

Distributed Generation Board Meeting

Monday, May 16, 2016

4:00-5:00pm

West Broadway Neighborhood Association – 1560 Westminster St, Providence, RI 02909

Board members present: Sue AnderBois, Sheila Dormody, Kari Lang, Kenneth Payne, and Bill Ferguson

Others present: Chris Kearns, Angela Tuoni, Becca Trietch, Shauna Beland

Call to Order: Chairman Kenneth Payne called the meeting to order at 4:05pm.

1. Approval of Meeting Minutes and Announcement

Ken Payne motioned to approve the minutes from the prior meeting. The motion was seconded and the minutes were approved.

2. West Broadway Neighborhood Association (WBNA) gave a presentation about their solar initiative. Please see the PowerPoint uploaded to the Secretary of State's website.

- a. Kenneth Payne asked if other municipalities were supporting solar development like WBNA. Shauna Beland replied that WBNA is unique in its approach although Solarize is now working with its 12th municipality.
- b. Kenneth Payne and Sheila Dormody noted the importance of neighborhood based activity to spur residential solar installations.
- c. Shauna Beland will provide the Board with a breakdown on what programs solar installations are using: National Grid's Renewable Energy Growth (REG) Program or Commerce RI's Renewable Energy Fund (REF).
- d. Sheila Dormody asked how long Solarize campaigns run. Shauna Beland explained that Solarize is planned as a 14 week program, but it can be extended for specific reasons. However, extensions are usually avoided as they reduce the sense of urgency that often encourages more homeowners to sign solar contracts.

3. Review of the Board's Work Plan/Timeline. Please see the Work Plan document uploaded to the Secretary of State's website.

- a. Chris Kearns gave a brief overview of the document
- b. Sue AnderBois asked how the timeline for proposed article amendments to exempt renewable energy projects from taxes and/or standardize taxes lined up with the Work Plan document. Chris Kearns summarized the status of the Office of Energy Resources' (OER's) work regarding these article amendments. He informed the Board that OER has been working with various stakeholders such as the League of Cities and Towns in this

process. OER will be looking to lower residential ceiling prices and, on the commercial side, to design commercial ceiling prices without property taxes by Nov 30th. OER will also be working on Rules and Regulations that will specify exactly how renewable energy taxes will be put together. All of this work will commence if the article amendments are passed in June.

- c. Sheila Dormody asked if an electronic version of this document had been emailed to Board members. Chris Kearns assured her it had and reminded the Board that he would like comments by May 20th
- d. Kenneth Payne suggested that this document be posted somewhere public so that people can see what topics are coming up for discussion. Chris Kearns said he would post it to the Secretary of State's website.

4. National Grid provided an update on their SolarWise program

- a. As of 5/16/2016, there were 35 registrants on National Grid's online database and 2 customers who were moving forward. The company did a soft launch on April 4, 2016 using RISE auditors to test the materials and measures. During the soft launch, National Grid realized that there were issues with saving outcomes. For example, customers with lower than average use and high lighting upgrades could yield high savings that would cause negative usage. This is an illogical outcome that National Grid is working to correct.
- b. Sue AnderBois asked for further clarification: how exactly was the example provided illogical? And does the situation mean that the energy savings reporting from the Energy Efficiency programs need to be adjusted?
 - i. National Grid responded that the savings reports do not need to be adjusted for the other Energy Efficiency programs. This is a unique problem to the SolarWise program. National Grid also promised to respond further with more details via email. RISE Engineering, National Grid's vendor, is currently changing how they are reporting savings to customers in order to fix the SolarWise issue. National Grid assured the Board that these changes will not affect anything that the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) has approved for the Energy Efficiency programs. RISE will be testing these new reporting mechanisms on June 4, 2016. June 21, 2016 is scheduled to be the next SolarWise program launch. Until June 21, 2016 the program is on hold. National Grid recommends that National Grid customers interested in the SolarWise program wait until after June 21, 2016 to begin the process.
- c. Bill asked for clarification as to why residential customers taking advantage of National Grid's programs can't oversize their solar systems? Chris Kearns explained that because participating customers are taxed on their PBIs (Performance-Based Incentives), it was determined that residential homes should be limited to their home's average historic usage. This was likely a good thing since the intent was to encourage renewable energy

while reducing program costs. Currently, National Grid's program for residential solar limits system sizes to 1-25KW or 125% of historic usage. Over 400 projects have been awarded tariffs so far. Ken Payne also added that by limiting system sizes the program was better able to avoid grey areas of zoning laws – it can be challenging to site a commercial sized project in a residential zone.

5. Solar Access Working Group Update from Shauna Beland

- a. Shauna Beland explained that a grant application was submitted on May 2nd by Clean Energy States Alliance (CESA). The grant would partner with five other states including Rhode Island, National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) and Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (LBNL) to create solar programs targeted at specific underserved sectors. She expects to hear back in the end of June/early July if the grant is funded. If awarded, the funding would be used in Rhode Island to design a solar program and support project implementation. The program would be integrated with Residential-PACE as that financing option comes online in the fall.
- b. Shauna Beland also told the board that Commercial-PACE is now online (it launched a couple weeks prior to this meeting). Municipalities are currently working to adopt the necessary resolutions to participate in C-PACE.

6. DG Board website update form Shauna Beland

Shauna Beland requested that a few more head shots and bios be sent to either her or Angela Tuoni. Sue AnderBois also requested that the Work Plan document be posted to the website.

7. Other Business

None

8. Public Comments

None

5. Adjourn

Kenneth Payne motions to adjourn the meeting. 4:58pm meeting adjourned.