

Waltham Energy Action Committee

Thursday 7pm, February 11, 2010

Public Meeting Room, Government Center, 119 School St.

Minutes

Members Present:

Guy Compagnone, Pat Fox, Rick Oches, Kathy Randel, Leo Keightley, Andy Greene, Eileen Zubrowski, Janna Cohen-Rosenthal

Others Present:

Councilor Steven Rourke

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

Welcome

Prior to addressing items on the agenda, there was discussion of how decisions are made (in any city or in Waltham) involving roles of the Mayor, City Council, Operating Budget, and Capital Budget. This was to better understand our role in working with the city to achieve our purpose and to help the Committee decide on priorities). Councilor Rourke was very helpful in this discussion.

The budgeting process was described as the main lever for getting things done. The Committee may have certain projects it wants added to one of the budgets (Capital Budgets are passed in the Fall and Operating Budgets in the Spring), but the Committee may find that it is more effective to assist others in accomplishing things that they want and that meet our purpose).

Councilor Rourke mentioned three examples of ways to gain support for green/energy-saving initiatives:

- MMA (Mass Municipal Association) will come out to speak to residential community. There is no cost and the Committee could arrange for the event.
- A pilot project of LED streetlights installed on a short street would be inexpensive and could be creatively funded. People would then see the feasibility and actual cost vs energy savings.
- Set up a scorecard for Waltham's progress in meeting Green Communities requirements.

Andy mentioned that Waltham's bond rating is good. Waltham could float a bond to pay for project that pays back in 3.5 years and improves the bond rating. Councilor Rourke said this should be brought up to the City auditor who is likely to look favorably on such a project.

In getting to the meeting's agenda, Pat suggested that the order of items be rearranged so that we are certain to accomplish the more pressing issues first. Everyone agreed to that. The order in the following minutes reflects that change from the original agenda.

Review and close follow-up items (part 1):

Other open issues or updates to review:

- Meeting with the Mayor

Letter to City Department Heads:

The letter, as it is in the Google site, was sent out.

Meeting rules to follow:

Meetings and working sessions have to follow the "open meeting law" & Roberts Rules.

Related discussion:

Councilor Rourke suggested we determine if the use of the group's Google web site is acceptable due to lack of public access. He pointed out that within certain public groups, emails between individuals may be private, but emails to the entire group, such as those placed on the Google site, must be public.

Andy suggested that because of the Committee's advisory nature, maybe web site is OK.

Review and accept minutes from previous meetings

Secretary Leo Keightley asked if Committee members had been able to access and review the minutes for meetings on 10-Dec-'09 and 14-Jan-'10 which were posted on the team's Google web site. Members said that they had been able to do so. There was a unanimous vote to accept the minutes for both meetings.

Review and close follow-up items (part 2):

Action items from last meeting

- Mission statement

The Mission Statement, originally drafted by Councilor Rourke and then reviewed in a working session on 25-Jan-'10 and modified by Andy, has been moved to Article II: Purpose of the bylaws.

- Statement of commitment – all member to sign

The Statement Of Commitment was finalized in the 25-Jan-'10 working session and presented to the Committee members to sign. All members present and Councilor Rourke signed a copy (one for each member) and gave them to the secretary for archiving.

- Bylaws

The latest draft was submitted by Rick and Andy who had performed the most recent updates including suggestions from the 25-Jan-'10 working session. Rick reviewed the most recent changes for the group.

- It was agreed that a copy would be sent to the Mayor
- There was discussion as to whether or not the required use of Roberts Rules at meetings and working sessions should be included.
- In response to discussion of possible gaps in the Bylaws, Councilor Rourke noted that Waltham City Council rules state that if there is a gap

in rules or bylaws then Roberts rules apply.

Pat suggested we provisionally accept bylaws. It was proposed, 2nded and passed with a unanimous vote.

- Web site

Due to time constraints, there was no action on a WEAC entry on Waltham City Web Site.

Action Plan:

Priorities:

Pat proposed that we review the suggested top 3 priorities as identified by Committee members as a previous assignment and placement of those suggested priorities into a set of categories.

- There was discussion of the reason for and identity of "categories." Pat said they will guide us in allocating limited resources. Councilor Rourke said top priorities should be those that will lead toward becoming a Green Community. Andy pointed out that other community plans have substantial depth. We don't want to lose sight of lower level details, but don't want them to drag us down with excessive scope. Guy added that outreach is important. Often lower level priorities (such as outreach) support higher level ones.

We proceeded to review the suggested top priorities and place them into categories. See file "Priorities.doc" (available from the Google web site or the Committee Secretary).

The top 3 priorities are as follows:

- Waltham becomes a Green Community

Councilor Rourke is going to do further research into this.

- Municipal Involvement

What's already going on in the city?

Contacting Department Heads, as follow-up to the letter of introduction from the Mayor, was discussed. Councilor Rourke suggested 1st contact could be a letter asking what has been done by the various departments in the past few years. What energy ideas have occurred to department heads and employees which they haven't been able to implement?

- Community Outreach

Assignments

Proposals for next steps for each identified priority

Andy said he will look into the "Energy Information System" software being implemented by the Green Communities Program to access state energy database.

Next Steps/Action Items

Next Meeting – March 11, 2010 - Public Meeting Room, Government Center, 119 School Street

The committee adjourned at 9:20PM.