

Windham Energy Commission

July 8, 2013 Minutes

Call to Order: The meeting was officially called to order at 5:30 PM

Those in attendance were: Jean de Smet, Mike Altschul, Grace Adams, and Corey Krohn. Also present: Kate Donnelly, Liz Ostwald, J. Finger –staff, and guest Peter Weeks

Citizens and Delegations – none

Approval of Minutes - Corey Krohn made a motion to approve the June 10th meeting minutes, and Mike Altshul seconded the motion; all voted in favor to approve.

Guest Speaker - Next Step Home Energy Solutions:

Mr. Peter Weeks introduced his firm: <http://nextstepliving.com/> and their based out of Boston - explaining their services. He continued explaining that their company is focused on providing clean & green energy jobs and are focused on reducing energy use by way of identifying energy conservation measures (ECM's), and follow up for contracts with insulation/HVAC and Solar contractors. He added that they do a lot of field work when working with a community and look at what's available in the market in order to develop a campaign to provide technical solutions to a receptive audience. They canvass a community to develop a list of good prospects, and identify partners in the area. Then they move to establish a public outreach program, and look for early adopters who may have testimonials about their success for people in the neighborhood. Critical in the Home energy solutions (HES) evaluation is to identify the heat source – as this is typically the greatest energy use. They could replace windows if necessary, but it may not have the payback. He explained that his firm has found that relationships matter – it's not the sales pitch, but having a conversation about the property owners needs.

In answer to the question of reaching Low Income households, he explained that in the New Haven area they have one contractor that specializes in work with low-income households. However, he explained that his firm is limited to four units or less – they cannot do the multi-family apartments with five or more.

He mentioned working with Stop & Shop who has offered gift cards to customers who sign up for HES evaluations. After some general discussion, Corey made a motion to invite Nest Step... for come back to develop a working agreement with the Energy Commission. Mike Altshul seconded the motion, and all voted in favor.

Update on Solarize Kate Donnelly gave an update on the project, and mentioned that C-TEC-SOLAR asked to allow them to skip the tabling exercise at the Willimantic Farmers Market for next weekend – they will do one in Storrs instead. C-TEC-SOLAR also wanted to skip the direct mailing of the post-cards as they said they had spent a great deal of their marketing budget on advertisements in the Chronicle, and have added more people to their sales force.

Jean mentioned the efforts of Commission members on door-knocking in various neighborhoods, and that we now have a contract for a property on Oxbow Drive – additional door-knocking will continue... Corey suggested that we should get some testimonials from property owners who have done the solar

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project – and then try to get this information in the Chronicle. Jean will draft a letter to the Chronicle to let them know of the project's success.

Update on C-PACE marketing grant – James Finger said that we were awarded the grant to market the program, but in order to qualify, property owners will have to hire an Energy auditor to examine their previous three years of energy use, and present a plan for energy conservation measures to present to the Clean Energy Finance Investment Authority (CEFIA). The hope was that this program could be used to help the many property owners in the Downtown who have empty buildings to revitalize the Downtown – but it doesn't look like that will be possible now. Jean suggested that we may need to contact our State representative to get a legislative fix to provide an exemption for the vacant buildings.

Clean Energy Communities: James Finger said the Commission should vote on the recommendation to the Town Council to authorize the Town Manager to sign the agreement to make the Clean Energy Pledge so we can qualify for additional grants. Some discussion ensued about meeting the pledge – and Jean asserted that we have already met the requirements in part – we just need to get the documentation to CL&P. Corey Krohn made a motion to recommend Council action on the matter, and Mike Altshul seconded the motion; all voted in favor.

Discussion and possible action to change meeting times for the summer – A general discussion ensued as to when Commission members could meet, as the Commission was having difficulty getting enough people to make a quorum. After a brief discussion – no action was taken.

Citizens & Delegations: Miscellaneous - N2N ends & DEEP awards - Kate Donnelly reminded the Commission that she will no longer be working with the Neighbor to neighbor program as it has ended. Now she will be working with Smart Power – a non-profit marketing organization working with CEFIA.

Respectfully submitted for consideration
James Finger