

Waltham Energy Action Committee

Thursday 7pm, November 11, 2014

Public Meeting Room, Government Center, 119 School St.

Minutes

Members Present:

Kathy Randel, Eileen Zubrowski, Melissa Downes, Jim Mniece, Amy Gortler, Jacob Miller, Grace Babula, Beth MacBlane

Others Present:

Bob Ferrone

Jillian Dimedio (Jillian works at the MA Dept of Energy Resources and lives in Waltham)

Jessica Balacios

Leo Keightley

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

Welcome

We introduced ourselves for the new visitor, Jillian.

September and October Minutes – Kathy

Sep: Some edits were discussed. Minutes were approved unanimously with certain edits.

Oct: Minutes were approved unanimously.

Nominating/Voting for Secretary and Vice-chair – Kathy

Kathy asked for volunteers for either, or a combined post. There were no volunteers. Melissa and Kathy will continue as co-chairs and Amy will continue to work with minutes but not as the official secretary. This was voted on and approved unanimously.

Communications Subcommittee Update - Beth

Beth is working on revising the WEAC brochure.

Grants and Planning Subcommittee Update – Jacob and Jim

- Jacob said there have been a couple of meetings. The initial goal was to determine what sort of grants Waltham should target. Eventually they decided Waltham needs an overall energy plan. They reviewed various cities' and regions' plans and decided to first come up with broad structure for a plan and discuss that with the City government (mayor or council) as an initial dialog.
- Jim noted that the plans reviewed are very complex. Possibly we need to hire somebody to work on a plan, or possibly there could be some projects proposed that are relatively easy to do.
- Discussion:
 - Bob said that one big “hole” is in Waltham is there is nothing like a “sustainability” office, so there should be a push for such an office. Also, possibly we could work with some other Waltham groups (like the Land Trust) to push for this office.

- Melissa suggested combining projects of short to long payback into packages so people don't go simply for those with short term payback.
- Jillian: Energy Service Companies (ESCO) actually do this. Consider sharing a sustainability office with another community(ies)
- Kathy suggested the Planning Office's Open Space Plan can now be used as a reference or model for ongoing project proposals. Consider making the “plan” a community project with a popular base (eg: Community Sustainability Plan).
- Eileen also said we need a large base of support to get progress on getting a plan (or position) accepted.
- Kathy: “Sustainability” is the common thread for a popular base. There was general agreement on this.
- Eileen asked what is goal behind which we are trying to build a coalition. Kathy said it is a “Strategic (sustainability) Plan” and there seemed to be consensus. Eileen asked how much impact a plan would have without an office (like Planning) behind it. Jillian said endorsement by Mayor or Council would add clout to a plan.
- Eileen asked how to get clout for the plan. Some responses:
 - Get popular groups to endorse
 - Have people in popular base contact councilors and Mayor.
- Jim: Plan could be smaller and simply list a few easily accomplished projects
- Jacob: The plan with coalition could be larger. WEAC would only add plan elements dealing with energy.

Kathy: Next Steps:

- Amy: Start contacting some of the popular base (groups)
 - It was suggested we should research groups before we contact them.
 - Kathy asked volunteers for doing research. There were several volunteers for various groups and interest areas to be researched. Kathy made list of names of researchers and topics. Results to be brought to the next meeting.

Other Issues as Requested - Kathy

none

Closing

Next Meeting – Thursday, December 11, 2014, 7pm-9pm -

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The committee adjourned at 9:00 PM.