

Minutes

Easton Energy & Environment Task Force

Regular meeting, Wednesday, May 20, 2020

Remote meeting via zoom, 7:30 p.m.

Present: Cathy Alfandre, Heidi Armster, Katie Callahan, Lise Fleurette, Robert Morganti, Deirdre Williams

Also present on the zoom call: Abbie Winter, Joan Winter, Ed Nagy

Guest: Joe Sardone via phone

Cathy convened the meeting at 7:35

(Joe was not available at 7:30, so the meeting began with updates)

Solar update:

- Cathy reported that the inverter replacement is still awaiting UI approval (Easton paperwork has been submitted)
- She presented data to the TF showing Phase I and Phase II performance
- A power outage caused a brief dip in expected Phase II generation

Bobby shared his screen with solar performance broken out into various important data points, some of which were:

1. Cost to The Green Bank (lessor for Phase I) and Skyview (lessor for Phase II)
2. Year-over-year performance
3. Cost savings on a monthly basis
4. Electric bill on a monthly basis

The team discussed the data with questions about overall savings to the town. Cathy and Bobby are working on getting some questions resolved, especially because data during the Covid 19 shutdown is not clear.

HKMS update:

Scott Reiss updated Cathy on process to potentially upgrade the Building Management System at HKMS:

1. There was a vendor walk-through at HKMS on April 16th; three vendors looked at the system; one submitted a proposal by April 29th
2. Estimate for work to be done from the 2015 audit was - at that time - around \$36,000

3. Current estimate/proposal for work: \$185,000 (from ESC); cost increase is because they will have to convert to an entirely new system, resulting in more work than previously thought
4. Scott Reiss has stated it would need to be financially neutral; has asked ESC to talk with UI and return to Easton with possible solutions

Ed Nagy weighed in on the estimate, citing that the new BMS for SSES had cost roughly \$450,000; his concern is whether or not the \$185,000 would give us enough of a system/savings to justify the cost

Courier submissions:

Dana has an article on green spring cleaning that is drafted and ready to submit in the next few days

Discussion with Joe Sardone:

Joe gave a brief overview of his history with Oak Ridge and who they were, when bought and who they serve (NY and parts of CT)

Joe presented a wealth of information for the TF, including the following:

1. Education of the public is key to the success of recycling's future; he identified the biggest issues they are currently struggling with and why
 - a. Single stream contains too many items that are highly contaminated
 - b. Countries such as China have now closed their ports and banned our shipments of recycled materials due to gross contamination (in other countries shipments can be refused at the port if contamination is found, and the cost to return is very high for the shipper)
 - c. Educating kids is the best way to educate parents on best practices of recycling
2. Top issues are contamination and safety in plant:
 - a. Moisture (wet paper/cardboard is no good); open bins or items left to the side are often wet; includes water but also juice, soda, etc.
 - b. Diapers
 - c. Needles, a safety issue for workers at the plant
 - d. Propane tanks used in camp stoves - another safety issue
 - e. Garden hoses and packing peanuts that get stuck in the machinery at the plant
 - f. Plastic bags (not recyclable with curbside) and glass
 - g. bricks/concrete (not recyclable)
3. Best way to make the home-owner aware is to reject the bin/use photos to send to town and/or call DEEP
4. End-market issues include: the loss of a market for PET plastics (used in carpeting and clothing); due to COVID there has been no demand for it and price has dropped dramatically
5. Some items are still working out well: detergent and milk bottles can be used to make black pipes

Major take-away: Focus on education, recycling is too important not to do properly. Garbage incineration is not a good solution because there are only two trash-to-energy plants in CT, and one is very old.

Electric School Bus Toolkit update:

Abbie updated the team with information about the 6 module program and what was learned:

1. Easton is not yet a good candidate
2. Looking into working with/for Danbury or Bridgeport for now; eventually electric school busses should be able to expand across the state

Recycling:

- Katie hasn't heard back from Kristen about our questions to the Simple Recycling program
- Take 2 is looking for a new date for the electronic recycling event; we will coordinate with Easton Police when they reschedule the Prescription Drug Take-Back.

Motion to adjourn: Heidi; second: Bobby.

Cathy adjourned the meeting at 9:30.

Respectfully submitted,
Heidi Armster, Secretary
Friday, June 12, 2020