

Minutes

Easton Energy & Environment Task Force

Regular meeting, Wednesday, October 16, 2019

Town Hall Conference Room A, 7:30 p.m.

Attending: Cathy Alfandre, Heidi Armster, Katie Callahan, Lise Fluette, Bobby Morganti, Deidre Williams, and JBHS liaison, Zac Shortt

Guests: Dana Ceva, Abbie Winter, Joan Winter

Minutes:

Motion to approve: Katie; second: Heidi. All approved minutes.

New Task Force members: (Cathy)

Cathy announced that Lise Fluette and Deidre Williams had both been officially appointed to the Task Force. EEETF is back to a full membership of 6 members.

Solar project update: (Cathy, Bobby)

Update from Tim Sadler, Encon: Solar system construction is complete, inspected and approved. Not yet live: waiting for UI to give the official go-ahead to Green Bank to energize. Expected timing: end of October.

Re: plantings on site: the investment group will seed the solar array area with pollinator-friendly plantings.

Data reporting: Cathy and Bobby met with the Board of Ed's Central Office and were given access to the missing data needed to create spreadsheets to track the system performance, energy demand, and cost savings. Bobby shared with the group his recent analysis of the newly compiled data:

- Current average savings is about \$4000/month.
- Average monthly bill with UI is about \$10,000
- Data shows seasonal variation in production; may also allow us to more easily identify problems with the system
- Model can be used for solar phase 2 and other future energy projects
- Some data missing for period when the system had data communication issues.
- There is also a continuing equipment issue leading to some under-production that the Green Bank is working on fixing.
- Data will show whether phase 1 and 2 together will produce enough to cover 100% of current demand at SSES. If not, we will have a target for additional energy efficiency measures that would enable us to get closer to the 100% goal.

Cathy reached out to Kim to schedule an event celebrating the new system; Kim responded with Dec 2 and 3 as the only possible dates.

Easton Community Center reached out for information on doing solar at the ECC; Cathy will follow up; might coordinate ECC/HKMS projects due to proximity.

Recycling: (Katie, Deidre)

- Katie hasn't heard back from Oak Ridge
- Take 2: recycling for Easton seniors to be planned around Earth Day; details tbd.

- Joan offered to pursue mattress recycling as part of this effort if a need exists; might survey seniors and/or work with another town.
- Deidre added that contamination is the biggest issue for recycling, and glass appears to be a major part of that (less use for it, cleanliness). At a conference she learned other CT towns have had success w/ contamination; suggested the TF look into this for ideas to adopt; She will follow up and report next month.

EV charging station:

Katie reported that Ed Nagy and his crew fixed the charging stations and they are working again.

Cathy reported on Green Lots: systems available to install and record usage data from the charging stations. Expense of this deemed too high to pursue.

Quick updates:

6.1 HKMS energy efficiency: Cathy circled back to UI regarding efficiency incentives; our new engineer sent a chart showing a 25% (\$9,000) incentive on prior cost estimate of \$36,000 for work on the building management system. Payback is short: 1.5 years; need to re-examine cost at current rates; Lise offered to look into grant opportunities and report next month.

6.2 Pollinator Pathways: Cathy reported there will be an event in December. More info to come.

6.3 Community awareness items: Discussed events and information we can post to Instagram; will look into sharing posting responsibility on social media; suggested using facebook to increase outreach.

6.4 Sustainable Fairfield: Abbie and Cathy attended the last meeting, which focused on food waste; Westport is starting a composting initiative at one of the schools; seems fairly complicated, requiring many volunteers and several months to implement.

Zac reported that the composting at Barlow is current and successful; raw foods, veggies, no meat, no cooked food; several raised beds for locally produced food. He is one of 2 members of the composting club, with one other senior; they are working to find more members to join. Cathy will send him info on other towns' initiatives.

Heidi motioned to add Priorities for 2020 to the agenda; Katie seconded. All approved.

Priorities for 2020: Discussion and ideas generated

1. Overall goal to place Easton on the map as a green town that supports solar power, energy efficiency and environmental sustainability.
2. Have smaller teams within the TF reach out to various town groups/divisions such as parks and rec, public works, ag commission, local farms, senior center and local real estate agents; keeping discussion a regular flow between the TF and local groups.
 - a. Questions to ask local groups: how we can help them with environmentally friendly choices, what needs to get done, how can we improve the green branding of Easton
3. Bobby: "franchising" solar to other buildings; "topgrading" improvements
4. Lise: increase communication of initiatives to increase awareness within the town, liaison to town residents for information
5. Deidre: set a composting goal that can be increased over time
6. Abbie: start initial exploration of electric school busses and signal interest to the market
7. Explore use of VW settlement funds (must be used for emissions abatement)

Brainstorming and discussion to continue at next month's meeting.

Katie motioned to adjourn the meeting; Heidi seconded. Cathy adjourned the meeting at 9:25.

Respectfully submitted,
Heidi Armster, Secretary, EEETF
Wednesday, October 23, 2019