

## Energy Commission Minutes, August 12, 2013

Commission Members Present: Jean De Smet, Chris Vials, Alex Girschik, Grace Adams, Liz Ostwald and James Finger - staff

Guest: Madeline Priest

**Overview.** The first half of the meeting was devoted to updates and conversations surrounding the updates. The second half of the meeting was a session on short, medium, and long-term goal-setting led by Madeline Priest.

- **Housekeeping.** Minutes from Aug 12, 2013 approved.
- **Final reports on HES** (Jean). We had 105 HES visits, , 10 HES-IEs, 10 Energy updates, and 65 lighting retro-fits
- **Solarize Update.** Windham/Mansfield got 88 signed contracts (only 19 in Windham/Willimantic).
- **Benchmarking.** The schools have been reticent about complying with benchmarking. There will be a person assigned to the Energy Commission from ICF Consulting to input the data and form a municipal action plan based on benchmarking results, coordinated by Rebecca Meyer from CL&P
- **Energy Info and the Town.** The Town has still not posted the information Chris put together months ago; many minutes are still missing from the Town website
- **CPACE.** We got the grant for CPACE (\$3000). We're going to start the marketing with the Chamber of Commerce. Thus far, very few local businesses have been interested in the program.
- **Clean Energy Communities.** Jean attended a webinar and learned some things on renewable energy points.
- Jean learned at webinar that by joining CPACE, we met 10% of our renewable energy goal
- there is a residential category that counts toward our point total that includes fuel conversions, lease applications with CEFIA, new loan programs for residential energy RECs; also, she learned of new categories of commercial clean energy points that accrue to the Town (fuel conversions, hybrid cars, etc.);
- now the Town wants fuel conversions (from oil to gas) to count towards our totals
- the Town will be getting more credits because the categories that count toward point totals have expanded (solar panels on schools will count; everything from Solarize, etc.); we can also cash in our points for geothermal, trash compactors, etc.
- **Microgrid.** We got the grant for the microgrid; it will be housed in 2 schools (Sweeney school and the middle-school); there is enough solar on both buildings to be 100% solar; these buildings will be solar powered, generator or fuel cell emergency centers
- **Direct Energy.** It's gone as a company in CT, at least in terms of taking on new customers; current customers will see their costs go up

- there are still the 2 state-approved, clean energy providers out there that customers can sign up with; these are Three Degrees and Community Energy (not CL&P); signing up with these 2 companies would count toward the Town's renewable credits; we need to get the word out about these
- **Clean Energy Workshop (James).** James and Jean attended. They learned that we don't have to own the solar system to get the credits (you can lease)
- More importantly, they learned of a small business energy efficiency program (outside CPACE) called SBEA, which stands for Small Business Energy Advantage
- Town of Litchfield energy task force came up with a tool kit to approach businesses to get them to sign on to SBEA; we can door knock with businesses up and down Main St; as part of SBEA, CEFIA arranges for a contractor to do free energy audits. These are more expansive than HES visits, as there are opportunities to save 50% of the costs of implementing the improvements; there are also 0% loans for 4 years to do the improvements
- SBEA is for anyone with 50-200 kw systems
- religious institutions qualify for SBEA and CPACE, depending on their energy usage
- **News Item.** Fires in Canada almost shut down the grid for CT because of our ties to Hydro Quebec. This is a reason why we should have more systems like solar on residential houses
- **Setting Short, Medium, and Long Term Goals for the Commission (Madeline).** Details were logged by Madeline Priest. Highlights included: outreach for SBEA, generating our own visibility materials (banners, buttons, T-shirts), and steps toward municipal autonomy (localized purchasing of poles and powerlines by the Town)