

## Windham Energy Commission

September 23, 2013 Minutes

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 6:06 PM. *Commission members* in attendance were: Jean de Smet- Chair, Grace Adams, Alex Girshick, and Liz Ostwald. Corey Krohn arrived at approximately 6:15 PM. **Also present:** James Finger –staff

**Citizens and Delegations** – none

**Accept Minutes of August 26, 2013** - Alex Girshick made a motion to approve the August 26<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes, and Grace Adams seconded the motion to approve the minutes; all voted in favor to approve with one abstention from Alex as he was not at the meeting.

**Report on webinars:** Jean reviewed information she learned from listening to various webinars – one on Virtual Net Metering. She explained that the webinar clarified that a Municipality could possibly have a 1 megawatt solar farm on about 3-5 acres of open, relatively flat, un-shaded land located near 3-phase electric distribution lines and get credit for the excess power production for up to five of the Town's electric accounts that together use about 1.2 to 1.5 million kWh annually.

Another webinar focused on working with CCM (CT Conference of Municipalities) to evaluate various sites in Town to determine the most suitable for developing a solar farm. CCM works with Bay State Consultants, the firm selected by CCM-member municipalities through a competitive bid process. CCM and Bay State would manage the competitive procurement process, including issuing the RFQ/P for participating CCM-member municipalities, reviewing proposals, scheduling on-site reviews, checking qualifications, negotiating both Virtual Net Metering Credit Agreements and Solar Power Purchase Agreements, arranging presentations by finalists and monitoring the process from start through commercial operation. CCM's program fee for services would be \$.075 per watt of installed solar capacity (DC rating) payable by the solar developer only if the project is built.

**Update on C-PACE outreach** - James Finger explained efforts underway to include a Breakfast meeting the next day (Sept. 24, 2013 at 7:30 AM) to hear details of the financing from CEFIA (Clean Energy Finance Investment Authority). He said the Chamber is handling this, and will have another event on Thursday afternoon September 26, 2013 at 5 PM – both to be held at the Breakfast place.

**Strategic Action Plan** – The Chair opened discussion on this topic. Madeline Priest- who was an organizer with Neighbor to Neighbor - helped the Commission begin formulation of this document. Long term, we want to create a net zero energy usage in Town. Michael Altshul asked for clarification of the term net zero. Jean answered that it means that we would produce enough energy to off-set any usage. This is not to mean free of the energy grid - but to off-set consumption by balancing it out with production by years end. This goal is just for the municipality and we should note that in the Plan. Some discussion ensued on trying to encourage citizens to reduce consumption; discussion also turned to conversion rates for different fuel types. This helped to refine the goal to clarify that the Commission

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wants to increase the use of renewable energy to reduce electrical consumption as part of the five year goal.

Another long term goal is to create a municipal utility in Windham. In order to start this, the Town should look into owning its street lights. Currently, the Town owns some in the Downtown area and at the Windham Mills along Main St. We should look at putting little solar panels on them. We probably need to hire a consultant to look at a detailed plan for establishing a municipal utility. A question arose as to other Towns who have purchased street light.

Jean answered that she heard that West Hartford purchased their street lights by way of a law suit against CL&P because of their failure to address street lights being out of service for extended periods – yet they were still charged for the service. She said that Chester is also looking into this possibility. We need to have the Town Engineer and Controller look into this by possibly contacting West Hartford.

Next discussion turned to Micro-grids. Jean asked about the Town's project to establishing one at Sweeney School (Oakhill Dr.) and the Middle School (Quarry St). The proposal was that this site will supply 100% of the electrical needs for the schools with solar panels and to put in a generator or a fuel cell for emergency power – and would serve as an emergency center. James will look into the matter and report back.

**Small Business Energy Advantage** Next the Commission discussed the need to knock on doors of businesses in Town to alert them to this program. Jean said that she hopes that this alternative will be discussed at the C-PACE informational meetings.

**Next meeting:** since the next regular meeting falls on Columbus Day – October 14<sup>th</sup>, the Commission agreed not to meet until October 28<sup>th</sup>. A sub-committee (less than a quorum) may meet in the mean time to go over the Commercial and personal property lists to determine who the Commission should try to contact about the C-PACE program.

**Nominate and Appoint new Recorder** - discussion then ensued on appointing a new recorder. After some discussion Alex Girshick agreed to volunteer to take minutes for the October 28<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**Citizens and Delegations** - none

**Adjournment** The Commission adjourned at approximately 7:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted