

TOWN OF SOUTHINGTON
ENERGY COMMITTEE
Regular Meeting
April 20, 2009

The regular meeting of the Energy Committee of the Town of Southington was held on April 20, 2009 in the Town Council Chambers at the Town Hall, 75 Main Street, Southington, CT. The meeting was called to order at 7:02 PM by Councilman David Zoni Chairman.

I.) Roll Call

Present at roll call: Chairman David Zoni, Councilman Nicholas DePaola, Sharon Vocke, Jerry Belanger, Fred Rogers, Anthony Tranquillo and Fred Cox. Dennis Vachon arrived a few minutes late.

II.) Approve of March 16th Minutes

Councilman DePaola made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 16, 2009 meeting. Ms. Vocke seconded his motion and it passed on a voice vote.

III.) Energy Committee Communications

Patrice Gillespie, a member of the Connecticut Sierra Club, spoke to the Committee about various opportunities to secure grant money and available programs to fund community projects in the area of energy conservation. She is working presently in the Ridgefield and Wilton area but she did comment on the City of Norwich and their program. She also discussed stimulus money and the potential uses of it and the limitations imposed. The CT Clean Energy Fund, the Climate Protection Program, the US Mayor's Program and ICLEI were discussed at some length. ICLEI, initials for a long title indicating an environmental focus group, was identified as a particularly helpful source for keeping abreast of grant/funding opportunities. Ms. Gillespie referred to a study which could be engaged to grade the community's greenhouse gas inventory. She took questions from the panel. Mr. Cox spoke about Southington's initiative to retrofit school buses to diminish harmful emissions through a grant program. There was some discussion about idling of vehicles and apparently there have been some signs posted in town reminding drivers of this state statute. Councilman DePaola commented that Southington has a truck stop and that makes the idling of motor vehicles a prominent local issue. It is apparent that there are many grant opportunities in this field and perhaps it would be worthwhile to participate in a program, perhaps ICLEI, since the fee is minimal and potential rewards advantageous.

There was some discussion about a plan to implement some of the programs. Councilman DePaola suggested that the state should lead on green initiatives and that it would be a good idea to start some pilot community programs funded by the state. Ms. Vocke indicated that there are some presently in place, with incentives, one of them being the 20% by 2010 program, in which Southington is participating.

IV.) Issues for Discussion and Review

a.) Update on 20% by 2010 Campaign

1.) Discussion of Comprehensive Energy Plan

Chairman Zoni presented a plan that has been set up in West Hartford. He suggested that it be used as a model to be customized for a long range energy plan in Southington. Ms. Vocke noted that West Hartford's initiatives are progressive and worthy of review and emulation. It is distributed to members of the Committee, with a goal of developing a similar, sustainable green plan. This was discussed at some length. Ms. Vocke feels that time of the essence especially in light of the stimulus money distribution.

2.) Community Innovation Grant Program

Ms. Vocke and Mr. Belanger participated in an on-line seminar presented on this. Chairman Zoni has the paperwork necessary to apply for this grant. Basic requirements have been established. Ms. Vocke explained that the grant is for a total of \$2000, with reapplication for additional funds available. The grant request will be forwarded on to the Town Manager's office for his review and signature.

3.) **New Wave Renewable Energy Program**

Chairman Zoni introduced some information on this program. Mr. Tranquillo will review the information and report.

b.) Public Building and Facilities Energy Conservation Issues

1.) Facilities/Site Energy Guidelines/Energy Savings Report

Chairman Zoni spoke about the excellent results from the efforts of Mr. Cox in the school facilities and his guidelines initiative. The chairman would like to set a goal for progress toward similar energy cost savings in the municipal facilities. Since the town buildings are used for individual purposes, each presents a unique challenge and must be addressed independently. Mr. Tranquillo presented a report on the energy audit done by Gary Lane of DBS Energy. He recommended that DBS appear at the next meeting to present the findings in detail. DBS has a lot of experience in municipal and board of education applications. Some information on present costs has been provided as a base for discussion and the report discusses proposals to committee members. Lighting is a big aspect, a solar photo-voltaic proposal is included and projected cash flow information. The federal stimulus could provide some funds toward this program and attractive financing arrangements are offered, along with figures for projected energy savings. Mr. Tranquillo discussed second phase and long range ideas, which will require more investment from the town. Mr. Vachon noted that savings increase substantially as energy costs rise. This program includes the administration, monitoring and verification of the plan. Chairman Zoni questioned if this service needs to go out to bid. Mr. Tranquillo will ask the Town Attorney, Mark Sciota. Councilman DePaola pointed out that this is an individual plan designed for Southington and DBS is a specialized service.

2.) Status of Energy Audits

Mr. Belanger presented his energy efficiency report for review.

c.) EPA Energy Challenge Program Update

1.) Benchmarking Data

A professor at Eastern Connecticut University has offered help in completing the EPA's complicated benchmarking program form. Ms. Vocke noted that most challenging was ascertaining and isolating current energy use data, so that the savings can be correctly tracked.

2.) Renewable Energy on Brownfield sites

Chairman Zoni announced a presentation on this, on Wednesday. There will be information about placing renewable energy innovations on brownfield sites.

d.) KVAR/Capacitance Device Update

Chairman Zoni has received information from another company marketing the same type of device as KVAR has presented. He forwarded the information to Mr. Tranquillo. He suggested that it would probably be a good idea to authorize a pilot project as a demonstration. KVAR has offered this without charge. Mr. Tranquillo says it is not a simple situation. Each motor must be individually analyzed. Mr. Rogers reports that most of the pumps at the water department are relatively new and fairly energy efficient. Motors at the treatment plant would require a major investment and it is not practical financially to consider them right now. When they need to be replaced energy efficiency will be a major consideration. It was suggested that when Gary Lane makes his presentation, it can be discussed what would be an optimal test site for KVAR. Mr. Cox suggests that KVAR be invited to select a piece of equipment that they feel would best demonstrate the savings they project and could guarantee.

e.) Rescue a Buck

(1) Vending machines in the town and school buildings should be Energy Star compliant: Mr. Cox reports that school facility machines are not Energy Star rated. The current vendor contract is expiring soon. They have not agreed to update the equipment since the volume doesn't warrant the investment. They did offer to shut down the lighting in all units since it is on 24/7 and that should provide an energy savings. They also discussed a device that monitors use of the machine and it will cut consumption of energy during down times. There are no ice cream or candy machines and the soda machines have been taken out. Mr. Cox

will discuss the Energy Star issue with the Business Manager. Mr. Tranquillo will check energy status and contracts on the machines in town buildings.

(2) Capacitance issue: Chairman Zoni did visit the recommended web site in the Suggestion and found that the information was comparable to KVAR. Mr. Tranquillo has been given this information for review and exploration.

(3) Lighting at the Dog Park: The Park and Recreation Department has explored this and found that there were some lights on at night. They have been placed on a timer. There are two lights that are on telephone poles nearby and who owns them is not clear. Mr. Tranquillo is researching this.

V.) Public Communications

None

VI.) Miscellaneous Business

Mr. Rogers reported that the night lighting at the Water Company has been addressed. Chairman Zoni says that he has so noted.

Mr. Tranquillo is looking forward to Gary Lane's presentation and expects that the Energy Committee will be prepared to take an official vote on moving forward with the program at that time. Replacement windows for the Town Hall were discussed.

Mr. Cox reports that the updating of lighting in the school facilities to save energy continues. Lighting fixtures are being changed, motion sensors are being installed and during vacation week the central office fixtures were updated. There are a couple of schools to finish up and then the entire district will be completed. Mr. Cox reported a thank you note received from a Town Councilman.

Chairman Zoni said that someone spoke about "lighting shields." Shields have nothing to do with saving energy, they are strictly for shielding surrounding areas from the night lights.

Ms. Vocke asked what the general feeling of the Committee was on signing up for any of the conservation groups discussed by Patrice Gillespie, particularly ICLEI. Chairman Zoni felt that he would like to have an opportunity to check the various web sites and verify the fees involved. This issue will be on the agenda at the next meeting.

VII.) Adjourn

Mr. Vachon made a motion to adjourn at 8:25PM, seconded by Councilman DePaola. The motion passed on a voice vote.

Councilman David Zoni
Chairman
Energy Committee
Town of Southington