

**IREC Steering Committee Meeting**

**APPROVED Minutes**

**July 7, 2022 via Zoom**

**Present:** Elizabeth Ferry - Barnard; Linda Gray – Norwich; Ryan Haac – Sharon; David Lutz – Strafford; Nancy Jones – Bradford; Jenevra Wetmore – Woodstock; Geoff Martin – TRORC

1. **Additions/changes to agenda**

Elizabeth suggested adding 15 minutes to the end of each agenda for steering committee reps to discuss what their town is working on. The group agreed this should be a standing agenda item.

Geoff mentioned that the Department of Public Service issued a [request for input on Vermont’s Renewable Electricity Policy and Programs](https://publicservice.vermont.gov/sites/dps/files/documents/Renewable_Energy/Final%20RFI%20%26%20Appendix%20A.pdf), and suggested that energy committees consider submitting input.

1. **Approve minutes from 06-02-2022 meeting**

The minutes were approved unanimously.

1. **CAP next steps**
2. Review/edit [outlines for Green Guidelines and RBES](https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/h9zo9nl7zqz5kzfvut1ar/Green-Guidelines-RBES-Outline.docx?dl=0&rlkey=z1t6csw3dw8iwg4barfn5d9y6)

Linda suggested the group consider the format of the guidelines - will they be a one-pager or a website?

*Green Guidelines*

Elizabeth suggested changing “low-income” to “income-sensitive”.

David recommended adding to the showcases the possibility of using vacant storefronts as a showroom, funded by clean tech companies, so that people could physically see these technologies before making the switch.

There was discussion over the concept of a green buying pledge for businesses versus green guidelines for residents. The group decided that most of what’s included in the green guidelines section for residents is applicable to businesses, though the two need to remain separate because there are different incentives and opportunities for businesses vs. residents. In addition to creating the guidelines, the subcommittee should consider the value of creating a pledge or a competition for residents and businesses as a way to encourage more people to use the guidelines.

*RBES*

Linda asked for clarification around what towns have the authority to do.

Geoff explained that towns do have the authority to adopt stretch code, but not much else. Adopting stretch code does nothing to increase compliance. The RBES specifies three compliance pathways, one of which is getting a HERS rating. Requiring a HERS rating should increase compliance, but towns do not have the authority to do this. This action would focus on enabling towns to require a HERS rating.

Linda suggested including working to enable towns to require net-zero new construction within the RBES action. David cautioned that too many requirements might slow down the pace of construction and significantly increase costs. The group agreed that working through the pros and cons will be the responsibility of the subcommittee.

Elizabeth pointed out that in addition to getting Selectboard support for this action, it would be critical to get the support of contractors.

Geoff asked whether the rental actions should be included in the RBES action, even though they are not directly related to RBES. Linda suggested that, though they are not directly related, they are connected and it might be worthwhile to address rental issues while working on RBES. In addition, it might be beneficial to bring a package of energy initiatives to legislators.

1. Determine structure and timeline for working on actions

Linda recommended that the Green Guidelines action could be coordinated through each town energy committee. Energy committees could discuss what they have done in the past, then figure out how to coordinate with other energy committees. Each town might take slightly different approaches, sometimes collaborating together or among a few of the towns.

Jenevra thought that the RBES action is a bit intense and complicated to ask energy committees to work on, and that it should be up to the Steering Committee and members of energy committees with expertise. Jenevra wants to be involved in housing/RBES section.

**The Steering Committee agreed to bring the outline of the actions back to their energy committees, describe what we agreed to at this meeting, and invite one member of the energy committee to join each action.** If no energy committee members volunteers, the Steering Committee representatives will serve. In some cases, there may be an energy committee member plus a Steering Committee member working on an action, and in other cases, there may be just an energy committee member serving.

**The first action group meeting should occur at the end of August/beginning of September.**

Linda suggested that there is research that could be done prior to the first meeting. E.g., look through town websites and see how each town might display the green guidelines. Some towns may be able to add to existing webpage, other may have to start from scratch.

1. Public outreach – format for displaying CAP

Geoff asked how the Climate Action Plan should be displayed for the public (i.e., full list of actions or just the collaborative actions). Jenevra said that the audience will be Select Board members and interested residents. Jenevra thought that, while it may be best to show just a subset of the actions, it would be nice to have an online format to present all the actions because if something is missing, people will ask why a certain action wasn’t included.

The committee agreed that it makes sense to show a subset of the actions, but to let people know that Sustainable Woodstock has the full excel document available on its website. Finally, the focus could be on the two actions that the Steering Committee/energy committees selected at the May meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Geoff Martin, Acting Secretary