



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION

Chairman Licht A. Licht, Director
One Capitol Hill
Providence, RI 02908-5890

Office: (401) 222-2280
Fax: (401) 222-6436

RHODE ISLAND RENEWABLE ENERGY COORDINATING BOARD
Established pursuant to RI Public Law 2011 Chapter 222 and Chapter 306

March 6, 2012
9:30 – 10:30 a.m.
Department of Administration, Conference Room A

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

WELCOME (Chairman A. Licht)

Members in attendance: Ronald Renaud, Chairman Licht, Janet Coit, Grover Fugate, Julian Dash

Others in attendance:

Bill Ferguson – The Energy Council of RI
Chris Kearns – Governor’s Office
Ken Payne – Systems Aesthetics
Barry Wenskowicz – Narragansett Bay Commission
Amy Kullenberg – Conservation Law Foundation
Bob Chew – RChew Energy Solutions
Karina Lutz – People’s Power and Light
Hannah Morini – EDC
Paul Gonzalez – Division of Planning
Tim Faulkner – ECO RI
Seth Handy – Handy Law LLC.
Liberty Goodwin – Klinkman Solar Design

All members present voted to approve the November 15, 2011 minutes.

ADVISORY COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS

A proposed list of Advisory Council members was provided to the members for consideration.
All members voted to approve the list of Advisory Council members.

PRESENTATION BY THE RENEWABLE ENERGY SITING PARTNERSHIP

The RESP Team provided an overview of the work-to-date. The Team included:

Teresa Crean – URI Sea Grant
Jennifer McCann – Director, URI Sea Grant
Marion Gold – Director, URI Energy Center
Danny Musher - URI Energy Center
Rachel Sholly - URI Energy Center

The Team strongly requested that the state take a leadership role regarding energy issues now. Marion Gold suggested that energy programs should be implemented by the University similar to the Land Grant program did for agriculture more than one hundred years ago. Ms. Gold highlighted a number of initiatives that have been included in the RESP including but not limited to:

- The Opportunities Report for energy efficiency
- Creating an Opportunities Report for renewable energy
- Opportunities for onshore-hydro, wind, solar, etc.
- Working with municipalities now and there is great potential to do more
- Establishing an energy data base, modeled after World Bank
- North Providence, Warwick, East Greenwich, South Kingstown have become showcase models for the country

Director Coit noted that the energy database is an important decision support tool that could be supported by the state. Ms. Crean agreed and discussed the monthly stakeholder meetings that bring everyone together. The RESP Team has been holding the stakeholder meetings as library lectures where 80-100 individuals are at the meetings. Jennifer McCann highlighted how the work products of the RESP are realistic and useful for municipalities, the state and developers.

Ms. Crean discussed how the Division of State Planning guidelines could be coordinated with RESP. There was a request for state leadership to make sure this coordination happens. URI does not advocate for specific positions but provides information and tools to help decision makers. Julian Dash asked if there had been specific outreach to small businesses and the five urban districts? Ms. Crean said that they had not been specifically targeted. Mr. Muscher discussed some of the highlights of landfill solar developments, Brownfield sites and partnering with DEM to identify hydropower opportunities where dam liabilities exist. The Power Point provided greater detail. RESP and DEM are providing great information to help maneuver through the permitting process regarding hydropower.

Marion announced that on March 31st Roger Williams University is hosting an Energy Policy Summit and invited Board members to attend.

Chairman Licht asked how much public funding had been granted to the RESP initiative? Approximately \$1.2 million in federal Stimulus funding, federal State Energy Program funding and support from the Renewable Energy Fund. This initiative has received national recognition for its collaborative model and decision-making tools. Director Coit asked if there are additional federal funds that can be applied for? Chairman Licht requested that once the RESP website is completed, it would be beneficial to have the URI Energy Center staff back to go through the website with the Board.

Jennifer McCann said that there needs to be a home for the RESP once it has been completed. While DEM, CRMC, and Statewide Planning have been involved in some capacity with energy related issues, this program should be housed in OER. The OER needs to be properly staffed and provided with the capacity to lead these types of energy initiatives.

Ronald Renaud from OER requested that the URI Energy Center provide a brief document on what level of funding and assistance would be needed to continue these types of programs. It was requested that a budget number be provided by the URI Energy Center.

Chairman Licht noted that the Board needs factual information about renewable energy, to debate issues that might be brought up. He referenced the wind turbine siting guidelines legislation that was introduced during the 2011 legislative session, which would have banned wind turbines in Rhode Island. Teresea Crean said that the RESP needs a home within state government. If RESP doesn't get support at the state level, then this program will fail.

Chairman Licht suggested that a small group be convened within state government and review the document regarding funding needs for these types of projects. A meeting will be scheduled once DOA receives the document from URI Energy Center.

A request was made by Chairman Licht for an electronic copy of the URI RESP presentation. URI staff will provide an electronic copy.

REVIEW/ADOPT REVISED DRAFT STRATEGIC RENEWABLE ENERGY IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Chairman Licht motioned to have the Advisory Council review the 2012 implementation plan and provide suggestions/edits to the document, and then submit it to the RECB for review/approval.

Before that could be voted on, Grover Fugate wanted to provide comments about the plan and an announcement that was made by the Department of Energy. Grover mentioned that he provided edits to the plan to Kelly Mahoney at DOA. Those comments will be forwarded to the Advisory Council by Kelly.

The Board voted to refer the Plan to the Advisory Council for further input. The Board requested that the Council give recommendations to the Board at the next meeting.

Grover mentioned that the Department of Energy recently announced a 160 million dollar grant opportunity for offshore wind energy projects. The CRMC will be submitting a letter of intent to apply for funding by the March 31st deadline.

Chairman Licht asked what the funding could be used for. Grover said that the funding could potentially be used for both research and development, but also capitol costs for demonstration projects, such as the Block Island wind farm project.

Grover said that Senator Reed recently spoke with Secretary Salazar in regards to pushing forward with the Department of Interior issue leases for the Area of Mutual Interest for offshore wind projects before the end of 2012.

Chairman Licht said that if there is anything that the Board could do, to please let them know. Chairman Licht suggested possible letters of support from the Governor or a possible Senate or House resolution indicating support for this grant application.

DISCUSSION REGARDING ANNUAL REPORT

Director Coit suggested a couple of ideas about the 2012 strategic energy plan, including more information in the strategic plan about the RESP studies, and to have a quick turnaround for this document be approved by the Board.

Chairman Licht requested that the revised plan be sent to the Advisory Council within the next week and have this plan approved by the Board in April. Chairman Licht recommended that this plan be completed within the next 30 days.

Director Coit made a motion to have the revised strategic plan sent to the Advisory Council for review and comments. Motion was approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Liberty Goodwin discussed innovative solar designs, beside the traditional solar projects that are presented to the Board. Liberty distributed information to the Board members and the public that were in attendance about the technology.

ADJOURN

Meeting adjourned at 10:47 a.m.