

Joint Thetford Energy Committee Meeting DRAFT MINUTES
November 3, 2022, 6:00 to 7:30 PM

Online: Join Zoom Meeting <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83133483649>

Meeting ID: 831 3348 3649; Passcode: 828152

By Phone: +1 646 558 8656

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JTEC Present: Chuck Cole, Chris Hebb, Nolan Riegler, Erica Ko, Alice Stewart, Tom Ward

Guests Present: Weston Martin

Call to order: 6:00 pm

6:00 Introductions

Weston new Post Mills resident, he has experience in sustainable ag and solar, works with Green Lantern solar based in Waterbury. Considering joining the committee.

6:15 Review and Approve October 6, 2022 Meeting Minutes

6:15 New Business

6:20 IREC Update - Erica

Summary from Geoff – see Annex A below

- Although OESU didn't get accepted to clean schoolbus program, Woodstock and Strafford were accepted so we'll be able to see the program in close towns
- Erica part of RBES group, and Chuck part of Climate Action
- IREC meeting today welcomed Orange County forester and Standing Trees Org as speakers to learn more about trade-offs between energy development and forest management. See value in managing forests for both C sequestration and timber management.
- Recently made an adjustment to the Current Use program, with a pathway for certain properties to be managed land for C sequestration rather than for timber
- Geoff Martin is resigning as IREC, taking a new position with Norwich Solar. His last day is Dec 2, so one last IREC meeting with him. TRORC looking for a replacement. TRORC has been good in the past at orienting new staff.

- Recording will be shared with the JTEC members

6:30 Events Updates

WD Hanover Build

TA design tech work with WD: <https://thetfordacademy.org/2022/11/design-tech-students-team-up-to-save-energy/>

Stephanie: \$2700 Grassroots Fund GRANT

SB needs to approve, with recommendation from JTEC. But hasn't this grant been given before? They cannot discuss at Nov 7, which is a shame, but can on Nov 21. I cannot attend so would need Mary to attend.

MOTION: Shall we recommend to the SB to accept this grant?

Seconded and approved: JTEC passed a motion to make a recommendation that the SB accept this grant.

ACTION: Stephanie will follow up with the formal recommendation to the SB, and request if it can be a quick issue on Nov 7th SB meeting.

Trees Talk

Achieved the objective to have practical advice for substituting trees for lawn
Well attended (at least 40 pp) and all speakers good, with varying perspectives
Some resources could be included on the website eg. NH state tree nursery

ACTIONS

Alice will purchase the recommended book 'Essential Native Trees & Shrubs for NE US' for the Latham Library

Alice getting the link for the recording of the talk as a lot of people wanted to attend

Tom will post on the JTEC website

6:45 2023 Budget

Budget needs to go into Bryan ASAP

Energy Fund, like a capital improvement fund.

Geoff recommended that

- Bryan hold off on EV chargers, but would likely need a 10% match funding for that. So recommended \$2500 for energy fund
- \$500 advertising on community solar arrays

Spent \$500ish last year

Timothy Frost WD - \$100 mailing Capstone

Other years we've spent \$ on food, etc

Ebike program will likely happen in 2023, Vital Communities looking for help on this, likely same amount

Recommend to stay at level funding, with some possible reallocation to different categories

Budget is on Google drive

ACTION: Alice will do our budget and energy fund and submit to Bryan. She will recommend for \$3,000 for energy fund if it's at \$0, but otherwise \$2500; and stay level for our annual budget at \$2500.

7:00 Committee Commission Charge

See draft Annex B

Consensus to remove 'Joint'

Questions on whether to use the title "Thetford Energy and Climate Resilience Committee'

Remove reference to IREC coordinator, and just maintain energy and climate committees

MOTION: Nolan made a motion and was approved by all to move the new charge forward

ACTION: Nolan will submit to town

7:10 TES Solar Update/ Next Steps

The JTEC is an Intervenor in the case, a summary of the case details and public documents are available on the PUC website:

<https://epuc.vermont.gov/?q=node/64/167750/FV-Case%20Summary-Portal>

Our Testimony has been filed.

The only other intervenor is VEC, because of precedent

Hearing likely in Feb, with decision likely in March.

PUC will likely approve, but question is more about whether they approve the previous rate.

7:20 Post Mills Solar Update

Summary of phone call with Goeff, Bob and Troy.

7% discount rate off net metered rate but now with new IRA rate, trying to understand if we could apply any of that to this array

We do have a chance with the TES array to take advantage of the IRA rate for income qualifying residents, which could be up to 25% discounts

Given the income qualification process with the TES array will be a more complicated process, so will likely need more time.

We will want to start outreach for both arrays, need to have subscribe by March 2023. Waiting for Norwich Solar for some additional information.

500MW array can service ~100 homes, and they already have some subscribers

TES owns the original array and owns their RECs (it's a condition of the original grant); Norwich owns the expansion. The school board / TES might be considered owners in future. Schools can net meter up to

Getting LMI customers on an array on IRA, there's an additional tax credit added for array owner (Norwich) – Norwich has suggested they would pass the savings on to the ratepayers. Currently we have the option of retiring the RECs. School board will be meeting on this soon, and will likely pass.

Best outreach would be mailers to find households that qualify. And LMI households will be found in the 7 towns.

Great to do an in person event – library or recycling center perhaps

Suggestion to push Norwich Solar to support marketing, as project will have some benefits

ACTION: Erica, Bob working on a flyer for outreach. Everyone should brainstorm on events where we can outreach.

7:40 New Committee Member

Weston wrote an email to the SelectBoard

Committee approves his candidacy, and SB will vote at an upcoming meeting

ACTION: Nolan will advise Sharon that we approve and hope the SB will appoint him to JTEC

Future Meeting Topics

Decision making criteria for efficiency investment (Marc Chabot)

Next Meeting December 1, 2022

Adjourn 7:30 pm

Annex A: October IREC report

IREC Progress Report Town of Thetford October 2022

- *Town Offices HVAC project:* Met onsite with EEI and Bryan Gazda on October 3 to review the design and locations for the condensers and interior units. EEI is working on pricing and a final proposal for the Selectboard.
- *TES and Post Mills Solar Arrays:* Responded to the Department of Public Service's first set of questions to my testimony. GMEDC received funding to complete the remediation study and that study is in process. They anticipate the study to be completed by early winter. Working with the JTEC on an outreach plan to subscribe community members to both arrays.
- *Green Procurement Policy:* Met with Bryan Gazda and Chief Scruggs to discuss possible replacements for the cruiser. After discussions with Chief Scruggs, there is not an all-electric option that meets the police department's needs at this time, but hybrid options are available.
- *Clean School Bus Program:* The OESU's application to the Clean School Bus Program was not initially selected. EPA is still planning to award additional applicants this funding round, and is strongly encouraging all applicants that were unsuccessful in the first round to apply for funding in the second round.
- *IREC Climate Action Plan Working Groups:* The RBES working group is finalizing a "Municipal Actions" document with actions that towns can take to encourage/require more efficient and fossil fuel-free buildings. The Climate Action Guidelines working group is compiling resources that will be shared among energy committees and continually updated.
- *IREC Steering Committee:* Met with the IREC Steering Committee on October 6. We discussed updated information on the Inflation Reduction Act and its relevance to our energy committees, and shared status updates on various town projects.

Annex B: Draft new committee charge

The Joint Thetford Energy and Climate Committee (JTECC) serves as an advisor for the citizens, schools, and the municipality of Thetford. Aware of the challenges presented by climate change, we advocate for innovative, practical, and cost-effective options to conserve energy and reduce carbon emissions in heating or cooling buildings, powering vehicles, and generating electricity. With an eye towards a low-carbon future, we support effective planning for resiliency, sustainability, and ecological wellbeing, and improved carbon sequestration through careful stewardship of soil, plants, and forests.

The JTECC provides ongoing assessment of Thetford's progress in the adoption of policies and practices outlined in its Enhanced Energy Plan and will, on an ongoing basis:

- * Advise the Selectboard, the School Board and members of Thetford's other committees and commissions regarding our local, regional and state energy and climate plans;
- * Provide information to the residents of Thetford and local farms, businesses, schools, and forest managers regarding de-carbonization opportunities and best practices;

* Work with energy and climate committees in neighboring communities to collaborate and achieve regional climate goals.