

Renewable Energy and Sustainability Committee - Town of Yarmouth

Meeting Minutes

Date: January 9, 2018

Present:

Committee
Members

Heather Abbot
Toby Ahrens
Scott Sheriff
David Ertz
Lianne Mitchell
Paul Fistich (late)

Town Council
Members

April Humphrey
Richard Plourde

Town
Employees

Nat Tupper
Steve Johnson

Public

Marge Titcomb
Alison Truesdale

Votes & Decisions:

- Minutes from previous meeting: Approved (5-0 with Paul's vote missing).

Commitments Made:

- Mission and vision statement: Heather will clarify open meetings rules through Nat and then figure out process-wise how to proceed
- Heather will reach out to Julie Rosenbach (South Portland Sustainability Director) to ask about Town commitments if Yarmouth were to sign on to the Municipal Energy Priorities as well as addition detail on the specific priorities.
- David will double check with Kimberly on door prizes for Energy Fair and Falmouth's thoughts about the Municipal Energy Priorities
- Signs for Energy Fair: David will get the signs (15 double sided) and Toby will help put them out. Target is to get them out a week early.
- Energy audit: Toby will follow up with Steve Johnson to get an electronic copy of the most recent audit
- Toby will reach out to both school committee and public safety to ask about opportunities for to be part of the conversation on energy efficiency considerations in the new bond commitments.
- Website: Everyone should look at website and make suggestions
- Paul will reach out to Bob for Water Dept to see if he can join at a future meeting (March?)

Meeting Notes:

Steve Johnson (Town Engineer, Yarmouth), Marge Titcomb, and Alison Truesdale provided updates on previous energy efficiency efforts in Yarmouth.

- Marge and Alison speaking on behalf of the former Yarmouth Energy Savers effort (2008-2015):

- o Marge: One-pager on accomplishments submitted to Town Council was reviewed. Details on 'weatherization of 6 Yarmouth homes' was discussed - YCAN funds were used for home repairs to enable qualification for federal subsidies for additional energy efficiency upgrades. This was intended to be a demo project. These federal funds may still be available.
 - o The Climate Action Plan was intended to be updated each year but it appears that it has not happened.
- Steve provided an overview of other energy efficiency efforts including the performance contracting with Honeywell. Savings were guaranteed each year and an audit revealed an even greater savings were realized.
 - o Q: Solar panel on public works garage and school - how much energy do they produce?
 - A: School was a demo project and education tool, not intended to be major energy producer. Public works garage produces 24,000 kWh which goes back to the grid, does not power the public works garage directly. Details of billing were not known and may be worth looking into in the future.
 - o Q: Could we find out what overall energy use of town is?
 - A: Marge: YES used to get this once and year and they tracked it. Shouldn't be hard for us to get. The bill may flow through Honeywell and could look a bit different than CMP.
- There was a discussion on power purchase agreements: A third party (e.g. Revision) installs the panels for free, enter purchase agreement with town, town pays the third party (e.g. Revision) for energy they are using but at 1 cent below standard rate, and often there is a provision at year 12 to continue contract or the town can pay the balance on solar panels and get the energy for free.
 - o 30% fed tax credit: Towns can't accept it but companies (such as Revision) can and then passes along savings to town.
 - o Tax credits are getting phased out over time, half way through 5 years and phase out has started. The sooner the better for solar...
 - o Energy efficiency in newly approved buildings:
 - Public safety: no details have been discussed. Building committee could specify energy goals (zero energy, etc). Brent Williams (Deputy Fire Dept) could be a good contact.
 - Schools: no details have been discussed, still early in the process.
 - Toby agreed to follow up with both groups to find out how we can be part of the conversation.
- Water district and transportation were big energy users but outside the purview of YES
 - o Steve: Wastewater district: energy efficiency upgrades are happening (pumps, dewatering, aerator motors, etc). New screw presses were delivered last week and hope to be running by early summer.

- There was a suggestion for a policy that whenever there are town capital expenditures, energy efficiency should be considered
- YES was active in many community events with things as simple as signage encouraging drivers not to idle. YES also did a community presentation at the high school auditorium, it was run well, YCAN came out of this
- A question was asked about building codes and Steve responded that he is not responsible for codes, but he thought that the National building code was adopted recently.
- There was a discussion around electric buses including the possibility of a grant program through VW settlement (Windham took advantage of this, and apparently Nat Tupper was aware and passed along info to the school committee). Yarmouth buys a new bus each year (15 buses, one new one added each year). This could be a topic for discussion with the school department, and there was also a request to find out additional detail on bus route decision.
- Student involvement in YES: 3 high school students made the original proposal to the town council that led to YES. Historically the Town Council has been very responsive to kids being involved. YES also had kids serve on the committee. We could consider reaching out to a YHS club in the future.
- Q: Methane recovery from landfill?
 - o Steve thought it may not have the volume required and the cap may not be appropriate, but the answer is no, has not been looked at. Could be good site for solar farm. YES also looked at methane but it was quickly rejected due to size, but the solar option was exciting.
- There was additional discussion around solar opportunities:
 - o Private homeowners can do performance contracts – solar panels, neighbors can help fund, etc.
 - o Town owns pole yard on Sligo that might be considered for solar
 - o Solar at transfer station: 3-phase may be an issue

Mission and Vision Statement: We should have one but maybe not best use of time to do it here. Perhaps a subgroup could discuss prior to next meeting? We need to be mindful of meetings of 3 or more offline for transparency reasons.

Municipal Energy Priorities:

- We reviewed the specific priorities but agreed that we didn't have enough information to make a recommendation (to the Town Council) to participate at this point.
- Heather will reach out to Julie Rosenbach (South Portland Sustainability Director) to ask about Town commitments if Yarmouth were to sign on to the Municipal Energy Priorities as well as addition detail on the specific priorities.
- There was a brief review for the Town Council process

Upcoming events:

- Freeport meeting Feb 11: David has details
- Energy fair: Sat Jan 26: We need to make sure this committee is represented there.
 - o Door prizes - Kimberly has the list of Yarmouth companies and will reach out to them (David will double check with her).
 - o We should get signs out a week early. David will get signs, Toby will help put them up.

Website: We should take a look at what is there and how it can be improved. There was a suggestion to have an inquiry/suggestion form. Mission and Vision statement should be up there too. There was also a discussion around how to disseminate information - Facebook pages, Town Hall, other social media platforms.

Future potential invites to our meeting (but sit on these for now until we get through next meeting with input from other towns):

- School dept
- Water department
- YCAN
- High school students