

Wilton Energy Commission
Meeting Minutes for November 10, 2008

Attendance:

Commission Members Present: Mike Lindberg, Rust Muirhead, Mitch Reichgut, Ron Cagenello, Bruce Hampson, Richard Creeth, Hal Clark

Commission Members Absent: Jim Furnivall, Ron French

Also Present: Jana Bertkau, Damiana Serafini, Rev. Blake Greenlee, Swetha Raghuraman

Meeting:

- The meeting was called to order at 7:05pm by Chairman Mike Lindberg
- A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of October 16, 2008. The motion passed unanimously.
- Mike Lindberg announced that Jim Snedeker had resigned from the WEC. Mike welcomed Hal Clark as a new member.
- Conservation Committee Report (Rust Muirhead)
 - There are 174 clean energy signups. This is down from 176 the previous month. Members expressed concern about the validity of the numbers. Mike is in contact with Bob Wall of the Clean Energy Option Program to encourage the need for verification that the program is well monitored and that the sign-up figures are accurate.
 - Commercial Sign-ups – Follow up to question posed last meeting re: commercial credits for clean energy signups:
 - Each 100 MWh of clean energy purchased by a local commercial and industrial customer through the **CTCleanEnergyOptions** program counts as 10 points
 - Each Green-e certified REC purchase by a C&I customer (excluding municipalities) counts as follows:
 - 1-10 GWh = 50 points for each GWh purchased; and
 - > 10 GWh = 500 points plus 50 point for each 10 GWh purchased above 10 GWh (e.g., a 30 GWh purchase earns 600 points)
 - 2,000 points – town receives 5 kW's additional solar PV
 - The cost for the home energy audit program has been reduced to \$75 from \$300. A link to this program will be added to the WEC website.
- Buildings Report (Bruce Hampson)
 - Benchmarks for fuel consumption in town buildings will be ready soon.
 - Comstock plans have been postponed until the economy improves
 - Construction drawings have been completed for the high school.
 - Bruce met with Bob Wall and with John Roundtree, the architect consulting with the energy fund on solar panels. They looked at Cider Mill and at Middlebrook and found a good site at Middlebrook. John will look for bids to proceed in the new

year. Wilton is eligible for a 3KW solar system. A curriculum targeted at 9th grade students is available through the state.

- The WEC is now eligible for a \$4k grant from the energy fund.
- Communications Report (Mitch Reichgut)
 - Mitch made an energy presentation to Ogden House at one of the luncheons including suggestions for saving energy and the opportunity to support alternative energy through the CleanEnergyOptions program. The response was skeptical. A discussion followed regarding the need to make a cultural change among Wilton residents towards energy usage. Visuals can be very effective. It is time to follow up with the library on setting up a WEC table. The library is receptive to this proposal.
- Energy Survey for local residents. (Damiana Serafini)
 - 22 responses have been completed on line. Many more are needed. This can be accomplished through publicity in the paper and through the sharing of other lists. Damiana will contact the Wilton Bulletin for publicity. This will be followed by requests for mailing lists from various organizations in town. It is important to have the organizations vouch for the importance of the survey. Damiana has received a grant to work with renewable energy in Argentina. She leaves on December 14th. The members congratulated her on her achievement.
- Green Cup Contest- (Shwetha Raghuraman and Mitch Reichgut)
 - The format will consist of a survey to be distributed in January to households and businesses in the towns of Wilton, Westport and Weston. Questions will focus on energy awareness of the participants and answers will be tallied on a website. Scoring will involve percentage of town participation as well as degree of energy reduction. Details are being worked out.
 - Bruce reported that NO IDLE signs would be placed at the different schools.
- Wilton Energy Plan.

Mike asked for comments on how to proceed with the Wilton Energy Plan.

 - Bruce Hampson: Our mission is to promote energy conservation and sustainability. We must develop a comprehensive plan with the same initiatives as the Connecticut plan. Other organizations such as Cool Air-Clean Planet have tool kits we can use. The towns of Stamford and Hamden have plans which mirror the state of Connecticut. We should follow their lead. We should invite the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICELI) here to advise us. In the meantime we continue to do what we are doing in line with CT and have the Board of Selectman endorse it. We have sacrificed planning for action. Now it is time to do the planning. We should have a 1-year plan.
 - Hal Clark: We have been challenged in getting the message out. We should go the same direction as the state of Connecticut.
 - Ron Cagenello: The chart is a useful exercise in getting an energy plan overview. We should leverage the work that has already been done.
 - Richard Creeth: We should not get into a research loop. We should get more people involved and come up with a comprehensive plan we can execute.
 - Damiana Serafini: The CT Department of Energy has Stakeholder meetings with Gov. Rell. They have completed energy initiatives and can provide advice on how to

adapt these to the different towns. It would be good for us to go to these meetings and tag along with them.

- Rev. Blake Greenlee: We should put the plan in place quickly.
- Mitch Reichgut: We should not spend more than 1 or 2 sessions on such a plan as a group. We should get more people involved and have task groups of people.
- Rust Muirhead: We should be editors not creators. We should think about measuring success especially for the near term.

Mike handed out the spreadsheet for the Energy Plan Overview (see attached)

- Mike pointed out that ICELI focuses on carbon footprint and the town of Wilton is focusing on energy reduction. There is a non-profit board at Eastern Connecticut State University that provides software for benchmarking tools for businesses. We should continue to look for incentives at the state and federal level and link these to our web site.
- Hal suggested that everyone read different documents, summarize and present to the group. We should point out the economic value of initiatives.
- Damiana pointed out that some initiatives that you take will have a long-term effect but you can't save money short term.
- Bruce stressed that we need to change the culture toward sustainability.
- Rust suggested that we use the Hamden or Stamford policy and edit it.
- Mike would like us to focus on three sectors; Municipal, Business and Residential. All agreed with this division and for dividing the plan in these sections. However, the groups that would be working to implement the plan would be different from the groups that exist within the WEC. e.g. business owners would be part of the drafting of the business part of the plan.

- Next Steps

- The top 7 plans would be identified and uploaded to a web site. At the next meeting the commission would go through the plans with the help of Mitch and create an outline for our own purpose.
- A vision statement would be drafted.
- The WEC would meet with the BOS to get its endorsement.

- Other comments

There was discussion regarding the need to coordinate an Energy Plan with a Wilton Strategic Plan. Since there is no Wilton Strategic Plan, this would not be possible. How are we to recommend policy in this case? Bruce concluded that the Energy Plan should not be different depending on a Town Strategic Plan.

While the WEC is working on the Energy Plan, ongoing projects include: building projects, No Idle Zone signs, PV array, Community Outreach/Education, benchmarking and improving the website.

- The next meeting will be held Thursday, December 18th at 7pm at the Wilton Library.
- The meeting was adjourned at 9:25pm.

Attachments: Town of Wilton, CT-Energy Plan Overview; CT House Bill #7432: An Act Concerning Electricity and Energy Efficiency

Minutes submitted by Jana Bertkau