

# IREC Steering Committee Meeting

September 2, 2021

**Present:** Doc Bagley, Elizabeth Ferry, Linda Gray, Erica Ko, Geoff Martin, Nancy Jones, Neal Leitner, Ryan Haac. **Guests:** David Lutz, in-coming Strafford IREC Steering Committee member and Alexander Taft, Mt. Ascutney Regional Planning Commission.

## 1. **Additions/changes to agenda**

No additions or changes were made.

## 2. **IREC Updates**

**A.** The State of VT is allocating some funding to regional planning commissions for energy plan implementation.

Action: The IREC towns will get some credit for some of the funds that we have put in to the IREC position. Details to follow.

Questions for Peter Gregory: Can it be applied to the cost of participating in the program next year? Can it be applied to a town's current projects?

**B.** Medium- and Heavy-Duty Truck Electrification: two upcoming events. Geoff is notifying us and the Highway Foreman of each town.

**C.** Comments to the PUC will be written, rather than live testimony.

Action: Geoff and Ryan will be the point people for this. The letter will need Peter Gregory's approval prior to sending.

## 3. **High Impact Projects**

Geoff reported that in weighted voting, the IREC Climate Action Plan clearly rose to the top as the idea that has the most interest among Steering Committee members. There were three other projects that were close behind: Green Guidelines for Homeowners, Forest Awareness, and Low-Income Community Solar. He also made it clear that any town can opt out of participating in a project if they desire. Further discussion to take place in his 1:1 conversations with each of us.

Discussion of all four options followed. A prominent point: for towns that have declared a climate emergency, this can be a roadmap for actual progress toward goals.

Action: Geoff will draft an outline for our October meeting. The structure might include Operations Plans, Policies, and Outreach Programs. Given data on hand, we are thinking that this can be accomplished fairly easily. It will include some specific actions and deadlines for each town.

## 4. **HERS Update.** Following conversations with the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission and the VT League of Cities and Towns, it seems that municipalities such as ours do not have the authority to limit the pathways for new building energy code compliance. As a result, it seems best not to move forward with bringing the document that Erica and Geoff have crafted to our various Planning Commissions or Zoning Administrators.

David asks if it would be constructive to consider achieving the same ends by a different

route, namely through building permit fees, which we know towns do have the authority to set. For example, if a building permit includes plans to install a heat pump, the fee would be less (or non-existent) in comparison to installing a fossil fuel-based heating system.

Action: Linda Gray suggested that Erica and Geoff follow up with legislator Tim Briglin, asking him to clarify for certain whether we have the authority and if not, to draft a bill that would be taken up in the next legislative session. Ideally, we could be back on track with the HERS recommendation next summer.

Action: Geoff will ask Kevin Geiger. This could be a strategy in the Climate Action Plan.

5. Next meeting: Thursday, October 7 at 11:00.

Action: Geoff will send a Zoom invitation by email that is clearly labeled.

Respectfully submitted,  
Elizabeth Ferry