

Island Energy Plan Committee
Wednesday, March 10, 2010
Town Hall, Old Town Road
12:00 noon

Present: Chair Peter Baute, Ken Lacoste, Barbara MacMullan, Kevin Hoyt, Neil Lang and Scott Comings. Committee member Russell Littlefield was absent. Also present were Town Planner Jane Weidman, Town Council member Kim Gaffett, Sam Bird, Bill Penn and for the recording of minutes, Deputy Town Clerk Millie McGinnes.

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Baute at 12:00 p.m.

Approval of January 21, 2010 Minutes

The minutes were reviewed. No motions were made.

Welcome New Members

Dr. Baute welcomed new member Scott Comings.

Review Committee's Charge

Dr. Baute reviewed the charge as follows:

1. Establish an Energy Component to the Town of New Shoreham's Comprehensive Plan.
2. Consider, evaluate and recommend to the Town Council a prioritized series of interventions and programs which would allow Block Island to become more sustainable with regard to energy uses.

What Should be Included in the "Island Energy Plan?"

Jane Weidman reviewed a draft outline of an Energy Plan (attached), the finalized plan to be included in the Comprehensive Plan. The following items were highlighted and/or brainstormed:

- All energy usage (oil, propane, gasoline, water usage, etc.) should be included and evaluated.
- A baseline of overall energy consumption should be established. Mr. Hoyt will come up with some ideas of how to collect that data.
- Fluctuations between summer and winter energy usage needs to be considered and evaluated, as well as differences between residential and commercial usage.
- Three scenarios must be considered: 1) connection to the mainland with a two-way cable (buying and selling) installed in conjunction with the Deepwater Wind project; 2) connection to the mainland with a one way cable (buying only); 3) no cable, with local power generation.
- Regarding the alternative energy sources list:
 - wave generation is not commercially available and should be removed
 - geothermal and co-generation should be added
 - a statement regarding evaluating and supporting future opportunities should be included

- Only the most efficient models of each alternative energy system should be allowed to be installed. Not all were in agreement.
- An energy audit program could be provided by the Town to residents to improve energy conservation and efficiency. Fixed and lower income households should be targeted.
- A policy for larger scale WECS needs to be developed.
- Tax exemptions could be used as an incentive for the installation of alternative energy projects.
- Massachusetts offers “Stretch Codes” which their Town’s can adopt. Stretch Codes are building codes which provide more stringent energy efficiency requirements. Something similar could be considered.
- The Town’s building maintenance must be improved, which could impact energy efficiency.
- Savings from Town alternative energy projects should be deposited into a fund to support future alternative energy projects.
- Existing legislation should be examined to confirm whether existing Block Island exemptions should continue or be eliminated (ex. net metering, emissions, etc.).
- There are a lot of empty heated/powered homes that sit dormant most of the year.

Portions of the draft plan were assigned to Committee members for each to collect pertinent information regarding the assigned sections:

- Ms. MacMullan – Electric power generation and distribution
- Dr. Baute – Use of alternative energy; smaller WECS and solar installations & Municipal efforts at conservation and use of alternative energy
- Mr. Comings – Deepwater Wind proposal and corresponding cable
- Ms. Weidman – Role of the state & local building and zoning regulations relating to energy use (work with Mr. Lang)
- Mr. Lang – Building codes and designs & local building and zoning regulations relating to energy use (work with Ms. Weidman)
- Mr. Lacoste – Transportation
- Mr. Bird – LEED requirements
- Mr. Hoyt – Collection of information regarding local energy consumption

It was noted that information, as it is collected will be forward to the Clerk for compilation.

Potential Specific Implementations

This item was included in the previous discussion.

American Recovery Act

Dr. Baute reported that grants under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act have been submitted through the Washington County Regional Planning Council.

Set Meeting Schedule

The Committee members agreed to hold regular meetings on the second Wednesday of the month at 12:00 noon.

Following brief discussion, the Committee decided to ask the Council to appoint John Warfel as a member.

With no further business to discuss, Ms. MacMullan made a motion to adjourn at 1:38 p.m. The motion was seconded by Mr. Comings and carried unanimously.

Millie McGinnes
Deputy Town Clerk

Approved: April 14, 2010