

IREC Steering Committee Meeting

April 27, 2021

Present: Doc Bagley, Strafford; Elizabeth Ferry, Barnard; Peter Gregory, TRORC; Erica Ko, Thetford; Geoff Martin, IREC; Neal Leitner, Woodstock; Ryan Haac, Sharon. **Regrets:** Doug Fraser, Fairlee.

1. Additions/changes to agenda: Recovery Funds

Doc inquired about the status of Recovery Funds that might be applied to climate and energy issues. Peter: funds available to communities from the state will be clarified by May 10.

Action: add this to the May agenda.

2. Intermunicipal Regional Energy Coordinator Service Agreement (IRECSA) FY 22

Geoff: the changes to the original IREC contract were made to reflect that this covers Year II.

Discussion:

— Clarification on percentage of the IREC's time that will go to towns and to TRORC.

In 2021, 60% went to the IREC towns and 40% to TRORC projects. In 2022, 100% of will go to the participating towns, with Fairlee not participating and Bradford and Norwich joining in. Towns will fund all of the IREC's direct costs; TRORC is pleased to continue to back the position by covering the indirect costs.

—Peter will keep an eye on what is the "right mix" re: number of towns, percentages, and workload.

Actions: (1) Under "Town-specific work." remove "energy work with schools, as this is a hot-button issue in some towns. Towns that want it can include it. (2) Peter will provide a breakdown of IREC direct and indirect costs specific to any town's contribution. Neal requests it for Woodstock.

3. FY '22 Programmatic Priorities — continue discussion on natural carbon sequestration See attachment, "Case for Including Land Considerations in IREC Scope of Work, 2021-22"

Elizabeth walked through this document, highlighting the value of farm and forest land as carbon sinks. *As rural communities, we have these resources to add to the equation.*

Discussion:

— Michael Snyder in Strafford is in very preliminary stages of carbon measuring.

— Strafford energy committee includes this in their work. Fortunate to have some community leaders keenly interested in the topic.

— Ryan has information regarding a four-town mapping effort involving Sharon, Strafford, Tunbridge, and Royalton. He developed an interactive tool to engage citizen participation.

— Question: is this already included under "lower GHG emissions" in the contract?

— Recognition of its value; concern that it doesn't translate in to cost-savings.

Actions: (1) For 2022, list this as a Town-specific option. Continue to work on it and consider adding to the job definition in 2023 based on that experience. (2) TRORC will continue to support the topic through education. (3) See attachment for Ryan's map.

4. IREC Updates

— **US Dept. of Energy Low GHG Vehicle Technologies Research, Development,**

Demonstration, and Deployment. Geoff is meeting with GMP and VT Clean Cities Coalition on 4/28 to brainstorm a concept. Underserved rural communities are included in the scope. Includes EV workplace and multi-family housing charging stations. Ryan notes: schools, the hub of small communities, are a good location for public charging.

— **Energy and Land Use:** See attachment for presentation which includes suggestions for Planning Commissions to encourage solar/EV readiness and movement away from fossil fuels.

— **Municipal EV Readiness.** Designed to help towns transition to EVs. Participation requires a “municipal decision maker.” Thetford Selectboard has committed to participation.

— **REC handout** still being drafted. VLS website info is out of date. Look at LEAP.

— **RBES Update.** The Department of Public Service (DPS) said that towns have the authority to restrict the compliance pathways in the RBES to the HERS pathway. This is exciting news as it helps to settle the question of legality around the proposal. DPS cautioned that manufactured home builders may have trouble complying through the HERS pathway, and that they typically use the REScheck pathway to meet RBES. Steve Spatz said that REScheck is a more stringent pathway anyways, so allowing manufactured homes to comply using that pathway should be okay.

5. Strafford Updates: GMP resiliency zones, Window Dressers

—May 11: Josh Castinguay of GMP will join Strafford Energy Committee via Zoom to discuss localized energy storage. Strafford’s large Elizabeth Mine solar installation makes this a particularly relevant topic in that town. All ECs are welcome to join the session.

— Thetford and Strafford are doing a Window Dressers event in 2021. Contact Doc if interested.

6. Next Meeting: TBD. Josh Castinguay of GMP will be invited to talk about RECS.

In preparation, see these links from local newspapers regarding the impacts of Hydro Quebec and the quality of the RECs.

— **from VT Digger**

[Article 1](#)

[Article 2](#)

— **from Valley News:**

[Article 1](#)

[Article 2](#)