

**TOWN OF SOUTHINGTON
ENERGY COMMITTEE
Organizational Meeting
February 6, 2008**

An organizational meeting of the Energy Committee of the Town of Southington was held on February 6, 2008 at 7:30 pm in the Town Council Chambers of the Southington Town Hall at 75 Main Street, Southington, Connecticut. The meeting was called to order by Councilman David Zoni, Chairperson.

Roll Call

Mr. Vachon, Ms. Nevelos, Councilman DePaola, Ms. Vocke, Mr. Cocuzza, and Councilman Zoni, Chair.

Councilman David Zoni, assuming the Chair:

Introduction of Members

For this initial meeting, the Chair welcomed those present and asked each to offer a personal introduction. Members cited specific business, town government and personal interests in clean and renewable energy, and a snapshot of their past community involvement.

Chairman's Opening Remarks

The Chair explained that the committee is new; there is no specific mandate from the Council and the members of the committee will be responsible regarding direction, goals, recommendations to the Council and will take an active leadership role in the promotion of clean, renewable energy in the Town of Southington.

Overview of the 20% by 2010 Campaign

The Town of Southington has signed on to a statewide campaign for municipalities and individuals called 20% by 2010. The goal is to replace 20% use of fossil fuels with renewable, clean resources by the year 2010 in the public and private sector.

Councilman Zoni, Chair, gave those present a packet of information and an oral overview of the hand outs. In addition to the information about the 20% by 2010 Campaign, contact numbers and addresses of members are included to facilitate interaction. The Chair spoke of Councillink, an internet resource for sharing information with leaders in other communities. Zoni also introduced the LEEDS program, designed to promote and support clean energy systems for public buildings. Ms. Vocke has been

attending LEEDS meetings and made a report on their activities.

Councilman DePaola commented that Southington has always insisted on the latest technology in new construction and he understands that South End School is contemplating utilizing geothermal energy. Discussion.

Presentation by Committee Member Vocke

Ms. Vocke presented a video presentation prepared by the Town of Portland, funded by a grant, dramatizing the pressing necessity for public education and attention to the clean energy issue.

Discussion

There was a discussion following the presentation. One goal of 20/2010 is to enlist individual households and businesses, as well as municipalities, to sign on for clean energy options. Mr. Cocuzza had questions about successfully presenting to the public a plan that will initially be more expensive, especially when many are struggling to pay now. A long interactive discussion followed. The Chair indicated that he would provide an expert speaker who could answer specific questions, at the next meeting.

Mr. Vachon reported having attended a recent meeting where the deregulated electrical energy situation in Connecticut was explained at length. Discussion. He will provide the paperwork on this to committee members for perusal. He also discussed energy audits available to CL&P customers; the process, the financial benefits and shared his positive experience.

Ms. Vocke explained the process of choosing a supplier when a CL&P customer signs up for clean energy.

Councilman DePaola commented that it would be a good idea for municipalities to approach State Representatives regarding what type of incentives are available as a reward for the town's ample participation in 20/2010.

Ms. Vocke adds that there needs to be more incentive for participation and that citizens and businesses should be made aware of them.

The Chair reports that he understands that towns can offer a property tax rebate on hybrid vehicles. The town would probably be obliged to pick up the resulting loss in revenue. The Town Attorney is investigating.

A discussion about the town's use of energy, including public buildings, water board, the schools and sewer facility brought out the necessity to include Fred Cox, facilities manager for the Southington Schools. Chairman Zoni said he would contact Cox to speak, since any successful townwide participation in 20/2010 would certainly require that the school buildings be on board. Councilman Zoni will also check with the Town Manager regarding other energy possibilities, including use of available audits for energy conservation and dollar savings.

Mission Statement Development

The Chair discussed the development of a Mission Statement for the Energy Committee, and perhaps a resolution and/or ordinance. It was decided to select a subcommittee to formulate a first rough draft, to be presented and discussed at the next meeting. Ms. Vocke, Mr. Vachon and Councilman Zoni agreed to accept this challenge.

Discussion/Comments

General discussion of future goals encompassed the use of existing access to the public—the town website and public TV. The production of a video presentation was discussed, to promote public awareness of the 20/2010 challenge and the intrinsic value of using clean, renewable energy. Conservation would provide immediate financial rewards while investment in renewable resources will offer environmental returns for the future.

Ms. Vocke announced a seminar on energy grant opportunities called **Other People's Money** to be held on February 19, in the event that another committee member is able to attend.

Adjournment

Adjournment was called for by Councilman DePaolo, seconded by Mr. Vachon at 8:45pm. Unanimously affirmative by voice vote.

Councilman David Zoni, Chair
Energy Committee