

DRAFT

Wilton Energy Commission
Meeting Minutes for August 13, 2009

Attendance

Commission Members Present: Mike Lindberg, Bruce Hampson, Ron Cagenello, Dona Pratt (7:20), Patrice Gillespie, Hal Clark, Gail Lavielle (7:30)

Commission Members Absent: Richard Creeth

Also Present: Jana Bertkau, Shwetha Raghuraman, Jim Lucey, Natalie Berland

1. Call to Order and review of minutes of last WEC meeting

Mike called the meeting to order at 7:02pm. Ron moved to approve. Bruce seconded. The minutes passed by unanimous vote.

2. Welcome Jim Lucey as an advisory member.

Mike introduced and welcomed Jim Lucey who is a science teacher at Wilton High School. Jim has had a long term association with environmental sciences and will help us engage high school students in our energy commission goals.

3. ARRA Stimulus Funding Opportunities.

There are three funding opportunities. Two are described here. The third relates to a Norwalk River Valley Multi-Use Trail which is discussed under Wilton Energy Plan –Infrastructure below.

\$76K for municipal projects. Bruce Hampson reported that the application is due October 15th and we are awaiting application specifics. Each application has to have quantifiable carbon emission reduction associated with it.

He suggests using the recently completed town energy audit to fund medium level costs. Strategic Building Solutions, LLC (SBS) conducted the energy audit which covers seven town buildings (6 buildings on the town campus and the library) It provides a good roadmap for us. Any contractor must pay their employees a prevailing wage- published every year. This law results in the town of Wilton paying 30-50% more than homeowners pay.

There are no big surprises. They found deferred maintenance, faulty operation of systems, and simple control complaints. Every facility is in dire need of balancing the air flow. Some spaces are hot and some are cold. Windows are kept open in the summer because it is too cold and in the winter because it is too hot. The lack of insulation in town hall and in the police headquarters results in insufficient heat. Little electric heaters are used. This is fixable but it will not have an economic return. One low cost fix is to install occupancy sensors and automatic thermostats that set the temperature. If all the suggestions were completed, a 20% energy savings would result.

Mike suggests creating a list of identified issues and placing them in three categories:

1). Normal maintenance activities that would be included in day to day maintenance. These would not affect the town budget. 2). Medium cost fixes such as replacing town thermostats. These could come under the \$76 stimulus funding 3). Long term large capital items. These would be included in future budget cycles. Hal Clark would like to see some large items

included in the stimulus grants. Mike would like to see a full time town energy manager to oversee plant management. The SBS consultant has agreed to come in and meet with the Board of Selectman. Results would then be distributed to department heads to get their feedback. Hal suggests putting this on a BOS meeting agenda for the next meeting on Tuesday, September 7th. It is important that the department heads be present.

\$1.4 M grant. Mike explained that this is a Federal Energy Management program to identify backup centers in time of crisis and to offload peak demand on the grid during summers. The Town Hall, Miller Driscoll and the high school could be considered for this grant. The funding is based on cost estimates for gas-fired turbine generators. The grant would potentially cover 50-60 percent of cost of implementing new generation capacity, but has several issues including the lack of natural gas pipelines into the center of town. The selectmen in the neighboring towns are meeting to discuss alternatives. How can this work using solar? Mike has asked Ron French to look at financing groups using solar.

In addition, Dale Hollingsworth, President of NXG Solar is seeking a new grant for his company to enable a demonstration center for solar panels that would be added to buildings and businesses in town. This is similar to what is in place in the library.

4. ICLEI Carbon Footprint Analysis

Matt Salla is making progress on this project. He has been coordinating with Ridgefield and with Redding. They are helping us with parts of the model.

5. Wilton Energy Plan

Mike suggested that all members look at the EPA Clean Energy-Environment Guide to Action to find best of breed practices. Available from www.epa.gov/cleanenergy

Mike asked Hal Clark to summarize the Blue Sky Discussion which can serve as a forward to the energy plan. Hal reported that a big picture concept that evolved from the blue sky discussion included a sustainable community built on super 7 right of way land. Hallmarks of such a community would be commercial and multi-family residential housing, on site power generation, gas turbines, other sustainable power. It would offer low cost energy, low cost leases, electric bus transportation, LEED platinum levels. It would be a model project for the state of Connecticut and could increase revenue for the town of Wilton. It would become for sustainable energy what Columbus, Indiana is for architectural excellence.

Another concept focused on having an energy fair in Wilton. It would have a trade component and an education component. It would have a story. What would our town get out of it? It could be an annual or biannual event.

Ron added that.....

A discussion concerning the need for an energy manager for the town followed. Hal stated that the hiring of an energy manager for the town needs to be proven to be cost effective. Perhaps we could share an energy manager with other towns. Branford, Guildford, Madison are looking for a regional energy czar. We could confer with Jake Muller, Assistant Town Engineer for the town of Ridgefield who measures energy use and can justify his salary. There is software/hardware to assess energy usage

Infrastructure: Dona and Bruce

Bruce has a building document with the regulations and the issues. He is ready for feedback.

Dona is looking at a Norwalk River Valley Multi-Use Trail. This trail through Wilton, Ridgefield and Redding is being considered by a team consisting of representatives from each of the three communities. They have met with the first selectmen of the towns and with Toni Boucher and laid the groundwork. They suggested bringing the DEP trails program head at the Department of Environmental Protections who can guide us on how to do this. The Norwalk River Trail has official greenway designation. This means that it is far easier to get state grants. This is a great start for the concept. The dream is to go from the Sound to the Berkshires. There is a sense of urgency in that land could go elsewhere. There are some grants coming up in the next couple of months. 1% of the highway budget is earmarked for trails. Such a path would encourage walking and biking between rails and businesses. Each community is working on this.

Conservation and Sustainability

Jana reported that the team has rotated chairmanship. Due to travel and summer schedules the team has been unable to meet together. Each member is working individually. They welcome Jim Lucey to the team to bring the high school into creating a culture of conservation.

Public Policy

Due to shortage of time, public policy was deferred.

6. New Business

Discussion involved how to follow up on the successful first Green Cup competition. This competition might include ICLEI's carbon footprint model for homes to calculate energy usage. Towns can use that model to give homeowners a guide to reducing carbon footprint. Denise Blaha coordinates this model for ICLEI. Shwetha suggests concentrating on Wilton alone in a future Green Cup competition. Students might be trained to do an energy audit. Bruce would prefer individual homes doing a carbon footprint using the EPA.gov calculator. It is very user friendly. Shwetha and Jim Lucey will work together to come up with suggestions for the next Green Cup

7. Publication of Biweekly Conservation and Sustainability Articles

Patrice has written an article entitled *Our Transition to a Post Carbon Economy*. Gail offered to write an article on transport. Mike proposed using Bruce's *What is Carbon Footprint* followed by Patrice's article and then Gail's article on transport.

8. Executive Session

Mike called the meeting into Executive Session to discuss staffing requirements and recommendations.

9. Future Meeting Schedule: The next meeting will be held on Thursday, September 17, 2009 from 7-9:30pm in the Rimer Room of the Wilton Library.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:35pm.

Submitted by,
Jana Bertkau