

Waltham Energy Action Committee

Thursday 7pm, January 14, 2010

Public Meeting Room, Government Center, 119 School St.

Minutes

Members Present:

Guy Compagnone, Pat Fox, Marilyn Maillet, Susan DellaCamera, Rick Ochess, Kathy Randel, Leo Keightley, Andy Greene, Andy Greene, Eileen Zubrowski

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

Welcome

Pat welcomed this meeting's guest (Joanne Bissetta, Green Community Coordinator at MA Department of Energy Resources).

Pat reviewed the Committee charter and status, mentioning that progress toward Green Community status (for Waltham) is a goal for the Committee. Joanne's involvement and knowledge in the Green Communities program are of great interest to the Committee.

Since Joanne had arrived at the start of the meeting Pat propose that the order of the agenda be changed to have Joanne's presentation and discussion first. Everyone agreed.

Presentation/Discussion: Green Communities Act – Guest: Joanne Bissetta

Presentation:

Joanne said that she is the Green Communities program "Regional Coordinator" for Northeast Massachusetts, and there are 3 other coordinators in state. Waltham falls within the region covered by Joanne.

Joanne referenced two resources that the Green Communities program makes available:

- Expertise in Performance Contracting
Having taken a community energy inventory the next step is to implement an energy savings/greenhouse gas reductions plan. Performance Contracting facilitates payment, for an energy saving installation, from the energy savings. This relieves the community from having to otherwise finance the installation. Once the installation is paid off the community pays lower energy fees as a result of the installation.

- Energy Information System
 - Web based
 - Utility data for communities is available
 - Useful for comparisons and benchmarking
 - Helps communities set goals
 - Helps track performance of installations
 - At the Massachusetts Municipal Association annual meeting January 22 and 23, 2010, this system will be demonstrated.
 - WEAC members can get permission to use the system
 - Paragram (<http://www.paragram.com/>) is developing the software.

Green Communities Program / Grants

- \$10M is made available each year for communities "designated" as Green Communities. The money is for use in implementing a Green Community's energy and greenhouse reduction plan.
- There are no current Massachusetts Green Communities, but about 6 are expected to be designated during 2010. They have the opportunity to share the \$10M available for 2010.
- Unused funds do not roll over from year to year, so in 2011 there will be \$10M available regardless of how much of the 2010 \$10M is used.
- Funding of \$10 million for the Green Communities program is made available through:
 - RGGI and NOx allowance trading programs;
 - efficiency funding from the electric utility System Benefit Charge;
 - alternative compliance payments generated through the Renewable Portfolio Standard; and
 - the Massachusetts Renewable Energy Trust Fund.
- For additional details of the program see: www.mass.gov/energy/greencommunities

Joanne reviewed and commented on the 5 requirements to qualify as a green community (see "Green Communities Final Qualification Criteria PDF - July 10, 2009.") under "Green Communities Programs & Technical Assistance" on the " .. /greencommunities" website.

1. Provide for the as-of-right siting ..
 - Waltham, due to its industrial capacity, may already have some of these provisions in commercial or R&D zoning
2. Adopt an expedited application and permitting process ..
3. Establish an energy use baseline inventory .. and put in place a comprehensive program designed to reduce this baseline ..
 - Utilities will manage programs to help communities do audits and will provide programs to implement changes.
4. Purchase .. fuel-efficient vehicles for municipal use ..

5. Require all new residential construction .. to minimize .. life-cycle cost .. by utilizing energy efficiency, water conservation and other renewable or alternative energy technologies.
 - (Stretch Codes)
 - Training is available: Free for inspectors. Contractors, builders, etc pay for meals & training materials.

Discussion:

Joanne mentioned that she has recently met with a Waltham Committee including Ralph Gaudet (Superintendent of Buildings, City of Waltham) and others from various Waltham city departments. She pointed out that Waltham's Green Communities efforts should be coordinated to include representatives from City departments and citizens.

- Discussion brought out the need for Waltham citizen interest in order for the City to take action and the fact that this Energy Action Committee is made up, mostly, of Waltham citizens. WEAC should consider promotion of citizen interest and joining Waltham's Department efforts as a citizen representative.

Energy fairs and Earth day were suggested as venues for rallying citizen interest.

National Grid, Corporations in Waltham, and the two Universities were mentioned as possible sources for WEAC funding.

Andy mentioned that because we're just beginning there could be a long time before we're ready, and asked: if there a way to fast track to the audit stage? Guy pointed out that one community that had simply paid for an audit still hadn't taken action. Joanne said that there are programs to assist in getting a community started.

Joanne said that there is \$1800 remaining of Clean Energy Choice funds still available, but the deadline for application for those funds was the next day (Fri., 15-Jan.). One valid use of those funds is Education Outreach. Kathy suggested WEAC could use the money to print fliers which might be distributed with water bills.

The "betterment" concept was discussed in which a community (town or city) makes funds available for property upgrades that reduce energy use and/or waste and raise the tax base of that property.

Joanne mentioned that her organization has a list serve. She said to go to the Green Communities web site and the link is there. She also said that she is considering setting up "get-togethers" among WEAC type committees.

This completed the discussion. We thanked Joanne for a very informative presentation and discussion.

Due to time constraints Pat suggested we move straight to Other open issues on the agenda.

Other open issues:

Elections:

- Secretary: Leo Keightley was nominated for Secretary. The nomination was seconded and there was a unanimous vote in favor.
- Vice Chair: Kathy Randel was nominated for Vice Chair. The nomination was seconded and there was a unanimous vote in favor.

Next Steps / Action Items:

Try to apply for the \$1800 Clean Energy Choice funds.

- Pat said she will contact the Mayor about signing the application.
- Eileen will talk to other City colleagues about how WEAC can "have" money.
- Rick will download and fill out the application.

Pat said she will also discuss with the Mayor the letter introducing WEAC to other City departments.

Pat asked if members can participate in working sessions between WEAC meetings in order to get various committee documents drafted. It was decided to do this on the 4th Monday of the next few months.

The next Committee Meeting is February 11, 2010.

The committee adjourned at 9:15PM.