

DEERFIELD ENERGY RESOURCES COMMITTEE

MINUTES | December 5th, 2013 | Deerfield Town Hall, Room 130 | 4:00 PM

Present: Jay Stryker, Kristan Bakker (Chair), M.A. Swedlund, Jeff Jewett, David Gilbert-Keith, Irene Winkelbauer, Jennifer Marrapese , joined by representatives from Sunderland (Laura Williams & Aaron Falbel) and John Walsh from WMECO

Meeting called to order at 4:05 pm

1. Establish minute taker – JEFF JEWETT

2. Minutes Review:

Review 10/24/13 Minutes – APPROVED unanimously

3. 12/12 Campaign:

a. Review number of residents receiving audits and their outcomes since January (WMECO/Berkshire Gas) to help assess our outreach campaign.

i. Monthly charges on customers' electricity bills pay for the energy audit and weatherization program.

ii. Audit effectiveness was discussed.

1. Extremely few audits lead to weatherization work.

2. Many reasons for the low rate of homes doing work. CET is mission-driven to get work done, Honeywell may only be driven to get more audits/day. Discussed longstanding concern about quality of auditors from different companies.

3. Auditing process is confusing with who the vendors/auditors are, hard to build trust and clarity

4. Very low effectiveness of audit...mostly handing out CFLs, not much else, only 1/8 WMECO-originated audit customers have weatherization work

iii. Recommendation made by Jay to make a *contractor flow chart*, showing who does what. Irene volunteers to do this.

iv. Greenfield, with paid canvasser and bigger population (3 year, \$80K grant, generated \$500K of improvement work done, paid for by utility incentive money. Door to door folks helped homeowner understand process.

- v. Greenfield interested in starting a multi-town Franklin County effort, proposal coming later in December through FCROG
- b. Review our questions for John Walsh
 - i. Our goal is not getting energy audits done, our goal is to get home improvements that reduce energy usage
 - ii. How are you assessing the effectiveness of your audit program?
 - iii. How is it funded?
 - iv. What are its goals?
 - v. How is the program held accountable?
 - vi. What is the outreach?
 - vii. What is the follow through?
- c. **Recommend to Selectmen to indefinitely table any agreements on solar PV installation on town landfill.** Motioned by MA, 2nded by David. 5 aye, 1 abstain, 0 nay.
 [MEETING joined by John Walsh and representatives from Sunderland at 4:40 pm.]
- d. Q & A with John Walsh, Supervisor - Residential Energy Efficiency, Western Massachusetts Electric Company
 - i. Relevant DERC actions were shared: \$7K on Green Comm. Grant on 12/12 campaign to reduce residential energy use, big 12/12 sign on Tilton library, leaflets at town meetings, merit badge stickers/yard signs/flyers, talked at senior center, talked to PTO, church groups, one of merit badge sticker is for “energy audit,” high school Nat’l Hon. Soc. Survey of town residents (N=150) which asked about interest in audits. Results: no effective change on town residential electric program during campaign. We’re disappointed in results.
 - ii. Walsh shares his information –
 - Our data are missing data from 400+ homes that are income-eligible in Deerfield that are participating in that program (Peter Wingate, energy dir. Franklin Comm. Action Program later corrected this number to 30 houses)
 - DERC Big concern – only 5 out of 35 audits from WMECO had work completed.
 - Home Energy Survey (HES) \$7 million annual budget for W. Mass (doubled from before). Kwh reduction is not a very good way to measure thing (CFLs, turning

lights off, etc.). WMECO collects about \$8M, do all “cost-effective energy efficiency), we estimated we could do ~\$48M worth, 1.2-1.5% of load historically, now roughly doubling budget (with NSTAR merger)

- Full home evaluation is complex and time-consuming, turns off many people
 - WMECO offers free home diagnostic, 8 hours of free home sealing
 - Post 1970s homes built to building code, all have some insulation (90% of energy savings is in R-1 to R-19 conversion)
 - Total resource cost, all savings in house, what is payback TO UTILITY (avoided costs to **utility**, set by Mass DUP)? aggregated savings projected over 25 years
 - 5250 target audits annual, may start having to advertise programs for first time
 - Honeywell is an example of “lead vendor”, will not divulge audit price as a sealed bid
 - Closed/open market – guaranteeing lead vendors certain numbers, different than Home Performance contractors (HPC)
 - ~20% of audits are HPC (instead of Honeywell), much higher here than other areas
 - Berkshire (CET) is getting almost 3x more work completed than Honeywell
 - We can only take the customer so far, we send out reminders, send out postcards, they must spend 2-3 days of their own time
 - 25% paid by homeowner, 75% by utility (low-income jobs, \$2K, are 100%), most jobs are \$8-10,000 total cost, but most jobs more like \$1700
 - Franklin/Hampshire Counties are ~15% of residential customers, about 30,000 houses are on discount rate, but many of those houses have health/safety issues
 - overall completion rate 39%, (had recommendations and actually followed up with upgrades), but Deerfield had 13%, HPC were somewhat higher rate, used to be ~60% completion rate, but now we’re working with less-motivated customer population
- iii. “Miles per Gallon” pilot had incentives that were far beyond cost-effective levels with grant \$
- iv. biggest source of audit leads, by far, is word of mouth

- v. let's coordinate efforts instead of doing one-offs, try to work together to create regional strategy, marketing-wise
- vi. more emphasis on education factor at first audit? Trying to get higher completion rates. They have had sales training.
- vii. ~25% of audits don't have any cost-effective recommendations to be done
- viii. roadblocks – knob and tube (\$5-7K to replace), low income loans currently can't go that way, average heating loan is about \$8K (usually heating system replacement)
- ix. concierge service - one point of contact, funding is a challenge, volunteer committees could do it
- x. incentives to do word of mouth referral? - \$25 incentives for completed referrals at Beyond Green, marketing \$...what are our success metrics?
- xi. \$ value incentives are fairly fixed for 3 year plan, approved by state DUP, marketing is a problem
- xii. interest-free loans are hard to get, need good credit
- xiii. 2-year payment plan is done for commercial/industrial, but hard with residential due to banking regulations (talking about things like PACE loans)
- xiv. PACE loans were stopped for 2 years due to second encumbrances due to Freddie/Fannie Mac, now is allowed, not popular with buyers, not popular with realtors
- xv. MassSave is now state-wide, but now it is hard to experiment
- xvi. 4-6 week Honeywell backlog right now, HPC being given work/maxed out

4. Green Communities:

- a. Update on clarification of GC spending
- b. Update on WWTP PV Array RFP progress –
 - i. Possibility of 11 dual-axis pole mounted PV arrays at site, each array is approx. \$35K, will ask for \$20K from WWTP to get 3 arrays expandable to 11 should future grant monies be available

- ii. VOTE: Use balance of Green Communities Grant (~\$93K) for dual-axis pole mounted solar PV at Old Deerfield WWTP. Moved by J. Stryker, 2nd by Jewett, unanimous approval.
- c. Update on midnight shutoff
 - i. Reconciliation of our midnight shutoff & lumen reductions with WMECO's
 - ii. Probable timeline – have Selectboard sign agreement with WMECO this month then schedule midnight shutoffs.
- 5. New grant available funding of shared Energy Manager with other towns for period of 2 years.
- 6. Schedule next meeting – January 23rd, 2014 (unanimous approval)

Meeting Adjourned 6:02 pm