

Wilton Energy Commission
Meeting Minutes for November 19, 2009
FINAL APPROVED

Attendance

Commission Members Present: Mike Lindberg, Bruce Hampson, Patrice Gillespie, Gail Lavielle, Dona Pratt, Ron Cagenello, Hal Clark, Paula Byrde

Commission Members Absent: Richard Creeth, Jim Lucey

Also Present: Jana Bertkau, Kerry O'Neill, John Pappa, Dwayne Escola

Meeting

1. Call to order at 7:05 pm., review minutes of last WEC meeting.

Bruce moved to approve the minutes. Ron seconded. The members unanimously voted to approve.

2. Update on ARRA stimulus funding opportunities

- \$76 for municipal projects

Mike and Bruce presented the application protocol to the BOS on October 19th. It was approved and then submitted to the state on Nov 5th. The application deadline has been extended to today, November 19th. We don't know when to expect a response. The federal government passes on the substance of the application and Hartford OPM passes on the budget. Bruce would like to recognize Bob Nerney for his efforts in helping move the process forward in a timely manner.

Bruce said that Bill Brennan invited him to speak to his Department Leaders on November 5th. Bruce presented an overview of the application for the stimulus funds. SBS did an energy audit of the town buildings. Bill Brennan wanted those reports to be presented to each leader individually. On November 24th, Bruce will be meeting with each of the department heads to explain the audit. He will tell them which improvements can be rebated in part by CL&P, which we have applied for from stimulus funds and which are considered maintenance items. He will emphasize that the audit was not an end but a beginning for the town's energy efficiency programs

- Norwalk River Valley Multi-Use Trail

This project has been referred to as the Green Way in the Wilton Conservation Commission's newsletter. Mike, Dona, Gail and Patrice talked with pertinent towns about the creation of a greenway up the Norwalk River Valley. Norwalk and Danbury have joined Wilton, Redding and Ridgefield in a five town coalition. Pat Sesto is leading an effort to seek funds to pay for an engineering study that would look at possible routes, mostly along the land formerly reserved for a now un-necessary state highway, for a trail that would extend from the Norwalk Maritime Aquarium to Danbury near the Ives Trail. The initial findings of the state gave us an endorsement of \$180K subject to federal DOT approval. This could fundamentally improve the character of our town. Danbury would also benefit from such an extensive greenway.

- Community Innovations Grant

Mike has filed a formal application from the town to be a recipient of a Community Innovations Grant from the CT Clean Energy Fund. We have a training session on Dec. 2nd which would allow us to receive a \$4K grant

3. Earth Markets Community Energy Saving Project –Kerry O’Neill

The goal of the project is to engage and empower municipal and community stakeholders to set and then meet specific, measurable goals for increases in energy efficiency and clean energy usage. This is a project which would be applying for federal money-a national program. This does not require Wilton to put up money. It is designed to deal with communities that are already making progress with clean energy. If as a town you have green house gas reduction goals, this could help you accomplish your goals. CT Clean Energy Fund, CT Energy Efficiency Fund Smart Power, Efficiency 2.0, Clean Water Fund, SCA (Student Conservation Association Corps), MIT, and Earth Markets are some of the partners in this effort.

Kerry explained that community outreach education and support are essential in that folks need to deliver the message locally. Community based message is most effective. Behavior change is needed at the individual and community level. What is the new social norm? What is the accepted norm? Actions that are easy to undertake are important. Lighting, Home Energy Solutions, Actions must be affordable and have impact. This is not an activity to get a few homes with deep retrofits. It is intended to get people engaged with energy usage, to get them to move up the chain, from lighting to home audits. Energy Solutions,

What does Wilton need to provide? We should provide a point of contact for the town. – someone on the Wilton Energy Commission. We need to convene a meeting of community leaders and help with coordination, a bully pulpit, communication vehicles, newsletters, website, and generally have a willingness to promote the program.

What is the time period of commitment? The grant is a three year grant. They think of a two year strategy with quarterly challenge events. Marketing comes from them; implementation comes from both the town and from them.

After more questions and discussion the members decided to vote on bringing the Earth Market proposal to the Board of Selectman.

Hal moved to go forward. Ron seconded. All members voted in favor. Mike and Hal will bring this to the next BOS meeting.

4. Wilton School Initiative

Hal would like high school students to do things in the community for energy efficiency with people with financial challenges. A discussion followed about the best way to have the high school students involved. It was agreed that a proposal needs to come from Jim Lucey. Hal and Mike will meet with Jim to discuss further.

Gail made a motion that the Wilton Energy Commission go forward with this initiative, Hal seconded. All voted in favor.

5. 2010 Wilton Green Discovery Festival -Jana , Patrice, Dona, and Paula

An update of the work of the committee was given to the commission. Members were pleased with the work. The date is Sunday, May 2, 2010. Some discussion followed regarding the rental of the high school. A treasurer is being sought.

6. WEC Web Site Enhancements - Lisa, Dona and Ron. Dona gave a brief report and said that the group had met and discussed topics such as Hot News and Rolling Thunder. One decision to be made is how much we need to update from our membership. Should we have a single webmaster or several authorized people? Further details will follow next month.

7. CT Municipal Climate Action Committee: Governor Rell has invited five communities including ourselves to be advisory towns for this. Mike is very pleased that we have been included. The plan has very little on transportation and Mike would like to elevate that to a main focus.

8. Wilton Energy Plan: deferred

9. Publication of biweekly conservation and sustainability articles in local Wilton newspapers deferred

10. Other new Business

11. Future Meeting schedule: Thursday, December 17th 7-9:30pm.

12. Adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 9:31.

Submitted by

Jana Bertkau