and Joel's terms are up in 2018. Need to decide if they want to renew.

Erica Ko - I'm interested in learning more about the Energy Committee with the intention of possibly joining. I have been working with Smith & Vasant Architects for the past 3 years, am in the process of building a house in Thetford Center with my husband, and a strong supporter of sustainable initiatives! I'm also 36, if that serves as a positive, edging me into the next generation :).

I actually began my pursuit of a career in architecture due to an interest in sustainability. I believe that the environment is the most critical issue we face, and is also the most difficult to generate action on. I've been encouraged since moving to Vermont from New York at the progressive policies in place here, and hope to help others take advantage of the opportunities available here. My husband and I were able to take out a loan to purchase a solar tracker in a community park and it's been really rewarding to feel that we are making progress towards leading a more sustainable lifestyle. We are also in the process of building our house, and have been working with Efficiency Vermont in discussing our envelope strategies. We also work very hard at Smith & Vasant Architects to keep up with building science and find good, energy-efficient solutions for our clients' particular needs. I also think I might bring a unique perspective because I do not necessarily believe that sustainability is solely about energy efficiency, and I hope to broaden the discussion about where, when and how to make the best sustainable choices for our community.

Looking forward to meeting you all and hearing more about what you do. [See attached resume.]

Pete Thoenen – Pete recently moved to town from Randolph where he was a long-time active member of their EC. [See attached resume.]

Unanimously voted to recommend to the Selectboard that they appoint Pete to the TEC. Pete please provide Letter of Interest to Bob. Bob will forward to the SB with our recommendation that Pete be appointed to fill our open slot. Erica will continue to attend and participate, pending the next available TEC opening.

Enhanced Energy Planning Update – Erica and Pete offered to participate in this process. Mike will add them to the list to receive agendas and minutes.

Bradford, Norwich, Sharon, and Thetford are the four towns that TRORC is working with for this second round of supported work. Subcommittee met Tuesday 05 Dec 2017 at 4:30 in the Thetford Town Hall. Here are agreed actions, notes from the meeting, and some of our summary “homework”

ACTIONS:

Chris to share TRORC “Best Practices” guide for plan implementation by email

Chris to review our Thetford draft town plan against RPC enhanced plan standards, and let us know gaps by next meeting

Mike to schedule next sub-committee meeting

All – review our draft town plan chapters: Energy (Phebe), Land Use (Mike), Transportation (Mary), Natural Resources (Li and Sue) and brief the group

Phebe – learn Thetford’s current permit review process, and brief the group

Mary – learn about Vital Communities transportation planning, and brief the group

SUMMARY “homework”:

Sue’s summary of the Bennington draft town plan is attached, along with a copy of the plan.

NOTES (please also see below for answers to questions):

Present (and copied): Alvin Clemens , Kimberly Gilbert, Chris Damiani, Li Shen, Mary Bryant, Phebe McCosker, Mike Kiess, Doc Bagley, Sue Fritz, Alice Stewart

RPC best-practices guide – Chris will share - <http://www.trorc.org/land-use-in-vermont/>

Flood plain considerations – Thetford has not changed maps, that we know of.

Process with RPC: We can meet monthly through August

First: Standards - Chris planning to review our draft town plan against RPC enhanced plan standards, and let us know gaps.

Second: Prioritize gaps

Mike summary of Standards docs

Vermont has set some energy goals.

Vermont regulates land use under Act 250 and energy development under Act 248. Decisions are made by the Public Service Board.

Vermont is inviting towns to participate in energy planning.

Vermont is offering to give town plans greater weight in Public Service Board deliberations if the plans meet certain standards.

Vermont needs residents and businesses to change their behavior to meet energy goals.

Our plan contributes to regulation, policy, incentives that encourage behavioral change.

Current draft of Thetford Energy chapter is using 2010 data

Sue summary of Bennington energy plan – also see attached

Bennington main idea for heating is to emphasize and encourage weatherization, change to heat pumps. Main idea for transportation is clustering people and services and increasing public transportation. Main idea for generation is mapping sites for solar, and criteria for siting that protects aesthetics and farm land. Not much attention to hydro.

Questions and Answers:

1. We understand that the Enhanced Energy plan will be an amendment to a chapter of the Town Plan. What is the approval process at the Town level for the Enhanced Energy plan?

Our draft town plan is in review by Selectboard. One public hearing has been held. A second is required.

Regional Planning Commission reviews plan for compliance with standards.

We will submit our proposed amendment to the Town Planning Commission and can change.

Then Select Board reviews amendment and can change.

Regional Planning Commission reviews amendment for compliance with standards.

2. Can TRORC please share lessons learned from the first round of municipal energy planning – what should we be sure to do? what should we avoid?

State and Federal regulation –

Analysis of data & Targets – RPC has limited ability to help us redo any analysis. May be best to accept what RPC has suggested. “Threshold of materiality” for any gaps we see in RPC analysis. (TEC and Elizabeth Mine are examples)

Our starting point toward targets is further along than others.

Mapping – most towns did not get to mapping.

Successful model – no town has had a favorably reviewed amendment yet. Bennington is a promising example. Amendment is a vision.

Our amendment should not focus on providing solutions. Focus on guiding people in exploring generation options.

3. Our time our limited and there is a lot we could do. What resources can TRORC contribute? How should we work together to prioritize our efforts, and to make sure we stop at “good enough” and move on to the next task.

RPC try to have a draft for discussion / review at each meeting.

Town provide data for use in draft creation.

RPC can contribute to communication graphics.

4. Does the Regional plan consider population variation? For example, if we have 10% more or fewer people, that will make a big difference in our targets. How do we address the population variable in our planning?

Some consideration in the modeling, assumption of less than 0.5% change per year.

5. Can we “mix and match” targets? For example, increase target in area like heating, reduce target by similar amount in area like transportation.

Yes, as long as we are moving toward 90% goals.

6. We understand that the Enhanced Energy plan is an invitation for the town to create policy and regulation. What are the boundaries of our authority? For example, can we impose penalties for inefficient buildings, provide incentives for efficient buildings? We have recently learned about Dillon’s rule (defined below). Do we need to look at our Thetford Town Charter to understand our authority?

Focus on promotion, rather than disincentives. VLTC may be best people to check with.

Town Meeting Resolution Regarding Energy and Climate – Review proposed resolution language by Stuart, Chris and Phebe. We agreed that with a few further changes, the TEC could bring the resolution to the Selectboard to request inclusion in the town meeting warning. We will review and decide at January TEC meeting. In the meantime, Phebe and other citizens will revise wording and begin to collect signatures.

2018 Sustainability Programs – TEC was awarded a \$2,200 grant from New England Grassroots Fund to produce the series Thetford 2050: The Good Life in a Post Fossil Fuel Era. Thanks Mary for all your hard work on this. Mary would like to kick off the series January 28th, 2018 with the movie "Tomorrow" followed by a dinner and discussion at the tables.

March 18th tentative – Minisplits and geothermal

April 15th tentative – Cultivate a local food supply

Summer or fall - Netzero homes for all incomes – Vermod guest speaker

Will review rest of the schedule next meeting.

We would like to promote the series at the Town Meeting – *Erica will help Mary with promotional material design.*

Future of the TEC – Discussion of next steps for the TEC, succession of leadership and recruitment of new TEC members, postponed till next meeting. Consider going through the Strategic Energy Toolkit EC planning process developed Vital Communities available on line at <http://www.nhenergy.org/strategic-energy-action.html> .

TEC Website and EAN Dashboard – Alice is communicating with Tracy re getting access to edit the TEC website page. Alice submitted final Buttonup report to Paul Markowitz.

Updates and Reports

- VECAN Conference Update

- **Transportation workshop** – Funds are becoming available from the VW settlement to help promote cleaner transportation in Vermont. The Governor has recommended much of it go to supporting cleaner diesel. Many environmental advocates want it to go to support electric vehicles, buses, and charging. You can learn more about the VW Environmental Mitigation Funds, and provide feedback on their plan at <http://dec.vermont.gov/air-quality/vw> through Jan. 23, 2018.

- **Revitalizing ECs** – ECs were encouraged to recruit new, younger members, consider working through the Vital Communities' Strategic Energy Action Toolkit – <http://www.nhenergy.org/strategic-energy-action.html> – consider collaborating with neighboring towns on projects and as multi-town committees for towns without enough volunteers of their own. Ask VC, VNRC/VECAN to solicit members for the committee. Search the PUC website of Certificates of Public Good for potential members - go to <http://puc.vermont.gov/epuc-information> then click on Case and Document Search - <http://puc.vermont.gov/epuc-information/case-and-document-search> - then click on Net Metering Projects - <https://epuc.vermont.gov/?q=node/95> - then click on Photovoltaic under “Generation Type” and the name of the Town the town dropdown field. Then click Search at the bottom.

- **Thetford Strafford Community Solar** – Dori reports that she is awaiting a final letter from the SB requested by the PUC. Hopes project will be approved early 2018. TEC will then

- **Post Mills Landfill PV** – Green Mountain Economic Development Corp. is in the process of communication with GMP on what size project might make most sense to develop on the landfill site.

Energy Tip: Alice did not get a chance to submit a tip last month, so will write up how to use outlet and light switch gaskets and two prong safety/air leak plugs for energy tip and make flyer to hand out with materials at food shelf.

Next TEC Meeting Date – Jan. 9th, 5pm, Town Hall