

Minutes: Town of Windham Energy Commission
September 25, 2012

Present: Madeline Priest, Kate Donnelly, Jean DeSmet, Michelle Mallett, Chris Vials

Note: we did not have quorum at this meeting, so no official decisions could be made

REPORTS/DISCUSSIONS

- **Community Innovation Grant Program.** Jean reported on the status on the remaining funds in this grant (\$5000). We discussed what we could do with this money. Jean stated that she talked to Robert Schmitt at CT Clean Energy, who said he would be very interested if we used it to pay for HES improvements in the direction of solar or geothermal. A few objected that only higher-income residents could benefit from solar-related improvements.
- Kate suggested using this money to get a “dashboard” installed into a solar-powered school building that shows how many trees, etc. are saved daily and weekly through the solar arrays. They’ve been doing this in Hampton, though the process has been long and stressful. If we go this route, she suggested talking to Katherine, the West Hartford Town Energy Monitor, who was quite helpful. A company called Deck Monitoring has the technology. Jean suggested we could do this for the library.
- **Solar Application.** Our application for solar-funding was turned down, but we were strongly encouraged to re-apply for a second round of grants (the deadline is January). When we re-do our application, we should add that (a) 54 people, mostly Windham folks, came to a workshop held by N2N on solarization.
- **N2N Benchmarking.** Jena (data specialist for N2N) is working on a value set to recalibrate our “points.” Lebanon benchmarking costs are currently being determined. Madeline will help us with ours once this is done.
- **Clean Water Mentoring.** A consultant named Justin Haaheim with Clean Water can come in to help us make our meetings and action plans move more smoothly and efficiently. We agreed that his help would be best later, when we have a long-term action plan, and because Madeline’s consulting role is similar.
- **Speaking with other towns with municipal utilities.** We discussed a field trip to Norwich and/or Jewett City to talk with their municipal utility folks about their experiences with municipal utilities.
- **Public Utility Regulatory Authority (PURA).** PURA is an agency charged with, among many other things, regulating CL&P’s Income Eligibility Program (its state-mandated program for helping low-income residents to make their homes more energy efficient through HES). Madeline and Jean testified at their last meeting about the complete

negligence of the company in administering this program (needless obstacles to applying, disrespect of applicants, failure to disburse funds, etc.). PURA was very receptive to their complaints. They will address this body again soon. Jean also addressed the complexity of the process to become a contractor in the HES program, which prohibits local, small contractors from becoming vendors.

ACTIVITIES

- we discussed our activities for the coming months, which would include intensifying our N2N door-knocking, establishing benchmarking data, participating in the co-op country fair, getting out an article in the *Windham Journal*, possibly getting out a mass mailing, and researching municipal utilities.