

TOWN OF BEDFORD
March 24, 2016
ENERGY COMMISSION MINUTES

ROLL CALL: A meeting of the Bedford Energy Commission was held on Thursday, March 24, 2016 at the Bedford Meeting Room, 10 Meetinghouse Road. Present: Rob Grogan (Chairman), Shana Potvin (Vice Chairman), Jim Aguiar (Town Council Alternate), Christine Donati, Bill Foote, Andrew Gillis, Matthew Pitaro, and Kevin Flynn

Chairman Grogan called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and introduced the new and returning commission members.

Town Projects:

a. Status of Library HVAC:

Chairman Grogan stated some of us had the opportunity to attend the groundbreaking ceremony for the Town library geothermal system. They have dug close to 10 or more of the 20 wells, and they hope to be done within a few weeks. After that they will then install the replacement systems within the library. We are very excited to see the benefit it brings to the Town. Through very strong effort by Jim Stanford of the Public Works Department they were able to obtain close to \$400,000 in grants to help fund the system. This was a remarkable commitment by both the DPW and the Town Council that will help save taxpayer dollars.

b. Tax Exemption Status for Solar:

Chairman Grogan stated the Town Council considered how to proceed on the tax exemption status for solar by a 3 – 2 vote at the last Town Council meeting. It was decided to exempt the value of solar systems from the value of the house. The current direction will stay in place for 2016, and in 2017 a solar system will become tax neutral. Councilor Aguiar stated I can clarify this at a future meeting.

c. Net metering cap updates:

Chairman Grogan stated the Legislature is still working on HB 1116. I understand that the House passed the bill as amended on March 10, 2016, which raised the cap to 100 megawatts. The bill then goes onto Senate committee and hopefully will be passed within a couple of weeks.

d. Transfer Station Recycling #s:

Chairman Grogan stated as you can see from the report, recycling from February 2016 is the second highest number we have had for single stream recycling at 17.62 percent, about the same as February of last year. We are hopeful that this trend will continue.

Branding / Marketing and Town Website / Facebook Page Updates:

Vice Chairman Potvin stated I continue to post things to these sites. There really is a lot of great information out there. Mr. Gillis stated hopefully once the Town's new website

is up and running the Energy Commission will find a good spot that is more visible than it is on the current site.

Portfolio Manager:

Chairman Grogan stated the EPA has an app that they provide for free to communities to allow them to record their energy usage from various usage meters to assist in creating a historical view of buildings and how they are performing. It also allows for the characteristics of a building and the climate and allows in preparation for future building in the community. The issue today is that there is no automated feed and all of the information has to be put in manually, although EverSource is working on an automated feed. I tried testing some uploads and it is very simple. Maybe we could start with the library as a test case, and if we like the results, we can try to expand elsewhere in Town. My hope is to get volunteers to help put the historical data on there, with the possibility of using students to get involved.

School Projects:

a. School / PTG Outreach / Student Reps:

Chairman Grogan stated last fall I reached out to science classes at the high school and there seemed to be some interest. Hopefully we will have some students joining us as liaisons. I will follow up on that and report back at a future meeting.

HAREI Partnership & Events:

a. Planned Energy Raisers:

Mr. Gillis stated this partnership is a nonprofit club that helps people who would like to have a solar system installed on their home. They assist with consulting, installation of panels, and they try to buy panels in bulk about twice a year to help with the cost. At this time they are starting to collect projects for this spring.

Bedford Green Business of the Month:

No discussion.

2016 Focus Areas:

Chairman Grogan stated I sent out to you a list of ideas that maybe we could start or follow up on in 2016.

Chairman Grogan stated one of those things was the possibility of putting up solar panels at the landfill. It is a shame to let that area go to waste. We could easily get 1 to 1.5 megawatt capability up there, and they would not be seen from any of the residents in the area. Mr. Gillis stated the Town of Goffstown has refit most of its buildings with wood pellet heat and they are looking to do a large scale solar project. We could follow how Goffstown does this and see if it works for them. Chairman Grogan stated the town of Lowell has lined their landfill with solar. There are more hurdles to be worked through on this, but the idea was that the power would be used for all the Town buildings and could generate all but about 10 percent of that. I am going to do some

follow up on what grants may be available to cover the cost of the evaluation for this project.

Chairman Grogan stated another item that surfaced in the past year was maybe looking at schools for installing solar panels. There was something mentioned about possibly incorporating engineering studies when a school is scheduled for roof work. Mr. Gillis stated the schools are not so big that they would require 3-phase power, so that is something that may work in the future.

Vice Chairman Potvin stated in the past we talked about putting a large sign inside the transfer station to show where solid waste and recycling goes. A few years ago my Destination Imagination team made a sign sample but nothing was ever done. I would like to rejuvenate this again, and I could speak to Mr. Stanford at DPW to see if this is a sign the Town could actually make. Mr. Gillis stated it might be a good thing to maybe have the students make the sign. There is also a program that America the Beautiful runs where students in grades 1 – 12 compete in a recycling competition across the nation, either through each school, the entire school district, etc. The competition runs for three weeks and the timeline for registering is August 3rd. This is something the school principals would have to sign onto. The program will give signage, sample press releases, posters, etc. If we are interested, I think we should start talking to the schools about it now. Mr. Foote stated we should probably go through the School Board. I will talk to them and get back to the Commission at a future meeting.

Mr. Pitaro stated I recently attended an event where Ray Dube from Coca Cola explained myths about recycling. He brought examples of recycling and explained where single stream recycle goes. He has not had the opportunity to speak inside our schools, but I would be willing to work at getting him here. Vice Chairman Potvin stated we could record his presentation and play it on BCTV as well for the entire community to see. Mr. Pitaro stated some of his points were very interesting, and I think we would benefit from what he has to say.

Mr. Gillis stated we have conferences we go to and one that I went to recently showed how some schools are monitoring energy use through certain energy meters. I got information on the models of these meters. They can be installed on something as simple as an air conditioner. Maybe we could collect the information in one area of the Town, like the library, and see how that works. These meters cost \$50 each, and it seems like we could do the whole Town for a few thousand dollars, although we would have to prove it is a viable thing and figure out how much it would cost. I will start the legwork on this and get back to the Commission at a future meeting.

Vice Chairman Potvin suggested maybe having students man the recycling area of the transfer station for a period of time, maybe over the course of each Saturday for a month, to assist residents with recycling and inform them about what can be recycled that they might be just throwing into the trash. This could possibly be done in conjunction with the sign mentioned earlier. Mr. Gillis stated we could maybe have this pushed through multiple channels and compare data from before and after this effort.

The Commission discussed delving back into the replacement of Styrofoam trays at the schools. Mr. Gillis noted that the school system uses 500,000 Styrofoam trays a year and they all go into the trash and onto the landfill. Vice Chairman Potvin will forward to the members the report the Commission received in the past and they will move forward from there.

Old Business: None

Approval of Minutes: None

New Business:

Chairman Grogan stated we will open for discussion for appointing of officers at our next meeting.

Adjournment:

MOTION by Mr. Foote to adjourn at 8:00 p.m. Mr. Flynn duly seconded the motion. Vote taken - all in favor. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted by
Valerie J. Emmons