

Town of Newtown, CT

3 Primrose Street, Newtown, CT

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL BY THE SUSTAINABLE ENERGY COMMISSION

January 15, 2015

The Sustainable Energy Commission held a regular meeting Thursday, January 15, 2015 in shared meeting room 3 of the Municipal Center located at 3 Primrose Street, Newtown, CT 06470.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman, Kathy Quinn at 7:12 pm.

Present: Chairman, Kathy Quinn, Mark Sievel, Fred Hurley, Barbara Toomey, Bryan Dougherty, and Dave Stout

Absent: Joe Borst

Communications:

Chairman Quinn stated that there are currently three vacancies on the Sustainable Energy Commission at this time. The following members' term in office ended on January 6th, James Gulalo, Charlie Copp and Desiree Galassi. Ms. Galassi will probably renew her term which will leave two vacancies.

There will be a Board of Selectman meeting on February 17th at 7pm in Council Chambers. The Sustainable Energy Commission was asked to present to the Board where the Commission is on the energy plan and solar projects in town.

Chairman Quinn mentioned that she went to an event sponsored by LIVEGREENCT.ORG. It is an organization with municipalities as members. Newtown is not a member at this time. The website features different member towns and lets visitors to the website know what the towns are doing to become more environmentally friendly. For example, Bridgeport was featured. It plans to develop a technology park, attempt to use excess heat from the incinerator to heat other areas, and try to turn sludge into energy. And Norwalk was instituting a Home Energy Audit program.

Public Comments:

No public comments this week

Acceptance of Minutes:

Ms. Toomey made a motion to accept the minutes of the December 18, 2014 meeting minutes with the following change. Mr. Sievel seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

On page 2, under Residential Post Solarize Program, the word Cephia should be replaced with CT Green Bank, formerly known as CEFIA, the clean energy finance & investment authority.

Old Business:

Budget / Grants-Park Lighting

Mr. Stout stated that he understands that all the lights have been installed. All the final paperwork has been submitted to CL&P and now we are waiting for the approved documents to be returned. Chairman Quinn was able to snag a picture of the lighting being installed at Liberty Field which can be used for publicity on the project.

Residential Post-Solarize Program

The program has been rescheduled for February 24, 2015 at 6:30 pm. It will run until 8:00 pm.

Solar Projects

There was some discussion on which project should be attacked next. The landfill was reviewed. A plan needs to be drawn and approval obtained. Also confirmation on whether the wiring will be able to carry the load is needed. Mr. Hurley stated that he believes the wires on Route 25 could handle the load but was unsure if Ethan Allen Road could. Environmentally there are no issues with this site. The covering over the landfill cannot be penetrated which will limit the type of system that can be placed there.

Reed School is a second possibility for a project. The roof is over 15 years old. There may be an option to roll part of the replacement cost of the roof into a PPA, power purchase agreement, along with the solar that will be put on that section. That would capitalize at least that portion of the roof. It would not be feasible to do the whole roof in that manner.

Another possible project is a canopy mounted solar project. The idea would entail building a canopy and placing the solar panels on top. The Commission members discussed possibly building the canopy over the bleachers at Newtown High School since it is not a candidate for roof panels. It was discussed that getting the student groups, possibly the environmental and architectural clubs, involved would be a great way to involve the students. It was also thought that Henry Abbott Technical High School may be a good fit to build it.

There was a short discussion on Wind Energy. Mr. Hurley said it would be good to try to match power production with power usage. There was an energy task force in 2008 that looked into wind power generation. At that time, there were only two possible sites in town that generated the average wind speed needed for a wind project. However, technology has changed since then and it may be worth looking into again.

Energy Savings Programs

An update on Middle Gate School was given by Mr. Stout. He stated that the fans should not be running constantly. He suggested that they install CO2 occupancy sensors which will turn the fans on when the building is occupied.

The plan is to change the boiler to a gas run model. Mr. Hurley stated that gas lines need to be run to the building. The town will dig the lines. Yankee Gas may be asked to help fund part of the project since they will not have to dig the lines. There was some discussion as to the route of the lines. There are two possible routes, one down Route 25 and the other down one of the back roads. The distance for each route is about the same, one runs through commercial areas, the other residential.

There was a discussion on the process of choosing vendors for projects. CL&P is pushing for the town to use multiple vendors. There are only a few of the vendors who do more than lighting projects. The Commission members will look at the list and pick several to use, possibly in a rotating fashion.

Exterior lighting was discussed for the Municipal Garage and the Treatment Center. At this time, an estimate could be obtained from one of the vendors to assess the costs at these locations. Edmond Town Hall site exterior lighting can be looked at but there is a facility study going on so the interior lighting should be put off for now.

Outreach to Schools

Chairman Quinn and Ms. Toomey are meeting with Superintendent of Newtown Schools, Dr. Erardi on January 20, 2015 at 10:30am. She will report back next month.

Municipal Energy Plan

Ms. Quinn is working on the plan and will forward it to the Commission members as soon as it is complete. The plan is due by July 2015. The goal is to have a 20% reduction in energy usage by 2017. She is using data obtained by the Ameresco audit. It was noted that usage figures can be obtained by CL&P and Yankee Gas. It would be easy to obtain oil usage also. Mr. Hurley stated that the study may be done on thermal usage, BTU, instead of kilowatt usage. Also the study needs to take into account when the town started using solar energy.

Transition Movement

Ms. Toomey is attempting to get a group started in town. The transition movement is a global movement to communicate people on how to get off fossil fuels.

Energy Star Portfolio Manager

No update.

Adjournment:

Mr. Hurley made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:14 pm. The motion was seconded by Mr. Stout. The motion was carried unanimously.

The next regular meeting will occur on Thursday, February 19, 2015 at 7:00 pm at the Newtown Municipal Center in Shared Meeting Room 3.

Submitted, Elizabeth Smith, clerk.