

**IREC Steering Committee Meeting**

**APPROVED Minutes**

**September 1, 2022 via Zoom**

**Present:** David Lutz – Strafford; Elizabeth Ferry – Barnard; Erica Ko – Thetford; Ryan Haac – Sharon; Jenevra Wetmore – Woodstock; Geoff Martin - TRORC

**Regrets:** Linda Gray – Norwich; Nancy Jones - Bradford

1. **Approve minutes from 08-11-2022 meeting:**

August minutes were approved unanimously.

1. **Working Landscapes Discussion**

Educating ourselves about forest: we’ve talked about inviting an expert. What are some of our questions?

* + “good wood heat” — wood as an alternative to taxing the electric grid, especially in winter (heat pumps in use but little solar generation)
  + considering the time lag (30-40 years) that it takes for wood to regrow and regain its carbon sequestration value
  + wood pellets vs. chips vs outdoor furnaces
  + equity issue — for some people, wood heat is “free” (apart from labor)

➡︎Action: 1. Geoff will draft an invitation to David Paganelli, Orange County Forester, and Mark Nelson, Chair of the Board of [Standing Trees](https://www.standingtrees.org/). He will ask about their availability for our October or November meetings. 2. Committee members send Geoff questions in advance.

**3.** **Local Legislators**

Linda Gray is interested in a conversation with local legislators before the session begins in January.

Question: is this a meeting without Geoff due to TRORC guidelines?

➡︎Action: Geoff will ask Linda to take the lead. We will cc him on our communications. We’ll invite legislators who cover all of our town.

**4. IREC Updates**

**a. IREC Action Groups**

Currently four people have signed up for each of the two Action Groups as follow-up to the IREC Climate Action Plan. Geoff is meeting on Friday with the Climate Action Guidelines Group, and the following week with the RBES group.

➡︎Action: Ideally there will be a rep from each town on each Action Group. Looking for more volunteers. Contact Geoff.

**b. Dept of Energy Grant Opportunities**

Geoff reported on two federal grant opportunities: one related to community engagement and training in underserved communities for alternative and electric transportation options, and another on community geothermal. On the former, Geoff will follow-up in 1:1 meetings. On the latter, Norwich might be interested, though Oct. deadline is unrealistic.

**Note**: related documents are in [Dropbox in this meeting’s folder](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/7muyhos5ieujco9/AAD7VOPUYpn5mAfd55PNP8gAa?dl=0).

**c. Inflation Reduction Act**

Geoff especially interested in Tax Credit for Solar and Low-Income Bonus. Something to keep in mind for us as a group.

**d. Vital Communities**

Anna is pulling together useful information about weatherization programs. Will contact local ECs.

➡︎Action: Watch for an email from Anna. Help to spread the word.

**6. Town Update: Thetford**

Erica reported that Thetford’s Window Dressers campaign with Norwich is in process. As an add-on, Thetford Academy has done a community build in their shop. In other news, efforts at community solar arrays are moving forward slowly and encountering obstacles. Still working on the project to get heat pumps installed at the Town Hall. Talking about changing the name and the charter of the energy committee to go beyond “reducing energy and saving money.”

Respectfully submitted, Elizabeth Ferry