

TOWN OF WINDHAM
ENERGY COMMISSION
Minutes of Monday June 9, 2014

Call to Order: The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:20 PM. Those present were: Jean de Smet - Chair, Elizabeth Ostwald, Grace Adams, and Corey Krohn. Guests included Taylor Vann - intern with Clean Water Action Network, and Mellissa Everett. Also present was James Finger as staff.

Citizens and Delegations - None

Minutes: Corey Krohn made a motion to accept the minutes of April 14 & April 28, 2014, and Liz Ostwald seconded the motion; all present voted in favor - so the minutes were approved.

TOPICS:

- Electric Charging Station
- Electric Charging Station grant
- Community Consensus Building with Melissa Everett from Clean Water Action
- Plans for Mini-split workshop, and engaging our schools - in the fall
- Updates about Thermal Imaging numbers
- Update about the OEEB outreach initiative in Windham

Electric Vehicle Charging Station: The Chair briefed the members about a State program for Electric Vehicle Charging Station, and that the Town could use its various bonus points and credits to pay for part of the cost; the question is where could it go. Various locations were discussed including: near the Town Hall, Willimantic Co-op (they lease and may move), Crosby parking lot. Solar would be the most energy efficient, but the site would have to have good access to the sun. This may also require a free standing location - which would be more expensive. The least expensive would be to mount a charging receptacle onto an existing building - like the back of the Town Hall. One of the problems is that whoever uses this charging station will have to leave the vehicle for at least a couple of hours; so they may want to go somewhere within walking distance while they wait. The Town could use its Bright Ideas grant to pay for this. James asked about the possibility of vandalism or electrocution. Corey mentioned possibly behind Town Hall with a sign to alert people where it is. Jean explained conditions of grant to allow charging for free during first three years.

Ductless Mini-split workshop: Erin O'Neil presented a few template letters that Next Step Living (NSL) planned to send out to alert property owners to the upcoming workshop. Some discussion arose about the thermal image in the letter - to be resolved before the letter goes out. Erin said she can provide some food for participants. Additional discussion focused on having a mock-up to show people what the equipment looks like. The phone number listed is Erin's Office phone. The Commission hopes to have the workshop in the first floor meeting

room on July 21st. Further discussion about future workshops involving the schools - but Erin said the earliest would likely be in October.

Community Consensus Building Melissa Everett from Clean Water Action spoke next about services that she would provide to the Commission. Ms. Everett explained that she has been with Clean Water Action's Energy program since last fall. She added that she is not a technical person, but can help with organizing community groups and communications as an author and a community organizer in helping communities do energy campaigns, energy challenge, and energy action plans.

Ms Everett then referred to a hand-out with a graphic illustration to simplify the goal-strategy building exercise that she had distributed at the previous meeting. She re-iterated that this is a simply tool to come up with a vision statement, and where you want to go. She asked each Commission member what they felt was the main problem in communicating with the public about energy conservation. Members expressed their frustration with the limited success, and that most residents don't know about the Energy Commission's goals or efforts - in spite of numerous mailings to households. Next members identified several possible ideas about promoting energy conservation including billboards, and more workshops of news articles.

The Chair added that she felt it is a matter of trust. Do they trust us or the Town , and why should they trust us? Alex commented that he had spoken with a client who had a nonchalant attitude about energy savings, and that it apparently wasn't a priority. He added that people get used to just paying the bill for energy and don't think about pursuing alternatives or more efficient energy solutions.

Jean added that it may be more important to simple have the information available so that when residents decide that energy conservation is important to them, they'll have a place to go for the information.

Alex asserted that changing people's attitudes - about anything - is the most difficult thing to do. Corey countered that he wasn't sure it was a matter of changing attitudes, so much as getting people to recognize that there is a problem that needs to be addressed. Alex added that it's a feeling - just saying you can save \$100 doesn't sound like a lot. Corey amplified saying - so if someone said - we could save \$2,500 a year - that would be a more significant amount.

Ms. Everett confirmed saying that its not due to a rational analysis - its understanding and realizing that its within your grasp; it has to be related to some kind of tangible economic incentive. Ms. Everett went on to explain the psychology of decision making process - such as weight loss or smoking cessation; you need to ask if you can get back to them and then be very gentle in asking. More discussion ensued.

Thermal Imaging Project: The Chair updated the Commission on the latest numbers of participants - and according to Sagewell - there were : 281Thermal image reports, 41 Assessments, 41 HVAC, 52 Solar inquiries.

OEEB outreach initiative in Windham Paul Aresta from CT Center for Advanced Technology sent a memo about their work with the Office of Energy Efficient Business as follows:

The OEEB outreach teams have visited 328 businesses in the City of Willimantic/Town of Windham. The table below summarizes some of the results of the outreach effort.

Please note that the status is not mutually exclusive. In other words, a business that was provided with “supplier education” may have also had an assessment.

Statistics	
Unable to Accept Services	60
Not Interested or Already Served	57
Assessments Completed	23
Supplier Education Provided	51
No Available Cost Savings Found	11
Referred to utility program	7
Report Delivered / Not Interested	1
Referral to efficiency (DIY)	1
Report Delivered / Response Pending	2
Client requested for OEEB to Return	37
Business is home based (Ineligible)	50

There several reports that we are working on that we will return to the business.

In addition, there are 37 businesses that we need to follow up with, and 60 businesses that were unable to accept services. This may be an opportunity to coordinate with the Town to identify the property owner for targeted outreach.

Clean Energy Communities: Benchmarking –James Finger and Wayne Donaldson will be working with the consultants on completing the Energy Portfolio Manager, and he said that they hope to get it together for the Commission by the next meeting. The Chair said she spoke with Marianne Graham at ICF, and that she will work us on the Municipal Action Plan.

Other business:

Erin will work with Jean and James on plans for Mini-split workshop...

Adjourned: The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:30 PM

Draft respectfully submitted by James Finger