

**IREC Steering Committee Meeting**

**Approved Minutes**

**March 3, 2022 via Zoom**

**Present:** Elizabeth Ferry - Barnard; Nancy Jones – Bradford; Linda Gray – Norwich; Ryan Haac – Sharon; Erica Ko - Thetford; Neil Leitner – Woodstock; Geoff Martin – TRORC

1. **Additions/changes to agenda**

Elizabeth requested to add a discussion of charging stations to the last agenda item.

**2. Approve minutes from 02-03-2022 meeting**

The minutes were approved unanimously.

**3. Brief updates from Steering Committee on IREC Climate Action Plan**

Geoff suggested the committee send their respective energy committee’s comments to him by March 16. He would organize the comments and send to the steering committee by March 23. The steering committee would then review and approve comments at the April meeting, and aim to approve a final draft of the CAP at the May meeting. This final draft would be shared with energy committees and used at a May/June joint meeting of the steering committee and energy committees to finalize the plan.

The steering committee approved of this plan. For the joint meeting, the committee agreed to aim for a week night, and pick a central location. The Sharon Elementary School pavilion, covered spaces at Huntley Meadows in Norwich, and Bradford’s Elizabeth’s Park were all suggested as locations. **The committee agreed to set the date for the meeting by end of the month.**

**4. IREC update – Window Dressers Consideration**

Geoff explained that Thetford and Strafford are hoping to do a Window Dressers campaign this year and asked if he could be a lead project coordinator and do so for other IREC towns as well. Elizabeth said that Barnard is likely not doing a campaign this year. Ryan said Sharon is unsure. Linda suggested that the Norwich/Hanover team may be able to help Strafford and Thetford rather than having Geoff work on the campaign. **Linda will follow up with Erica.**

**5. Steering Committee discussion**

1. POWER-D.city

Ryan met with the two organizers (April Salas, Executive Director of the Revers Center for Energy, Sustainability, and Innovation; Ethan Goldman, So. Burlington Energy Committee) of POWER-D.city. They are looking to test out their model of gathering energy/GHG emissions data for communities, and thought the size of the IREC group is perfect for what they are looking for. They hope to do a free 6-month pilot, and could continue to track progress after the 6 months for a charge. The concept is to put in place systems that make data gathering automatic.

The committee asked the following questions, which **Ryan will address and provide answers at the next steering committee meeting.**

* What would the cost to continue after 6 months be?
* If we don’t choose to continue with the program, could we continue to use the product/data on our own?
* Would participation take up Geoff’s time or town staff time, and if so, how much?
* If town staff need to be involved, could POWER-D.city present to Selectboards?
* If a subset of the IREC towns agree to participate, is POWER-D.city still interested in working with us?

Elizabeth noted that she would want to be sure that participating in the program is useful, and that it provides something different than the tools we already have.

1. How can small towns be involved in climate action?

Elizabeth suggested that one of the biggest things that small towns can contribute to climate action is their functioning, rural, natural ecosystems. She explained a proposed change to the Current Use program to include land passively managed for carbon sequestration. The bill has passed out of the VT House and is now in the Senate. She also mentioned Zack Porter, who is the Executive Director of Standing Trees, and is working to protect and restore forests on public lands in New England.

Linda expressed concerns about the PUC considering strict restrictions on cutting down trees in connection to solar. **Linda will circulate comments from Renewable Energy Vermont on this issue.**

**Elizabeth will send an article from Vital Communities called, “Is wood heat good heat?”.**

There was not time to discuss charging stations, but Elizabeth will follow up with Steering Committee members individually.

Respectfully submitted,

Geoff Martin, Acting Secretary