

Waltham Energy Action Committee

Thursday 7pm, May 23, 2013

Public Meeting Room, Government Center, 119 School St.

Minutes

Members Present:

Kathy Randel, Leo Keightley, Eileen Zubrowski, Melissa Downes

Others Present:

Maia Rodriguez-Semp

Bob Ferrone

Jim Mniece

Amy Gortler

Christopher Hardy

Frank Craig

Don Cusano

agenda in [blue](#)

Ms. Randel called the meeting to order at 7PM.

[Don Cusano re energy efficiency of City Hall and Government Center](#)

Kathy asked Don to describe the process by which specific updates, such as energy use reduction measures, are added to a project. Don listed the following:

- For a project costing \$100,000 or more, there is a board which will select an architect.
The current board is Joe Pedula, Jim LaCross, and Don Cusano.
- For energy savings for example, get an architect suitable for that job.
The 1st step is to get a list of resumes and select those potentially qualified.
Do a site view of the job with all prospective architects and make a selection based on additional screening, some applicants will drop out based on the site view.
- The selected architect will do a project feasibility study including price estimates.
- Don manages the job.

WEAC members asked how they can provide input to a project: certain features like windows, boilers efficiency, passive solar features, etc.

- Don said a preliminary feature-specific feasibility study would be performed. For a heating system, a preliminary feasibility study might show where a building is losing heat.
Joe would be asked to put out a request for bids for the preliminary feasibility study.
The results of the preliminary study would become part of the set of requirements for the main project.

Kathy asked if City Hall and Government Center have been audited. Don said just the lights.

Kathy asked about using NSTAR. Don said they would do preliminary feasibility work (not the final job).

Kathy asked about a City-wide plan.

- Don said there are several projects in the pipeline:

The Moody St. Fire Station is being audited now.

Availability of grant money often steers efforts to certain areas and certain buildings.

Planning Dept. handles grants.

Kathy asked how projects are prioritized.

- Don said he submits requests for a number of projects. The Mayor and City Council decide which ones are funded. Don can request priorities.

Leo asked when architects will be selected for City Hall and Govt. Ctr. Projects. Don said there are no immediate plans for selection.

Arrigo Farm Purchase Endorsement (Leo)

- Leo reviewed the City Council resolution, introduced by Councillor Darcy (Ward 3) “.. to sponsor a CPC application to acquire the Arrigo farm under open space and historical purposes, for the ultimate purpose of leasing this farmland for local farming preserving of one of the last vestiges of local family farming to benefit current and future generations of Waltham inhabitants.”

Leo passed around a copy of the resolution which was endorsed by 9 current City Councillors (Councillor Curtin endorsed the proposal but has resigned as a Councillor) and passed unanimously by the Waltham City Council on 13-May-'13 and by the Committee of the Whole on 20-May-'13.

- Leo then requested that WEAC support the resolution and passed around a draft letter of endorsement from WEAC to Council President Robert Waddick.
- Leo moved that WEAC support the resolution by having Kathy sign the letter which will then be mailed to Councillor Waddick.
 - Kathy asked if we need to clear this by the Mayor
 - It was decided to change the endorsement so that it is addressed to the Mayor and copied to the City Council. With those changes the motion passed unanimously.
 - Copies (.pdf) of the resolution and letter are filed with minutes of this meeting under “Arrigo Farm Council Resolution final.pdf” and “WEAC for Arrigo.pdf.”

Fernald Working Group (Leo)

Leo noted that he is considering working with the Fernald Working Group, developing “.. a community-based proposal for the redevelopment of the Fernald School site.” Leo will focus on integrating modes of energy conservation, collection, and possibly generation into the redevelopment proposal. Leo said the Working Group's general approach is very generic, including: housing, small business stimulation, possible farming, transportation, open spaces, and preservation of historic buildings. Energy related work done by Leo would be available as groundwork for any development planning done not only by this Working Group, but any other organization developing potential plans for the Fernald site. WEAC will receive for Committee records, all of Leo's written contributions to the Fernald Working Group's proposal works in progress.

Leo moved that WEAC establish a project, which will be his work with the Fernald Working group with the understanding that WEAC will receive for Committee records, all of Leo's written contributions to the Fernald Working Group's “proposal” works in progress.

The motion was tabled because WEAC members felt this may draw too much effort away from other WEAC projects.

Residential PV in Waltham (Jim)

Jim had his first 1st month of negative electric use last month (his PV system generated more electricity than he used)

Jim brought up Solarize Mass, a program of the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center.

- Lexington and Bedford are applying for grants. Solarize Mass will fund 8 or so installations.
- A “team” is required to participate in the program. Also, 1 team member, devoting 8 hours/wk for 6 or 7 months, is required to run the program

Kathy thinks WEAC doesn't have resources right now to create a team.

Solar companies are advertising but there are very few takers. Jim wonders why.

Next Step Living Solar Campaign (Eileen and Amy)

Sagewell Statistics:

As of 05-Apr-'13, 116 homes in Waltham have signed up to see their no-cost thermal image reports, out of which 78 homes signed up for energy assessments. With over 10,000 (10,266 to be exact) 1, 2 and 3 family homes in Waltham, there is plenty of room for growth.

NSL Contact:

Eileen and Amy got in touch with Next Step Living (NSL). NSL wants Waltham representatives (like WEAC members) to meet with and NSL outreach person to create a targeted campaign in Waltham. NSL noted that it is easier to interest people in a PV evaluation than an energy audit. So, they package an energy audit with their PV audits. NSL said they get 80% positive reviews of their audits and that no other organization gets a higher percentage of positive reviews. If WEAC agrees to work with them, what they want is access to Waltham's “database of homeowners” (exactly what they meant by this is not clear). They want to find which buildings are owner occupied. They run a 2 month outreach program. The pay for outreach workers is significantly commission based, which may be a source of what is perceived as excess pressure. They're looking for people to hire (part time). This is a common outreach model. They will do a mailing, which they pay for.

NSL currently uses 2 PV panel types:

Trina (China made)

Sunpower (premium .. USA made)

NSL would like to use “Boston Solar Company” as the Waltham PV installer.

NSL wants to be sponsored by the City or a Waltham Group.

NSL Wants:

City database (not certain what this is)

Participation in city events

Part time workers

Maia suggested they could advertise at universities, for college students. However, she has some experience with NSL's somewhat exploitive behavior (quotas).

For Waltham, maybe potential customers would identify more readily with canvassers who are not college students.

Jim suggested we should possibly give even exposure to other companies.

Forest Street Upgrades (Leo)

- Leo has drafted a “request” for walking and bicycling upgrades for possible inclusion in Waltham's 2013 planned upgrade work to Forest Street. Leo passed around a draft of the “request,” which is a

format for changes to be submitted to Waltham Traffic Engineering.

- Leo moved that WEAC vote to be listed as a co-requester on the form by having Kathy sign for the Committee.
- The motion passed unanimously.

Green Communities Update (Stephen)

no discussion

Brandeis Intern Project (Kathy and Leo)

Kathy said that the program for the intern has already been decided upon. There will probably be some interaction in getting information from the Mass Energy Insight database (through Leo).

Newsletter Approval (Kathy)

no discussion

Waltham Riverfest and Farmer's Market Tabling (Kathy)

Kathy asked for volunteers to work the Riverfest table.

Amy, Kathy, and Frank volunteered.

Kathy asked if people want to do a Farmers' Market table.

Maia, Frank, Amy, and Kathy volunteered

Waltham Connect (Kathy)

no discussion

Survey Progress (Catherine)

no discussion

June Picnic (Kathy)

People agree on 16-Jun as the date.

Additional Item(s)

Kathy distributed NuRide cards ..

Closing

Next Meeting

– Thursday, June 20, 2013, 7pm-9pm - Public Meeting Room, Government Center, 119 School St.

The committee adjourned at 9:05 PM.