

Swampscott Energy Committee Meeting

Thursday, January 17th, 2013 at 7:00 pm
Swampscott Town Hall, First Floor Meeting Room

Members Attending: Neal Duffy, Milton Fistel, Thomas Dreeben, Wayne Spritz, Hal Schwartz

Members Absent: Derek Barnwell, Vicky Masone

Non-Members Attending: Peter Kane

Minutes

1) NSL Outreach – planning for the next workshop.

The next Next Step Living Mass Save 101 workshop is happening will be next Wednesday, 1/23 at the Library. Peter passed out promotional posters and flyers to members to put up around town.

Neal will give posters to Shirat Hayem, Cindy's, Connery Rink, China Green, C&L Liquors, EMS, Alo Alo, Starbucks, YMCA, Paradise Gym.

Milton will try Panera, Red Rock, 5 Guys, Dunkin Donuts, Vinnin Liquors, Whole Foods

Wayne – Chabad House, Captains,

Whole Foods – Pete talked to the store manager (Eric Piper) about our outreach program and they approved NSL setting up a table during the week.

It was noted that some revisions should be made to the poster for future events - we should have “program of the Swampscott Renewable Energy Committee” and our url on it.

Pete will send out an email blast to promote the Mass Save 101 workshop. Everyone is encouraged to send out emails to friends and neighbors.

2) National Grid 2012-2013 Community Initiative – Pete updated the committee. He is going to update the Big Blue Energy website and put the National Grid logo on it. In response to a question that was asked at the previous meeting, if a Swampscott resident buys an energy star appliance, we get credit, and we do not have to worry about any special tracking to make sure that happened.

Wayne raised the idea that we should track our Big Blue Energy website to see if we are getting more hits, and if that is translating to more home energy assessments.

National Grid wants to train committee members so we can be more effective in our outreach efforts. We scheduled training for February 4th, and scheduled our next meeting for Wednesday Feb. 13th 7:00 PM.

There are no updated numbers from Next Step Living right now in terms of home energy assessments.

- 3) Funding Future Green Projects – Pete is looking into possibility of directing monies we get to specific projects.

He found out that a revolving fund is not possible because, by law, the only way we can have a revolving fund is if we are collecting fees for a program – like the Recreation Department.

The committee likely can not get a budget this year because of budget issues town wide there will likely not be any budget increases or new budgets.

Pete has been talking to MAPC about this problem. The town of Acton had a home rule petition issued and created an energy efficiency revolving fund. It is allowed to take in money from efficiency rebates to put in the revolving fund. Pete is having a call with MAPC and the Acton representative to find out the process so we can potentially replicate it here. Big picture, MAPC is planning on bringing this problem up to the state to push for a legislative change. MAPC is saying it is a conflict of interest if the state wants the communities to save money and energy but they do not give us the tools to do so.

- 4) MA CEC clean energy initiative program – Application went in successfully. It seems like we will be selected but we are waiting to hear.

Solarize MA Announcement – the next phase is called round one of Solarize Mass so there may be more than one round this year. They have opened it up to non-profits and universities. Deadline is towards the end of February. Jeff, the Energy Manager in Salem, is on board to apply jointly with us. Pete talked about reaching out to Hamilton-Wenham and Beverly to join with us in this initiative.

- 5) Pete is going to reach out to Alex Esteverena about being the solar coach again.

- 5) Other Business

Solarize MA update:

Thomas Dreeben reported on Arlington's Solarize Mass program:

1. How successful was the program for your community (How many installations were contracted? What pricing tier did you reach? How did it compare to their goal; if they had one?)

Arlington achieved 157 contracts, the most of any town, and well over their goal of 100. They reached the lowest pricing tier.

2. What role did the committee have in the program?

The committee's role was largely that of the solar coach Ryan, which was quite extensive. He estimates that he averaged 1-2 days per week from May to October. He coordinated most of the events, participated in contractor selection, and answered all e-mails from residents individually. He also had volunteer support from a group called "Sustainable Arlington". There were approximately 15 volunteers who helped a lot with outreach, and I think Ryan was quite skilled at delegating. For example, his volunteers identified good candidates for solar installation on the web, designed and produced material to hang on peoples' doors, and canvassed these neighborhoods.

3. What role did the town/city staff have in the program?

Arlington's municipal rep spent ~ 1/2 day per week.

4. Did they rely on their municipal legal counsel much throughout the program?

Legal counsel was needed at the beginning for evaluating proposals from contractors and for signing the contract.

5. Did they (committee/town/city) incur any additional costs beyond the MassCEC funding?

Negligible costs.

Tom also asked him if anything surprised him in the process and got a little more information about his experience:

-They learned that there are a lot of legal restrictions when installing solar panels on condos, where the infrastructure is owned by the association and not by the people who live there. It's good to identify a real estate attorney who can navigate those issues.

-The cost for permitting was high. Some cities include the panels themselves in

the permitting costs, and others leave that out. It's good to get a handle on that with the building department upfront, and see if they can assist with any opportunities to incentivize.

-Timing: Marketing to residents proceeded before a contractor had been selected, so the contractor was initially overwhelmed with customers. Ryan thinks that MassCEC will try to improve that on the next round.

Minutes from the previous meeting were approved unanimously.

Meeting adjourned – 8:50 PM