

Bedford Energy Task Force
February 11, 2015
Meeting Notes

Members Present: Mark Mullins (Chair), Carrie Sarno, Bob Kalantari, Aubrey Jaffer, Brendan Welch, Amy Lloyd (Planning Board), Margot Fleischman (Selectmen)
Also Present: Facilities Director Taissir Alani

Chair Mullins called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm.

Voted, 4-0-1 to approve the minutes of January 7, 2014 (moved by Fleischman, seconded by Sarno).

Facilities Update

Mr. Alani presented a spreadsheet with data on the Town's energy consumption. Mr. Alani expressed confidence in the data, which for the most part have been collected in-house using School Dude program, and not through the system provided by the utilities. To facilitate comparison, he converted all units into MMBtu for electricity, natural gas, oil, and fuel. He also looked back before the Green Communities base year (2009) to 2007-2008 and normalized all the values. The spreadsheet he presented showed total MMBtus consumed, the usage from year to year, normalized usage, normalized year-to-year, and year over baseline. He thinks we are at 21% reduction if you considered 2007 as the base year. He also presented a set of graphs representing total energy reduction, reduction by building, and total town and school reduction.

Regarding the increasing energy consumption trend at the DPW, Mr. Alani noted that in the future the exterior lights at the DPW will be timed and dimmed. Also, Mr. Alani and DPW Director Sorenson have just inspected the DPW building and are strategizing ways to reduce the energy consumption. One idea they are already considering is installing heat curtains. Identifying the drivers of this trend for the DPW and developing best practices is something that could significantly reduce the overall town energy consumption.

Mr. Alani also presented a list of projects that will be proposed for grant funding from the Green Communities program, including energy efficient lighting, as well as VFDs for the cooling tower for the Police Department. The overall goal is to implement a town-wide Energy Management System over the 3 years (2017-2019), and he has already been looking at several vendors who might be interested in bidding on the project. There has also been a request to Capital Expenditures for retro-commissioning Davis School in 2017.

Mr. Alani reported that he has received samples for the decorative energy efficient lighting for the Town Campus, and installation will happen when the weather permits. Concern over who will choose the lighting was expressed, and Mr. Alani suggested that the Selectmen might be the appropriate decision-makers. Ms. Sarno

noted that there is a White House initiative for energy efficient outdoor lighting. She will forward the information to Mr. Alani.

Mr. Mullins has reached out to a member of the Library Trustees to invite him to a future Energy Task Force meeting to discuss the electrical consumption at the library.

ETF Website

Mr. Jaffer reported that he has looked at the current website, and it is much better than it was a year ago. On the first page, the agendas are up to date. There is good information, but we should have a page that explains what the Green Communities program is, and makes it clear that we have already been designated a Green Community. Links to the residential energy programs are not in good shape. Many links are out of date or broken, and in other places there are no links at all. The link to the Mass Save program is good, but is buried and should be moved up to where people will be able to find. We should also be able to showcase the achievements and the data, perhaps posting some of the energy consumption graphs that Mr. Alani just presented. We should probably keep the links pretty simple, be clearer and avoid jargon and acronyms to make the page more user friendly. Mr. Alani thought that it might be possible for the Facilities Department to provide some staff support for posting changes to the webpage.

Energy Policy

Ms. Sarno noted that while she received a lot of good comments from committee members, her overall impression was that the structure of the policy should be rethought. Ms. Fleischman circulated a draft energy policy to discuss. Her thought was that the policy itself should be more robust and link to guidelines that could be updated periodically.

It was noted that utilities costs have recently been removed from department budgets in the town's budgeting process, but one suggestion might be to create mock billing for energy to help department heads monitor their consumption.

Ms. Fleischman shared some information from a workshop presented at the Massachusetts Municipal Association Annual Meeting by Kate Crosby from the Acton-Boxboro School District. The workshop session described behavior-based energy conservation programs in that school district. The presenter stressed the importance of data, social marketing and changing social norms. When Bedford's new Energy Policy is adopted, there needs to be a better hand-off to and engagement with all stakeholders, and learning from the methods described in this workshop might be one aspect of the ETF's roll-out efforts. Ms. Fleischman offered to share a link to the presentation when she finds it.

Town Construction Guidance

Mr. Alani noted that when we do our own RFPs and RFQs, we already add guidance on energy efficiency. What needs to happen in the future is that language

referencing the Energy Guidelines needs to be included in contracts with designers and architects. Fortunately, most things come to Facilities for procurement, so they can monitor energy efficiency aspects.

New Business

Ms. Lloyd wondered if there is any way that the Town could offer incentives to developers to build highly energy efficient homes. Some towns have been looking at ways to do this through local ordinances. This might be something for the ETF to discuss in the future.

Next Meeting

Wednesday, March 11.

Meeting Adjourned.