

WCEI Task Force Draft

Minutes of meeting held Tuesday, December 16, 2008.

Meeting called to order by Chairman Gorham at 7:45pm.

Attendees: Chairman Jon Gorham, Jason Morrill, Sheri Cifaldi-Morrill, Dawn Kopel, Yugi Zhang, Alex Bell, Sharon de Kadt, Dr. Jim Sabshin, and Sandy Stein

Review of Minutes

Minutes of the October 21, 2008 meeting were presented and approved.

Welcome

Chairman Gorham opened the meeting with a letter from 350.org regarding the CO parts per million debate.

Ms. Bogush was introduced as Administrative Assistant for WCEI Task Force.

Brief discussion took place regarding the incoming Presidential Administration and its potential impact on local funding.

Amity Regional High School Update

Ms. Zhang reported on recent events at the high school. The three towns agreed to pool together their sign ups in order to secure an array for the roof of the high school (33 sign ups from Woodbridge, 33 each from Bethany and Orange). This is the first-ever tri-town collaboration and both the school principal and Bob Wall (CT Clean Energy Fund) are pleased. Ms. Zhang and Mr. Bell explained potential locations for the array. Ms. Stein asked who gave approval from each of the towns and discussion on the implications of combining sign ups took place. Chairman Gorham addressed the concern and explained the history of the tri-town agreement, noting time pressure and the uncertainty of future funding. Chairman Gorham added the agreement was reached with Mike Okrent from Bethany and Ron Novick from Orange. In the spirit of cooperation, the WCEI decided as a committee to pool extra sign ups with Orange and Bethany before 12/31/08 and prior to funding disappearing or a change in the rules requiring more sign ups to earn an array.

Discussion turned to opportunities for integrating the panel into the high school science curriculum.

Brainstorm – Marketing Efforts for CT Clean Energy Options Sign Ups

Brainstorming marketing efforts took place. Ideas included:

- Doing an inventory of every renewable energy installation in town
- Using the goal phrase “10% by 2010”, i.e. there are 3,300 households in Woodbridge, therefore we’d like to get 330 homes signed up
- Exploring installation of solar arrays on either the new or existing fire buildings (Chairman Gorham will contact Dwight Rowland, Co-chair of the New Fire Building Committee
- Holding a second tri-town contest
- Using potluck dinners
- Mapping green households
- Securing an additional grant for marketing efforts

- “Energy Teas” similar to those in Fairfield, CT where participants take a pledge
- Creating a committee of children, tie into contest
- Working with the Fire Marshal to incorporate conservation in his presentations to students
- Utilizing online information/lessons for teachers
- Children could demonstrate ways they conserve in their own homes
- Providing information at the town’s recycling center

Beecher Road School

Chairman Gorham explained the BRS “Go Green” program and the two committees formed -- one for the retrofitting efforts and one for integration of the Department of Energy information into the curriculum. He is on both committees. Ms. Stein suggested the focus of the 6th grade video-making project could be green energy in which students highlight a project completed in their houses. The videos could be shared with their China counterparts and DVDs could be sent home. Discussion took place on involving Ms. Cifaldi-Morrill’s Conservation Quest exhibit as a kick off. Ms. Cifaldi-Morrill updated the task force on the exhibit at Stepping Stones Museum, noting they are very committed to working with teachers. There are curriculum links with CT and NY content standards built into the exhibit. Ms. Kopel noted there is signage at the Yale renovation explaining how materials are being cleared and recycled; suggesting such signage be used during the BRS renovation/retrofit.

Chairman Gorham explained that BRS has won 3 kilowatts. The town has agreed to fund \$9,000 to increase this to 5 kilowatts which is generally what an energy efficient house in Woodbridge can operate with totally on solar. He further explained that two RFP’s would go out.

Discussion turned to what should be the goal(s) of the WCEI Task Force. Chairman Gorham noted every photovoltaic installed generates money for the town. Task Force members questioned if state funding for future photovoltaic cells is in question, should the goal turn from sign ups to educating the town (residents and government) to be more energy efficient. Every house that “goes green” is an ecological and economic victory. Woodbridge could be one of the green-est in the state.

Brainstorming of goals and meeting them followed and included:

- Working with Woodbridge Human Services and providing a Green Team to tighten up houses for energy savings, possible use of the current grant balance
- Turning the Massaro farm buildings into model energy retrofits
- Using a thermometer to show visually the increasing number of sign ups
- Providing informative talks (a synagogue, the Republican Committee, and Moms of Multiples have all expressed interest)

Discussion took place on how many inspections can be done monthly as well as training more Green Team members.

Those present were asked to send any ideas to Chairman Gorham.

Speaker Series

Chairman Gorham reported on the Green for the Holidays presentation done by Mr. Morrill and Ms. Cifaldi-Morrill. It was videotaped and the Task Force will ask Ms. Ford to run it on Channel 79 during the holiday season. Uploading meetings with Google was discussed.

Upcoming topics for presentations may include:

- January: House Warming (Chairman Gorham)
- Wind
- Solar PV
- Recycling
- Energy Policy
- Food-Energy
- Green Renovating and Decorating

Talks will be held at the library and will run every other month. Ideas for getting the word out were shared and included involving the high school. Chairman Gorham asked for more ideas to be sent to him via email.

Massaro Farm

Mr. Morrill updated the Task Force on work done on the property, including brush clearing done by the town. He reported the property is secured and well protected for the winter. The farm will file for 501(c)3 status in January.

Other Business

Budget and marketing ideas are needed. Ms. Stein suggested taking ideas for the top three focus options and putting them in the form of a plan on which the Task Force can vote. It was also noted that other people are welcome to join the Task Force.

Mr. Morrill thanked Ms. Stein for raising the issue of lighting at the fire department. Ms. Stein and Dr. Sabshin explained the lights would be on timers within two weeks. The BOS will keep track of the situation. Ms. de Kadt noted if the lights in back are excessive they can cause changes in the ecosystem of the wetlands.

A celebration may be planned after the holidays.

The next meeting date is January 27th at 7:30 p.m. at the Town Hall.

Meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Aimee Cotton Bogush
Administrative Assistant, WCEI Task Force