

Wilton Energy Commission
Meeting Minutes for March 12, 2009-Final

The meeting was called to order at 7:10PM. Members present were: Mike Lindberg, Richard Creeth, Bruce Hampson, Hal Clark, Mitchell Reichgut, Ron Cagenello, Dona Pratt, Patrice Gillespie. Non-members present were advisor Malcolm Whyte and volunteers Swetha and Katie from the High School.

Hal Clark moved to approve the minutes of February 19, 2009. Ron Cagenello seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Pre-agenda items:

- Review of Earth Day: Swetha has contacted Community Energy for sign-up forms, Ron will circulate the recommended book list to commissioners for updates and send to Sally when finalized, our booth will have the CFL/incandescent demo, specific tasks to recruit townspeople to help with (other content TBD). Other demos on the day will include the solar kiosk, geothermal (Richard will ask neighbor for a reference as Bruce was unsuccessful at contacting a firm he met at a conference).
- Library solar update: Hal said that P&Z approved the installation of NXG solar panels on the library and installation should occur prior to Earth Day. They will provide a kiosk for monitoring the panel statistics.
- Clean Energy Award ceremony: Richard gave a summary, noting that it took place in a very drafty building with single-paned glass. Nine municipalities, six businesses and one school district were represented. Cornwall has a 30% participation rate in clean energy signups and we discussed getting information from them on what their methodologies were to achieve that level. Bruce suggested we place Wilton's award plaque prominently in the library (everyone agreed). As an aside, Richard noted that the Wilton Commons project is on Governor Rell's list of shovel ready projects and Mike added that all of Wilton's projects have made the first cut. Richard and Mike suggested that we involve other communities more, make a more regional push, given the like-mindedness and similar goals/methodologies we all have and that was exhibited at the awards ceremony.
- Also discussed was the need for a permanent kiosk at the library to display awards, books, sign-up sheets and other information. Malcolm volunteered to design the kiosk.
- Status of POCD – Patrice and Dona. It was noted that the energy section had many specific references to technologies and current facts that may not be relevant to a long-range plan (e.g. “10 day reserve of heating oil”). Dona went through our chapter and summarized the P&Z commission's discussion and

recommendations. Hal noted the need for a transportation strategy “easily human-accessible lanes for people to use to walk to their jobs”. This brought more discussion of the importance of mass transit and how to incorporate different forms into existing infrastructure (e.g. utilizing train stations as bus stops). Patrice commended the process and detail-oriented nature of the P&Z commission’s review of the plan. Mike said we ought to highlight the coordination of the P&Z, Conservation and Energy Commissions in the energy chapter. Dona said a draft of the plan will be available on the town website prior to the public hearing on May 4, and that there is also a P&Z meeting at the end of March that we are welcome to observe.

Agenda items:

- 1) Long range plan and ICLEI
 - a. Bruce updated the commission on the status of ICLEI membership, stating that the invoice has been sent to Joe Dolan and once it is paid we’ll get access to the resources. There will be 2 liaisons, Richard Creeth from our commission and Mike Conklin from the town (an ICLEI requirement to have a salaried town staffer).
 - b. We revisited the notion of having a greenhouse gas emissions audit to establish a baseline. Our main opposition in the past was that it would be time consuming and deflect our attention from other areas, but Patrice and Bruce mentioned the availability of an intern from the Yale Forestry school to help out, and Mike said we should be able to get traffic data from studies done in preparation for the ongoing Super 7 construction. The consensus was that it may not be as difficult as first thought, and is desirable because ICLEI metrics center around greenhouse gas emissions targets and it is part of the program.
 - c. Mike pressed the point that we should be getting dedicated support from ICLEI, to the extent of having a single point of contact to coordinate our efforts. Patrice and Bruce will see what’s possible along those lines.
 - d. The plan is to schedule an additional commission meeting once we receive the ICLEI packet in order to split it up for assessment.
 - e. Bruce mentioned the CL&P electricity data, which shows Wilton residents using 77% more Kwh than CT as a whole (16,215 kwh/year avg.). Richard pointed out that the data would have to be normalized by house size to make a meaningful comparison, but that he suspected we’d still be larger consumers. Hal said all the data we’d need on home square footage are in the tax office. Dona brought up the point that perhaps the larger number of those working from home and/or staying at home in Wilton could contribute to the higher usage given the need for keeping lights and heat on during the day.
- 2) Communications
 - a. Discussion of our series of articles for the two local newspapers. Hal, Ron and Malcolm advocated some “tips” and “myth busting” type articles giving homeowners practical advice on the what’s and why’s of energy conservation. Mike and Bruce advocated more far-reaching and harder-

hitting knowledge articles to educate readers on the broader issues: “sustainability for future generations” would be the overarching theme. We came to the conclusion that it should be a combination, and Mitch said the important thing would be to stay on message and be consistent with our communication strategy, which he re-distributed. Along those lines, the possibility of having an outside editor to assist was mentioned, and Hal and Mike are going to ask an experienced copy editor to take ownership of the “voice” of the articles and edit them to be consistent stylistically. Dona offered that the format should be consistent and “scannable” and that we should have a recognizable logo.

b. The articles will be 500 words and appear bimonthly. The first one will be an “intro” to the series and appear before Earth Day and be written by Mike. The second one will be written by Bruce and will cover “why is this important?” at a regional/local level. Other proposed topics include recycling, transportation, green jobs. The plan is to share the writing with the conservation commission, and that each of us would be responsible for at least one article.

- Next Meeting: Tuesday, April 7, 2009.
- Meeting was adjourned at 9:30.

Submitted by
Ron Cagenello