

TOWN OF SOUTHTON
ENERGY COMMITTEE
Regular Meeting
September 21, 2009

The regular meeting of the Energy Committee of the Town of Southington was held on September 21, 2009 in the Town Council Chambers of the town hall, 75 Main Street, Southington, CT. The meeting was called to order at 7:07PM by Councilman David Zoni, Chairman.

I.) Roll Call

Present at roll call: Councilman David Zoni, Chairman, Sharon Vocke, Dennis Vachon, Jerry Belanger, Fred Cox and Town Engineer Tony Tranquillo. A quorum is determined.

II.) Approve of June 15, 2009 Minutes

Dennis Vachon made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 15, 2009 meeting as presented. The motion was seconded by Jerry Belanger and passed on a voice vote.

III.) Energy Committee Communications

a.) Presentation by Mr. Joseph Ventura from Positive Energy Electrical Supply

Mr. Ventura made a complete presentation of services offered by Positive Energy Electrical Supply, available due to the deregulated electricity market. He explained the billing details and the intricate system of delivery. He compared Positive's rates with those of CL&P and his company's relationship with CL&P. He brought with him detailed visual information distributed to all committee members. There were some questions from the panel. Mr. Vachon had some questions about rates. Town Engineer Tranquillo asked if his company served other municipalities and Mr. Ventura supplied him with them. Mr. Tranquillo anticipates an upcoming bid on electricity for Southington. There was a robust question and answer period. Mr. Cox discussed the Board of Education's present consortium purchasing plan which includes some 60 Board of Educations, soon up for review and rebid. Cox will share this information with the business manager. There was some discussion about a municipality consortium and the financial advantages of that. Mr. Ventura stated that he wished to compete for the town's business, but if the town decided to go elsewhere he would be available to consult.

IV.) Issues for Discussion and Review

a.) Update on 20% by 2010 Campaign

1. Discussion of Comprehensive Energy Plan

Chairman Zoni announced that this committee has been awarded a \$2000 grant. Ms. Vocke discussed the plan to use this money. The request was for the Sustainable Southington Group to purchase logo t-shirts, banners and tote bags to promote signups

for the clean energy option. The remainder of the funds were to be used for an event scheduled for October 24. That event has been cancelled since the money has not yet arrived. A logo has been designed for this project. The committee had hoped to have a presence at the Apple Harvest to educate people about signing up for clean energy. The understanding is that after the first \$2000 grant has been spent and reported upon, another \$2000 will become available. There was a discussion about producing a video on clean energy for Southington.

2.)Community Innovation Grant Program

One of the original goals for the 2010 Campaign in Southington was to develop a Comprehensive Energy Plan. Such a plan instituted in West Hartford has been reviewed at some length. West Hartford has offered their plan as a pattern for Southington. Chairman Zoni asked if anyone on the panel was familiar with anyone on the committee. Ms. Vocke did acknowledge that she had a working acquaintance with a few. Zoni wondered if one of them could come and speak. Vocke suggested that the committee review and discuss the West Hartford plan in detail.

Ms. Vocke reviewed the three steps toward the 2010 goals in order to complete the program and earn the free renewable system. Southington has accomplished the Join the 20% Campaign. The second is a commitment to the EPA Community Energy Challenge and the third is to sign up electricity customers for clean energy. She believes that the benchmarking that is needed is being worked up. The second is that it is necessary to interview representatives from Sterling, Planet and Community Energy—the clean energy options. She believes that Sterling or Community offers incentives that will help the town pay for the 20% clean energy source component when purchasing energy.

Mr. Tranquillo suggested that the town could become its own aggregator (or middleman). He explained and there was an interactive discussion about this option. It was noted that the town, the BOE and the residents who wished to participate would be a huge buying block and could command a substantial discount. Mr. Tranquillo noted that there would be a substantial amount of bookkeeping involved and therefore a cost, which would have to be factored in.

Chairman Zoni pointed out that Southington is doing a lot to conserve energy but buying it right would offer additional substantial savings.

Ms. Vocke asked about the mission of this group in regard to the town's participation in the 2010 Campaign. She wonders if the main objective is to save money or whether the use of more clean energy is important in the mix. Chairman Zoni explained that the goal is to achieve both goals. He felt that the 20% by 2010 Campaign was meant to involve the entire community and the town could benefit from the personal participation. He explained that to be environmentally conscious and move forward, the town should also be buying more renewable energy. However, cost savings is a big factor as the town spends taxpayer funds. She

reports that 128 households have signed up for a clean energy program providing 146 out of 400 points needed to meet this criteria. They discussed getting this message out to the residents. Vocke stated that Southington has made a commitment to do this. There was a discussion about the percentage of clean energy that is being used by the town now. Mr. Cox said that he would find out if clean energy is part of the Board of Education's purchasing plan.

Mr. Belanger pointed out that it must be considered that if these three goals are met, the town will be awarded some type of renewable energy system and that must be taken into consideration when assessing bottom line cost.

Town Engineer Tony Tranquillo states that plans call for a Photo Voltaic roof on the firehouse, so the town is moving in the direction of renewable energy.

b.) Public Building and Facilities Energy Conservation Issues

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

Chairman Zoni asked Mr. Tranquillo where the town is now, working with DBS on cost saving energy measures for the town facilities.

2.) Status of Energy Audits

Mr. Tranquillo reports that DBS is working with the federal government to secure approval for funding for re-lamping of the town hall, highway garage, library and fire station. This includes new lamps, motion sensors and the PV system at the firehouse will generate electricity, the excess will be fed back to the grid. DBS should soon retrofit the buildings and Southington will begin to realize the savings. There is also some discussion about retrofitting variable drive motors at the sewer treatment plant. There are great savings to gain there, reportedly. The data is being collected now. The motors will be changed and updated.

3.) Update on DBS Recommendations

Chairman Zoni reported that he and the town engineer have met with the KVAR people since the last meeting. DBS brought in a consultant on this. They believe that there is something to it on older motors, but a new high efficiency new motor is the way to go. There was some discussion about this technology. Mr. Tranquillo reported on the quest for a motor that would provide a good test on the KVAR box. It was difficult since it would be catastrophic if there was a problem at the sewer plant because the penalty for a violation there is \$20,000 a day. A test situation remains elusive on motors at the town hall.

Site energy guidelines at town facilities were discussed. Mr. Cox reported that with the return to school, the best practices program has been reinstated and stressed to

staff. DBS is completing Derynosky School. All facilities are now complete. The lighting levels are greater and less power is being used.

Guidelines have been distributed to all town facilities. Mr. Tranquillo expects savings to be realized and tracked. He explained that an energy audit is extensive and expensive. This was discussed and perhaps a consultant should be considered.

Mr. Vachon outlined an energy audit done at his place of work. Mr. Tranquillo shared that he did an audit on the Annex Building. He did a kilowatt per square foot, BTU per square foot and dollars per square foot, with a result of anticipated saving of \$10,000 on that building, if it were modernized.

An audit was discussed at some length. Mr. Vachon explained what is available and the time that it takes to set up a plan. This would be something DBS would be paid for.

Ms. Vocke noted that the speaker scheduled for the October meeting has a lot of information on auditing and the value of same.

c.) EPA Energy Challenge Program Update

1.) Benchmarking Data

Emilia is working on getting this together. Mr. Tranquillo will follow up.

2.) Renewable Energy on Brownfield sites

Last month this was discussed. It would be a very expensive project to capture energy from the landfill.

d.) KVAR Capacitance Device Update

At this point the committee agreed that there is little or no value of pursuing this technology at this time.

e.) Rescue-A-Buck Energy Suggestions

Chairman Zoni reports one new suggestion. It has to do with saving fuel on buses. Idling of buses was discussed. Zoni did pull the state statute for review of the committee. It is noted that any savings from buses would be for the bus company not the town. Mr. Cox reported on idling rules at the schools. Vents drawing fresh air into the building on rooftops at the schools are an issue. New signs are being posted to alert all vehicles waiting at schools to limit idling according to state statute. This is part of the emissions grant the town accepted. Mr. Tranquillo reported that the Town Attorney, Mark Sciota did put together a no idling policy for the town about 4-5 months ago. There is no idling for town vehicles more than 3 minutes. This policy is health-related.

Vending machines were discussed. They should be energy compliant. The school facilities contacted their vendor who

refused to change them, but they agreed to "de-lamp" them during the summer. As new contracts are written, no machines will be accepted unless they are energy star compliant.

Lighting issues around town were discussed. The new park at wellhead 1A on Mill St was noted to be very bright. Mr. Tranquillo said that he would check on that.

Lighting in other towns was discussed. Mr. Tranquillo explained this. In Southington the lights are 200' to 300' apart. He feels that people do want the lighting for safety. Lighting distances are Council policy.

f.) Federal Energy Grant Review
Mr. Tranquillo will update this.

V.) Public Communications

Art Cyr 103 Berlin Ave. He offers to go with Chairman Zoni to tour the town and assess lighting on any Friday or Saturday night.

He comments on the solar panels at Abbey Park. He suggests that some publicity be solicited on these.

South End School looks very nice. He wonders about adding solar that that. Mr. Cox answered that the chases are in place. That location is textbook for solar panels. This has been discussed with DBS.

He also spoke about brown field sites, in particular Old Turnpike Road. He thinks that a solar field or a wind farm would be great there. Mr. Tranquillo said this needed to be investigated because there are EPA restrictions on what can be done at that landfill. Anything that jeopardizes health and safety or the integrity of that cap would not be allowed.

VI.) Miscellaneous Business

Mr. Cox spoke about clean energy and 20 by 2010. He suggests that Mr. Florian's solar panels be noted on the 2010 Campaign report. Ms. Vocke states that this can be counted as residential renewable energy. He also wonders if this committee is planning to put something in the town budget in the realm of renewable energy in the near future. He notes South End Elementary School or the solar farm that Art Cyr speaks about on Old Turnpike Rd. There is no money available at this time, it is true, but he feels that if the committee waits until money becomes available it may be too late. This committee should be prepared to present a "shovel ready" project for the upcoming budget season. A line item will be placed on the next agenda for discussion and vote. Mr. Vachon suggests that although it is too late to put solar in the South End school project, there is nothing to prevent the town from funding it.

John Barry, Chairman of the Town Council spoke from the floor. He discussed the South End School project with Mr. Cox. This project may come in beneath budget and he feels that if that is true, there may well be funds that the Council could earmark to add the solar panels. He also encouraged this committee to submit a line item for the next budget for renewable energy. Mr. Cox reported that CL&P contacted him several weeks ago and made him aware of some rebates for LED lighting and he will get the rebate on the South End project. Mr. Barry wonders why only South End is on the table. Plantsville is also in the mix but it is not as perfect. Mr. Barry wondered why not both. He notes that the chases are in place in Plantsville as well. Ms. Vocke spoke about a solar roof program that can be secured for no up front money. She is qualified to speak on this. Mr. Cox states that Southington is nowhere near the goal and 2010 is near. Chairman Zoni feels that the state could provide some guidance and incentive funding.

VII.) Adjourn

Mr. Vachon made a motion to adjourn at 8:45PM. His motion was seconded by Mr. Cox. All were in favor of adjournment.

David Zoni
Chairman
Energy Committee
Town of Southington