

Wilton Energy Commission
Meeting Minutes for September 17, 2009
(approved)

Attendance

Commission Members Present: Mike Lindberg, Bruce Hampson, Gail Lavielle, Richard Creeth, Patrice Gillespie

Commission Members Absent: Jim Lucey, Ron Cagenello, Hal Clark, Dona Pratt

Also Present: Jana Bertkau, Shwetha Raghuraman, Katie Jacobs

1. Call to Order and Review of Minutes of last WEC meeting. Chairman, Mike Lindberg, called the meeting to order at 7:08pm. Bruce Hampson moved to approve the minutes of August 13, 2009. Mike seconded. The minutes were approved by unanimous vote.

2. Update on ARRA funding opportunities

\$76 K for municipal projects

Bruce reported that SBS had audited all of the town campus buildings plus the library. They took a look at low-cost initiatives including cost, payback and pounds of carbon saved and found that there is no single source for significant savings. The major energy loss is located within the structure, the windows, etc. Simple things like occupancy sensors and thermostats and a plethora of maintenance items could be addressed easily and make a difference. They have identified those initiatives that could be funded by the stimulus. Such initiatives which have the best chance of being funded total about \$28K

Mike made two observations: 1. Boilers are operating 365 days a year in many municipal buildings even though they are only needed November through March. This is because no one owns the management of the HVAC- The town needs a facility manager. 2. We can identify \$28K in energy improvements earmarked for the town. Additional funds could be used for the schools. Sean O'Toole and Gary Richards would like to expand LED lights for Middlebrook and other schools. The remainder could be used for a facilities manager for the town for a year. At the end of the year we can look back and see what savings have occurred.

November 2nd is the final date for the grant application.

Patrice said that the town of Guildford is joining with two surrounding towns in applying for ARRA funds to hire an energy manager

\$1.4M for Regional Energy Reliability projects

The DPUC has requested formal proposals from towns in Fairfield County for the purpose of developing distributed electrical generation capability throughout the region. The Connecticut Center for Advanced Technology was hired by the CT Department of Public Utilities to manage the process. To date, none of the towns in Fairfield County has submitted a proposal due to the noise, pollution and economic costs associated with implementing either a diesel or gas turbine generation capability. Mike has a suggestion exploring a renewable energy solution based on a large scale solar implementation. Mike has discussed the approach with both Bill Brennan and

Gary Richards who both support further study of the alternative. Ron French has offered to put the business plan together.

Norwalk River Valley Multi-Use Trail - Patrice, Mike and Gail

The goal of the Norwalk River Valley Multi-Use Trail is to create a commuter multi-use trail to link town centers with train stations. Ridgefield and Redding support the concept. Gail found that Laurie Giannotti who is with the State of Connecticut's DEP recreational trails committee is also very supportive. There is a grant to be awarded in early 2010. Redding, Ridgefield and Wilton could be competitive for the grant request. By adding Norwalk which is designated as a linear park, we would have an improve chance of receiving an award. The grant would be used to take the trail from a conceptual idea to a formal engineering plan. Patrice is getting endorsement letters from all the First Selectmen, the Conservation Commissions, the Norwalk River Association, the Sierra Club, the New England Mountain Biking Commission and a number of other groups. The trail would consist of pedestrian access as well as bicycle access from the Maritime Aquarium in Norwalk to the Danbury town line. No motorized vehicles or horses would be allowed. Patrice refers to this as a carbon free thoroughfare. There is an environmental lawyer and surveyor in town that might help. Native wildflowers and plants should be installed and used for outdoor education.

3. High School HVAC and Wilton Fire Department Projects- Bruce Hampson

High School Project-Bruce reported that it opened up on time. Bruce spoke of the value of having an ongoing commissioning agent who is a separate consultant on the project and who reports directly to the owner. This agent will ensure that the system is installed properly and that it is maintainable and accessible. He will also test every single component in the building and make sure it is meeting specifications. This person is independent. CL&P reported that the schools peak KW demand was reduced by 300KW. If that can be maintained, the CL&P electrical cost will be reduced by \$31,000 annually. The Building Automation system monitors and controls every piece of operating equipment. It provides only that amount of fresh air required by the number of students in each classroom. It does so by measuring the amount of CO2 in the space. Finally CL&P has provided the High School with a portal into their system so electrical usage can be checked 24 hours a day. The commission members congratulated Bruce on his outstanding contribution to this project.

4. Wilton School Initiatives-discussion of sustainability initiatives encouraging participation by area students –Shwetha Raghuraman

Jim Lucey is looking into having the students accompany technicians to home audits. Another idea being discussed was the sale of WHS water bottles or coffee mugs to raise awareness among the students. Mike pointed out October 24th is Global Climate Day. Many towns are using the event to kickoff community initiatives such as a campaign to get local residents to sign up for home energy assessments. The state has reinstated the assessment, including homes heated by oil, for a charge of \$75. Several communities have approached the providers and offered to help drive signups in exchange for a reduced fee of \$50. Analysis of homes done last year yielded an average annual energy savings of \$350- not a bad return on a \$50 investment. Shwetha and Katie will be meeting with Jim Lucey to discuss how we might engage high school students to assist in a campaign to drive signups across the community. Patrice said this can lead into 350 parts per million – a segway to Climate Day. She pointed out that Green Insulation Incorporated is the only Home Energy Solutions approved contractors that you can print out for Clean Energy CT website. We need to publicize this more. John Pappa in Ridgefield says that there is a local company which sells kits that convert cars from gas to electric. This company would donate such

a kit to our high school so that students could convert a car into electric. They take a compact car and have a standard kit to pull the engine and put an electric engine in it. Kate will talk to Mr. Durkee in the high school to see if the Wilton students would take this on.

Mike added that GM has a fleet of hydrogen cars throughout the country. He met the GM representative in New York City who has one and who would be willing to come to Wilton to make a presentation to see where GM is going and where they see the future of hydrogen cars.

Shwetha also reported that the high school students could provide an alternative car and a light bulb display for any proposed Energy Fair.

Richard proposed a prize of \$1000 for the most innovative conservation idea coming out of the high school.

5. 2010 Earth Day Energy Fair –Jana Bertkau

Jana reported that she would like to follow up on the concept of a Wilton based Energy Fair next spring. Such a fair could be linked to the 40th anniversary of Earth Day on April 22nd. Patrice commented that there were many earth day events in Wilton last year and in the area and there might be competition for vendors. Perhaps earlier in April or in March would be better. Patrice offered to help with this fair. Many suggestions arose including approaching the Fink Foundation, coordinating with the library, the Woodcock Nature Center and Ambler Farm, local businesses such as Deloitte and Touche. Gail encouraged the early creation of a web site. Patrice and Jana will follow up on planning and meet with Mike after Columbus Day weekend.

6. Wilton Energy Plan

Mike has spoken with all members and realizes that making an energy plan in short course is almost impossible with everyone's personal commitments. Mike suggests taking a more piecemeal approach to the project. The consensus of the team is to prioritize several actions that are currently in the spotlight across town and to work them as a team. Once complete, they will be incorporated into the plan framework and a new set of priorities will be identified. This will reduce the near term workload on each of us and provide time for us to also focus on other town requirements we agreed to spend time during our next meeting to identify those initial prioritized items. Our stated objective is to pull this together as a full plan.

8. Publication of biweekly conservation and sustainability articles

Bruce is still working on his article *What is your footprint?* Patrice has given hers to the Conservation Commission. Gail is addressing a transportation article.

9. Other new business

Dona has offered to improve our website and make it more visible.

The schools have done a fabulous job in reducing energy consumption. LED lighting installation has saved \$30K. It would be great to draft an article about what has been done. Richard offered to interview Bruce and write an article.

This is a two year mark for the WEC and time to report on some of the key milestones to the Board of Selectman. This is another article possibility. What are the key things we have done over the past two years? This would be in conjunction with the stimulus presentation for the BOS in October.

Gail would that the WEC has more visibility in the state. We need to start within the Office of Policy and Management. We would like to bring issues forward that need to be addressed at the state level. Mike proposed that an agenda item of the next meeting would be pulling together a topics and objectives list for a meeting with OPM (state level), so that we would come out of our meeting ready to ask for and schedule the OPM meeting.

Bruce expressed disappointment that we have been unable to come forward with a comprehensive long range energy plan for the town. . He reminded the Commission that such a plan was part of the Commission's Mission, duty and mandate from the Board of Selectmen. We are remiss if we don't put items that are goals in a plan that we should set for the town. All it takes is passion to go forward with a building plan. He would like to see long-range goals that the present BOS may not endorse but these are goal that we are moving towards. Future members should understand and have a level of comfort.

10. Future meeting schedule

Next meeting will be Thursday, October 15 from 7-9:30pm at the library.

11. Executive session discussion on staffing requirements and recommendations

There was a discussion of staffing requirements in executive session.

12. Adjourn-

The meeting adjourned at 9:18pm.

Submitted by,

Jana Bertkau