

Deerfield Energy Resources Committee

January 22, 2010
Minutes

Present: Kathy Melnik, Amy Gazin-Schwartz, Jay Striker, David Gilbert Keith. Kristen Bakker and Barbara Krolick arrived after meeting had started.

- 1.) Previous minutes reviewed. KM moves to accept, JS seconds. Unanimously accepted. DGK secretary-du-jour.
- 2.) JS: Morris Pierce is not coming to discuss district heating. Misunderstanding apparently resulted from Greenfield Recorder running an article from two years ago. Letters from Geoff Brown regarding biomass energy submitted for review. Two citizens came to hear Mr. Pierce, left when told he would not be coming.
- 3.) Old Business: Per MA Swedlund, JS reports, ESCO audit moving along and Wind Fund checks are being cut.
- 4.) No Energy Savings Tips of the Month this time.
- 5.) Meeting with SelectBoard (KM reporting): Bernie Kubiak says mapping of street lights is done and he will soon be able to make it available. WMECO found more lights than previously known, so town owes more.

While the Green Communities grant process has no pressing demands before April, Bernie advises moving on the landfill zoning adjustment in time to get it on the town meeting agenda. Putting solar panels at the transfer station may run into trouble under the site's current zoning designation as agricultural/residential as currently defined. Therefore the definition of ag/res needs to be broadened to allow solar panels. The change can be site-specific and is a requirement for the town to receive a Green Communities designation. This is not (necessarily) a zoning change, but rather a change in the definition of the current zoning category.

- 6.) Kristen reports:
 - a.) LED streetlights, as installed at Deerfield Academy, are brighter at the base, but have a narrower light cone and colder color than the old lights. The bulbs do not fit elegantly with the faux-gaslight fixtures.
 - b.) Stretch Energy Code: Stretch Code is an optional step communities must accept by vote. The Stretch Codes are more stringent than standard building codes with regard to insulation, inspections, and matters relating to energy efficiency. Building codes alone have already become more stringent.

Home Energy Rating System (HERS) assigns homes values from 0 to 150 points. 0 is good, assigned to houses that need no supplemental energy input. 100 points is a benchmark pegged at energy consumed by an average home built to the 2006 building codes. Proposed regular

building codes are going to be less than 100 and the Stretch Codes will require the following HERS ratings:

Renovations <2,000 square feet	85 points
Renovations \geq 2,000sf	80 points
New homes <3,000sf	70 points
New Homes \geq 3,000sf	65 points

Homes must be inspected by certified HERS raters at an estimated cost of \$500-\$1,000, with some outliers charging more and less by a few hundred dollars. Rating will also include air blower tests before sheet-rocking.

There are two compliance paths: performance and prescriptive. New construction is performance, renovations are prescriptive. Prescriptive refers to check lists and criteria for commercial and residential housing.

Higher initial costs for efficiency are likely to be offset by several factors: First, in reduced energy costs alone, the payback time for the initial higher costs is likely to be 5 to 10 years. Second, because reduced energy costs make the home a better investment, mortgage lenders often extend better rates for Stretch homes. State rebates and tax incentives may also assist. Finally, other factors may include shorter payback times as energy costs rise and reduced costs in required size of heating and cooling equipment.

Based on 2005 government energy estimates, the average code compliant home would cost \$0.98/sf or roughly \$1,470/year for a 1,500sf house. A HERS 70 point home, by comparison, would use \$0.67/sf or \$1,005 for a relative savings of \$485/year.

It is likely to cost ~\$5,000 more to build a Stretch compliant house than meeting non-stretch codes. Kristen recommends we consult real estate agents, mortgage brokers and developers.

DK raises issue of stigma left from 1970's buildings that tight houses are not always healthy. Kristen explains there will be considerations in the code. For instance, homes that are too tight will need venting systems, but they are still likely to be cheaper than lost heat. Vent systems are available that include heat exchangers. Code will address many health issues, such as mold prevention, etc.

Towns must vote to accept Stretch Codes in order for the town to receive Green Community grants that can be worth millions.

Kristen is working on a Programmable Thermostat promotion page for the town website.

Meeting adjourned.