

## Thetford Energy Committee 7/15/14 Minutes

Meeting started: 5:10 PM

**TEC Attendees:** Chris Hebb, Ellen Blumberg, Manny Grewal, Mike Kiess, Bob Walker, Alice Stewart, Joel Legunn

**Others:** Phebe McCosker, Stuart Blood, Taylor Ralph (SunCommon)

**Review and approve minutes from 5/13 and 6/10/14 meetings** - Unanimously approved after motion from Manny and second from Ellen. Bob please pass to Kim (select board secretary) for posting on town web site.

**Town Hall Weatherization and Challenge Grant Update** – Donn Downey submitted application for \$500 Challenge award which was approved by Paul Markowitz. Building Energy is scheduled to do work on July 18 and 21.

**Volunteer Assisted Weatherization Project** – Bob talked to the select board and they approved our doing more VAW jobs. Mark McMahon mentioned that the Ompompanoosuc Trust had discussed and decided to support the Thetford VAW effort. We discussed with Manny how that will work. Our fundraising goal is \$5,000 (2 projects at \$2,500 each). Manny suggests request entire \$5,000 from Trust, and Trust can decide how they will approach fundraising, in agreement with the Town. Contributions from town residents would be tax-deductible and designated for the weatherization effort. Manny please send copy of fund request letter of agreement used for a previous project. Bob use template to create draft request. Circulate among TEC for any feedback on draft. Manny and Bob will take the request to the next convenient Select Board meeting.

**Solarize Thetford-Strafford** – Final Results: Solarize Thetford-Strafford more than doubled the amount of solar in our towns and we reached our Tier 5 (largest) discount pricing that will be in effect for all who went solar during this project.

Through the Solarize effort, 46 households (32 from Thetford) went solar with our project partners, Catamount Solar and Integrity Energy, and more than 250 kW of solar panels will be installed. In addition, a few folks encouraged by the Solarize push jumped on board the solar bandwagon during this program with other installers. Twelve families went with Solaflect trackers for 52 kW (9 families for 36 kW from Thetford) and one Thetford family joined onto a Sovern Solar group-net-metered array for about 3 kW. So in all we know of 42 Thetford homes installing 221.25kW through Solarize.

Prior to the Solarize effort there were about 22 grid-tied solar homes in Thetford with 79kW.

Lessons learned – use customers as Solar Ambassadors to generate more business, maybe reward people for generating more business.

**PACE Promotional Program** – Efficiency Vermont contacted SERG about collaborating on an educational outreach campaign this fall to promote the use of PACE financing in the 11 UV towns that have passed PACE. SERG is considering developing an evening forum that focuses on PACE and the various programs it could be used for (home weatherization, window improvements [<http://www.windowimprovementmasters.com>], renewable space and water heating systems, pellet boilers, ASHPs, heat pump water heaters, solar hot water], solar PV, micro-hydro.) and offer to present in the various UV PACE towns. We could get local providers of the PACE qualifying services to help sponsor and attend the forums. TEC recommends putting together information on other financing mechanisms available in addition to PACE to distribute.

**Community Solar Discussion** – Bob reported on meetings and discussions with select board, ANR and several solar consultants. The former landfill in Post Mills seems to still be owned by the deceased former owner, Frank Barker’s estate. ANR is looking into ownership, liability and site development control issues. The select board is supportive of TEC continuing to investigate a possible GNP project there. From Mike’s email – grant funds may be available for researching and establishing legal framework for town “owned” array. Mike will create outline of grant application and pass to Bob for next steps.

Taylor Ralph, a community organizer from SunCommon, based in Waterbury Center, joined us to explain their programs. SC formed 2 years ago as a spin off from VPIRG’s Solar Communities initiative. SC is just starting to organize in Orange and Winsor Counties. SC is a “Benefit” corporation tied to triple bottom line. Located in Net Zero office building. Close relationship with Waterbury LEAP. Waterbury set a goal to double solar and achieved. Waterbury also achieved a new 40 new solar home goal and SC will build a greenhouse on their school. SC organizes workshops and info sessions.

SC has 3 Programs

- Residential Solar Purchase with financing so no up front cost; fixed monthly rate paid to SunCommon instead of GMP; 12 year loan = 1.99% or 2.99%. Payments might be slightly more than those to GMP. But payments are fixed and if GMP rates rise, SC payments may be lower than GMP. Ownership of system after 12 years.
- Community Solar Leasing – 10% savings/month guaranteed. They have two 150kW arrays – to be built in Waltham, VT, Addison Cty. They have sold out all subscriptions. 20-year lease can be renewed at end. To get out, pay 3 months extra. Perks for landowners include property lease.
- Solar Heating and Cooling – use ASHP to heat and cool, no up front cost. Use same financing as solar. Cost 1/3 of propane and oil.

**Next TEC Meeting Date** – Aug. 12, 5:00 PM, at town hall.