

WINDHAM ENERGY COMMISSION

Minutes -Monday February 10, 2014

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:08 PM. Those present were: Jean deSmet - Chair, Grace Adams, Elizabeth Ostwald, and Alex Girshick. Also present was James Finger -staff, and guest Wayne Donaldson, School Facilities Manager.

Citizens and Delegations - none

A motion was made, seconded and carried to move Micro-grid up on the agenda so that Wayne Donaldson could discuss the Micro-grid project first as he had to leave early to do a presentation on the grid at the CIP meeting.

Micro-grid:

Mr. Donaldson explained that DERP is working on the Z-REC's for the project, and they had the Town's share down to about \$188,000; little over five years in payback. They're looking at about \$36,000 a year in savings on electric costs. Mr. Donaldson said that he's been told that the project will qualify for the School Facilities reimbursement, but he will get confirmation. Mr. Donaldson added that they had contacted the contractor who installed the solar panels at the Water Department, and they determined that they could fit approximately 230KW of panels on the roof of the building, which would eliminate most of the ground based solar panels. Also, he said that Mike Licata, Fire Marshal, is looking at additional funding for the emergency generators.

Other financing options are a power purchase agreement, or a CEFIA (Clean Energy Finance Investment Authority) loan or lease. Mr. Donaldson added that another option was to purchase the power from the vendor for a fixed period, and then after seven years, purchase the equipment at fair market value. Liz confirmed that Stafford employed that option, as she learned from a conference on Z-RECs.

The Chair mentioned that the Commission needs to support the project before the Board of Finance, Town Council, CIP, and Town Meeting - as well as looking at various ways to make their support 'public' - including possibly sending a letter to the editor or an op-ed article to the Chronicle. Discussion ensued - as to the amount of funding that will be requested - either \$1.8 or \$2.2 million; and whether to mention the town's liability in a dollar figure, which is not certain. One important thing to keep in mind is that it is a community project that could offer a benefit in the event of a power outage. EC members will go to the CIP committee meeting regarding the first Round application immediately after the meeting.

Round 2 of micro-grids is coming, and under consideration is adding solar panels to the High School roof, which the architect is designing it now for possibly adding it to the project in May 2014. Mr. Finger explained that he spoke with Mark Doyle - head of the CIP committee - about the Energy Commission's interest in applying for round two for another Micro-Grid.

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The EC asked for clarification on the time line for getting the project approved before the Boards and at a Town Meeting. Mr. Finger said the Manager told him that the Town meeting was pushed off for a month, possibly mid March, as they didn't have the cost figures nailed down. The Manager added that he wasn't aware of a deadline for the grant, and was assured that this schedule for the Town meeting was not a problem. Mr. Finger said he explained that the Energy Commission wanted to support the project, as well as for making an application for round two. In response, the Manager said that he wasn't going to push either project, as it is up to the Board of Education since it involves school buildings and their energy costs.

Mr. Finger said he spoke with Mike Licata (Fire Marshal/Emergency Management Coordinator who is the lead staff for the Micro-grid project) who said that they don't have a project in mind to make an application for round two, and it would have to go the Capital Improvement Committee.

Thermal Imaging Project

Mr. D'Sousa sent a draft letter to be mailed to homeowners which the chair edited; James said he would take care of the mailing in house. Homeowners will get a discount on solar - if they go through the link to Sagewell on the web site and use the preferred contractor. Sagewell has screened contractors and would like us to use Astrum Solar - which is one of the biggest contractors on the east coast. According to Sagewell, whenever they've gone out to bid for solar contractors, this company came in the lowest, and gave the longest warranty for their work. EC members asked Sagewell to give a price per kw instead of a \$2000 discount, and to interview local solar contractors.

CEFIA has offered to send a letter to all the people who signed up for the Solarize project but didn't proceed with it, because this will give them a second chance.

Next Step Living - Erin O'Neil - indicated that they work with Sagewell in other Towns. Next Step Living does the home energy audits and follows up on getting the insulation done. Next Step is one of the preferred contractors Sagewell uses to do HES-IE.

The Chair mentioned that James had sent out a flyer that reported that the energy rates were going to go up - A LOT, and that we should put the link to this on the Energy Commission's web page.

Minutes of January 13, 2014 were approved.

Citizens and Delegations - none

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:20 PM

Respectfully Submitted - James Finger and Jean de Smet