

**Joint Thetford Energy Committee Meeting APPROVED Minutes  
December 1, 2022, 6:00 to 7:30 PM**

**Online:** <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81225168375>

Meeting ID: 812 2516 8375; Passcode: 746645

**By Phone:** +1 646 558 8656

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**JTEC Present:** Nolan Reigler, Erica Ko, Alice Stewart, Mary Bryant, Chuck Cole, Tom Ward, Stephanie Daniels (from 7-7:30only)

**Guests Present:** Bob Walker, Weston Martin

**Call to order: 6:00 pm**

**6:00 Review and Approve November 3, 2022 Meeting Minutes**

Minutes Available Here:

<https://www.thetfordvt.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/3680/638041199025970000>

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Some ambiguities, so we decided to table the approval until next meeting after we had some discussions with Stephanie

**6:05 New Business – Budget Rundown**

If no money in energy fund, would recommend \$3000 for it.

Alice reviewed breakdown of the budget – Committee supported her bringing it to Bryan

**6:10 IREC Update**

- Last meeting with Goeff
- Future event – discussed carbon forest event/managing invasives
- Events – green guidelines have different towns take lead on specific events and then advertise to all of the area
- IREC – role in general – 6 applications, interviewed on person, expect to interview 3-4, highlighted attributes; When hire? Not sure
- Did we know if Thetford would be continuing with the IREC? – Mary – Selectboard feels very positive about the position – expects to re-fund it.
- Bob – will IREC towns be part of the decision? – Erica – No – but we did give input.
- Who else is filing in for the interim – Kevin, Kyle
- Discussion with Bryan re: Heat Pump Town Hall Project – either this Monday or January 19

**6:20 VECAN Conference**

Virtual – Sat 10<sup>th</sup> 9-12, workshops throughout the week

Bob has list – forward to the email list 1.5 hour things –

VECAN has added descriptions and individual session registration buttons for the weekday workshops. <https://vecan.net/15th-annual-vecan-conference-2022/>

### **6:30 Post Mills/TES Solar Updates**

Bob – frustrated re: Post Mills – from when we started to promote it LMI Thetford and surrounding residents – Norwich solar

TES – LMI larger discounts 10%; advertise 5-7% discounts – don't know  
\$1.5M for 380Kw

Twin Pines, Poore Farm Trust, Town, Capstone

ARPA Survey – have to add slot for solar array,

#### Bob Walker

- If Norwich is coming with financing will be 5-7% discount for offtakers for TES array. We don't know if we're going to be able to get more than that.
- Ideas to come up with financing to secure better discounts, such as ARPA funds from town or Poor Farm Trust, or Byrne Foundation could it be combined by several investors. Project is \$1,5 mill project for 380 KW (expansion from 120KW → 380-500).
- Trust would probably be interested in having a conversation, although \$1.5mill is likely more than PFT would have. Twin Pines Housing and Capstone would be the 2 others we could speak with on financing. Twin Pines would also be able to bill users as they do this kind of thing.
- In TES agreement with Norwich Solar, low income Thetford residents have priority
- TES as property owners can decide to offer a larger discount to offtakers, they won't make as much money back as quickly as they would otherwise – so could we think about a financing collaboration. This is a systemic challenge of how do we get low income people access to solar power?
- In a conversation with the developers of the PostMills array will also have a 10% discount to the developers, which also cannot go back to ratepayers, it must have to go to the owners who are taking more risk
- Q: can we open this up to individual investors?
- A; No - Ideally only 1 or 2 investors, couldn't have a whole group of individual investors – too complicated contractually

#### Weston –

- Likely that PUC allocate this as a new project and value is drastically lower than rates we're looking for.
- If town/TES can assure Norwich Solar that all offtakers will be low income, then Norwich will get the 10% ITC guarantee, so they can offer a higher discount to offtakers
- His company Green Lantern has multiple arrays that town could buy power from, and would offer 10% discounts

#### Erica –

- TES net metering rate is expiring next year – does this have an impact?
- Norwich doesn't sign people to a specific array so doesn't promise a specific rate
- If we figure out the investor control, this will dictate the discount

### Mary Bryant –

- Will send out town survey soon on ARPA funds, and would need to add a question on solar array
- Q: Are we locked in to Norwich Solar? Could another company offer a better deal for low income rate payers?
- A: this would be a decision for TES who has a contract with Norwich?
- A: TES owns land, and Norwich likely has a lease on the land
- A: For Post Mills, Green Mt Economic Opportunity Council is currently trying to get the owner of the land, and will be the developer and will be likely signing an agreement with Norwich Solar
- A: it's highly likely that Norwich has control / lease of both properties

### Nolan –

- project wrapped up in a contentious hearing with PUC; as well as unknowns from IRA
- Norwich also saying we need to start signing up people now
- We could start signing up people now – even if we can't guarantee they get power from the TES array
- We could use TES, TA or church for a public meeting to do an outreach meeting
- But we should simultaneously be trying to figure out financing

### ACTION ITEMS

1. **Bob** willing to talk to town, Poor Farm Trust, Twin Pines, Capstone, Pompanoosic Trust were interested in having a conversation about idea of joint financing
2. **Mary** will put question about solar array financing from ARPA on town (Would you agree with the town investing in developing a solar array that would give discounts to low income town residents?) and town would earn that money back over time
3. **Mary and Bryan will talk with Weston** about his company Green Lantern has multiple arrays that town could buy power from, and would offer 10% discount

### **6:40 Solar Outreach Planning**

*Nolan will share materials from Norwich Solar on outreach to sign up consumers and we can think about that plan*

### **7:15 Planning for 2023 – Return to Live Meetings**

- First meeting will be virtual (January 5) on Zoom
- February meeting we will return to live meetings at least for some of us
  - Q: is there still a zoom option for Guests?
  - A: **Nolan** will double check with **Martie** if we can do Hybrid

Mary requested a time shift to 6:30pm – we need to check with town hall on other meetings happening at this time

Decision: Keep meeting at 6pm, and push topics that link with SB to later in the meeting so Mary can participate

### **7:30 Window Dressers**

- Bob doesn't want to be the lead organizer, would be happy to lead trainings

- We should recruit someone else, and Bob would be willing to mentor
- WD has a lot of backlog of people who want inserts; organizer from Maine is polling organizers to do another build this year
- Bob would like to talk with Chris Schmidt to do another build this year
- Bob would like to approach Efficiency VT to see if they can give the \$ they give for inserts, give \$ to WD directly as it is hard for homeowners to put out money up front and get reimbursed for it

**Next Meeting January 5, 2022**

**Adjourn 7:35 pm**

**Future Meeting Topics**

Decision making criteria for efficiency investment (Marc Chabot)