

WINDHAM ENERGY COMMISSION

Minutes -Monday January 13 2014

Call to Order The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM. Those present were: Jean deSmet - Chair, Grace Adams, Elizabeth Ostwald, and Alex Girshick. Also present was James Finger -staff, and guests Tim D'Sousa of Sagewell, and Erin O'Neill of Next Step Living.

Citizens and Delegations - None

Accepted Minutes of November 25, 2013 and December 9, 2013 meetings, as corrected. Dec 23rd—no quorum.

Thermal Imaging Project Tim D'Souza from Sagewell explained the project and outlined the role for the Energy Commission in marketing the opportunity to residents, and suggested getting partners involved - like Next Step Living. He said that Sagewell will be out with a vehicle taking pictures of all the homes in Town that they can see from the road, and then will want to contact the homeowners by mail to advise them that the information is available through their web site. Ideally, they would like to have a web link on the Town's web site as well as some information about the Thermal Imaging program.

Next he explained that they will line up contractors for homeowners to contact to do a more thorough energy audit - like the Home Energy Solutions (HES) program. Unfortunately, the HES is time sensitive, and would have to be re-done if the home owner didn't act on the recommendations. Sagewell will try to line up a chain of contractors that they recommend to do the work - including Solar installers.

Jean asked whether the Commission would need to send letters to homeowners, and Mr. D'Sousa said that personal letters would be ideally sent from the Town - maybe having the Mayor or Town Manager sign it along with the Energy Commission Chair. Other media options were discussed including Cable TV, Teachers (in particular science teachers), student organizations, the Windham Parent Network, Parent Teacher Organizations, Churches, Radio interviews, and the Town's quarterly newsletter. The Deadline for Windham Journal is Feb 3rd. Mr. D'Sousa will provide language to use in all marketing materials.

Erin O'Neill from Next Step Living spoke and advised the Commission that her organization would be willing to assist in contacting homeowners. She explained that homeowners can get CHIF loans for small projects, or Smart-e loans for up to \$25,000 through CEFIA.

Micro-grid:

The Chair then called the Town's consultant for the Micro-grid project - Rebecca Rush of DERP for a conference call to discuss the status of the grant. Ms. Rush explained that they made a presentation to the Board of Education. Subsequently, they revised the budget, as some of the items recommended were not considered essential or eligible for funding under the grant, and DERP didn't understand that all expenses, even those paid for by the grant, needed to be in the budget. They are looking at getting reimbursement through the State for a School

Facility grant - which may cover almost 80% of the cost of the solar panels. She also mentioned that the Town could apply for Z-REC's, but there is growing competition for these, and the reimbursement rate is dwindling. Ms. Rush suggested that we make an effort to change the legislation for this program to give preference to funding projects with public benefit. With respect to the official making the application, it should be someone at the School - like Wayne Donaldson who is in charge of the facility maintenance.

There are other non-essential items that were not covered under these grants, which we can add on later. Ms. Rush said that DERP may be able to find additional grants for some of these.

The timeline and strategies for escorting the Safe Havens for Schools application through town Boards/voters for approval of funding is getting very tight. Discussion then focused on whether to send a Letter of Support for funding of the Micro-grid for Sweeney and Windham Middle School. It was decided that the Commission would simply support the project as a whole and let the Board of Finance and Town Council decide on the amount of funding.

Liz Ostwald made a motion to send a letter to Windham's legislative delegation at the State to give preference in funding Z-REC projects to those with public benefit. Alex Girshick seconded the motion, and all voted in favor to approve the motion.

Discussion and possible action to endorse DERP applying for the next round of micro-grid funds.

Next discussion turned to whether the Town should make an application for Round two for another Micro-grid. The Chair asked Ms. Rush if the Town should apply, and Ms. Rush replied that it would certainly be worthwhile saying that this round doesn't require a pre-application, and that DEEP indicated that the expenses for preparing the application would be reimbursed - regardless of whether the application was awarded funds to complete the project (note - need to get confirmation of this).

We need to publicly outline our vision for an energy plan, which may include utilizing the Virtual Net Metering of 5 municipal meters, with goals of local energy production from a diverse number of generation resources, partnering with ECSU, and creating a Community Solar Ownership LLC.

By consensus, it was decided that we should ask the Town Council for administrative funds, to include recording minutes. Jean presented language to the Charter Revision Commission asking them to create enabling language for a municipal utility. Roger Smith from Clean Water Action approved our applications for help with outreach for the Thermal Imaging Grant, and for organizing around the micro-grids, and to get the town on board with what the energy commission is working on, in general. We may need to form a task force to involve more community members in specific initiatives.

Citizens and Delegations

Adjournment