

Thetford Energy Committee Meeting Draft Minutes – 5/15/18, Town Hall

Present: Manowar Grewal, Pete Thoenen, Alice Stewart, Mike Kiess, Mary Bryant, Bob Walker

Called to order 5:17 PM

Discuss and Vote on Adding a New Item to the Agenda – unanimously approved

- **Review of a proposed new PV site on Rt. 113**

Review and approve minutes from 3/20/18 meeting - unanimously approved

2018 Sustainability Programs – Discussed promotion and other logistics for upcoming events: Composting May 19, Vermod July 14, Berries July 21. Hand out posters to be hung around town for next events.

Ideas for Fall Events:

- **Local foods.** Want to include berry bushes, hunting. Realistic goals – 3% increase in locally produced food. Rooted in Vermont a potential partner. Drive for the food shelf. Need to ask about criteria for preserved food. Check with local stores about local sourcing. Check with hunting community about providing venison and other meat. Check with community about storing meat.

- **Transportation.** An electric everything event, or just transportation? Promote areas (park and rides) where people could meet for carpooling. Partner with Vital Communities. How does an electric car work? Charging, cost of ownership. Economics of carpooling versus single driver. Rewards of efficiency – time and money. % target.

Enhanced Energy Planning Update – TRORC is organizing all of the EEP work to appear in the Energy Chapter of the town plan. Dean Whitlock has contacted Phebe and told her that the Planning Commission expects to warn the new Town Plan with the old Energy Chapter in it around the end of June. They will hold their hearing, approve the draft and send it to the select board. They will review our chapter when it is done and advise the SB on how it will affect the Town plan. The select board will insert our new chapter into the document during their review and hearing process.

1. Select four accomplishments from this long list that we would like to include in the plan: ^[1]_[SEP]“Review from the TEC annual reports which begin in 2008.”

- Trained 50 volunteers as our Home Energy Action Team (Thetford HEAT), who visited 650 Thetford homes to educate homeowners on weatherization programs, resources and financing. The program won a VECAN award as the best project of the year and Efficiency Vermont modeled its Vermont Home Energy Challenge after the program;
- Reduced streetlight spending and electric use by more than 85% through a federal grant to that allowed us to purchase upgraded LED streetlights, remove half of the town’s unneeded streetlights and secure a more favorable rate from the utility for streetlights by owning them
- Helped the Thetford Elementary School install a 150kw solar array to power the school
- Received a grant for a series of educational projects titled “Thetford 2050: The Good Life in a Post Fossil Fuel Era”.

2. Consider recommendation that TEC form a group of volunteers to assist people in accessing low income energy assistance options. This would entail building connections/partnerships with service providers at COVER, CAPSTONE, Efficiency VT, LISTEN, etc. and working with town groups already interfacing with this community to outreach this effort.

Training a core of people. People who are in contact with potential clients introduce volunteers. Meet people where they are. TEN lunches. Recruiting through relationships. Food shelf, Town Clerk, Community Nurse, other.

3. Describe preferred areas for solar in Thetford. Here is an example of text-based preferred site designation (Braintree):

“For all commercial energy generation facilities, the following policies shall be considered:

1. Preferred Locations: The Town supports the placement of new generation and transmission facilities in the following areas

- Roof Mounted Systems, on landfills, on brownfields outside of the village center, on reclaimed quarries or gravel pits, on a site that was previously covered by a structure or impervious cover, and on specific areas identified as preferred on the accompanying map:

- o Along Rte 12A in the areas identified as West Braintree and Rural 2 as identified on the Future Land Use Map

- o Along Battles Brook Rd within 1000 horizontal ft.

- Additionally, the Town, by joint letter of the Planning Commission and Selectboard, may designate a site as preferred if it is not visible in the growing season from town or state highways, is not actively in agriculture,”

TEC suggestions:

May designate a site as preferred ... if it would not negatively affect agriculture;

Under 15K are already unconstrained under the PUC rules;

Unconstrained in the regional plan (except agricultural soils);

Rely on abutters for input on viewshed

EE Subcommittee will also get suggestions from Conservation Commission, Planning Commission

4. Potentially hosting final TRORC workshop with other towns, including zoning administrators, SB, planning commission members – not needed, but we are invited to visit TRORC in Woodstock.

Vermont Climate Pledge Coalition – Bob filled out a Municipal Energy Survey from the Energy Action Network asking questions about town energy use and municipal projects we have done and our interest in joining the Vermont Climate Pledge Coalition – see attached survey.

TEC Website – Alice will connect with Tracy before next meeting to continue cleaning up the site.

Thetford Strafford Community Solar – Construction has started and moving along as scheduled. Panels and racks are due to be on site for installation by June 1st.

Post Mills Landfill PV – Update from Green Mountain Economic Development Corp. No report.

Discuss Hosting a showing of the movie, “Reluctant Radical” – Clare Kelsey asked the TEC to consider showing this film, which Sustainable Woodstock showed recently. Carole Petrillo reports having seen it and that, “It is a really good film in the sense of the commitment of Ken Ward and others in their approach to civil disobedience over climate issues. I highly recommend this film.” You can see a trailer of it at: <https://vimeo.com/211135555> Postponed till next meeting.

Review of a proposed new PV site on Rt. 113 – Matt Cross contacted Bob about land he is considering buying on Rt. 113 (on right just past Erhardt Frost’s driveway, across from Tofer Sharp’s house). Matt has

been in discussions with Norwich Solar Technologies about possibly developing a 200KW PV array there. They suggested he contact me about a status review by the town of the site. We should discuss forming a Renewable Siting Review Subcommittee to include members of the TEC, PC, CC and SB and a process for doing site review. We should then get back to Matt and let him know what we have decided. Bob thought that the site looked like it might be eligible for preferred status – it is up off and relatively well screened from the road and neighbors, it is a bit hilly and partially covered with scrub pines, similar to the Braley property in Post Mills.

EE Subcommittee will also get suggestions from Conservation Commission, Planning Commission

Future of the TEC – Discussed having a meeting outside of our regular meetings to do long term planning and leadership transition, including short and long term vision/mission for our TEC. Mary and Pete will review Vital Communities workbook. TEC will use next meeting to select items for inclusion in a half-day retreat.

Energy Tip: Mike promote Vermod event in Town Newsletter

Next TEC Meeting Date – June 12th, 5pm, Town Hall (Bob might be gone)

Adjourned 7:10 PM