



City of Middletown
CLEAN ENERGY TASK FORCE
MINUTES
MEETING OF AUGUST 3, 2022
VIA ZOOM

Members Present: Anna Salo-Markowski (Chair), Christopher Holden (ex officio), Demetrius D'Alessandro, Erin Dopfel, John Giuliano, Vincent Loffredo, Ray Lumpkin, Sara Mendillo, Zoemma Warshafsky, Krishna Winston

Members Absent: Augie deFrance, Patrick McKenna, Catherine Young

Also Present:
Kimberly O'Rourke

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM by Chair Salo-Markowski.

2. Approval of Minutes

The Chair announced that no minutes had been prepared for the June meeting because of the absence of a quorum.

3. Public Comment

The Chair suggested revising the agenda to make it possible for Recycling Coordinator Kimberly O'Rourke to make a presentation in the public comment period. A motion to that effect was proposed by V. Loffredo, seconded by K. Winston, and adopted unanimously.

Ms. O'Rourke reported that she had been following up on the EverSource Community Partnership Initiative for which Michael Harris had applied; participation had been approved by the Common Council at its August meeting. The purpose of the initiative was to increase the number of income-eligible residents—homeowners, renters, and owners of properties with a maximum of four units— participating in EverSource's Home Energy Solutions (HES) program and having heat pumps installed by company-authorized contractors. The funding offered to the City was intended to support outreach efforts, not the actual energy-use audits or installations, for which EverSource had separate incentive funding. This program would run only to the end of December. Ms. O'Rourke said a Web site was being developed as a second iteration of the HeatSmart program, and asked members of the Task Force to suggest ways to reach eligible residents, with a goal of recruiting approximately 120 participants. Members suggested specific social-media outlets; working with the Free Center; and in-person contacts. She noted that PACE would help with the development of social-media materials and that EverSource would be directly involved as well. Mr. Loffredo asked whether Ms. O'Rourke had been in touch with other communities participating in the initiative to get advice; the answer was yes. She added that although the City was joining the partnership late, there might be a follow-up program next year. *She stressed that she would appreciate additional suggestions!*

4. Old Business

A. The 2022 Middletown Energy Plan

The Chair reported that she and K. Winston had continued working on the draft. Ms. Winston noted that she had been hampered in her editing of the text by her lack of technical expertise when it came to deciding on the feasibility of certain elements of the plan and the order in which various measures should be undertaken. The Chair announced that she had an appointment with the Mayor for Friday, Aug. 5, at which she would seek his response to the four-pillar structure proposed by E. Dopfel and ask for his input and ongoing involvement. V. Loffredo stressed the importance of including needed expenditures in the upcoming budget process and establishing the plan's goals legislatively through resolutions or ordinances. The directive to departments to include relevant elements of the plan in their budget projections would come from the Mayor, with the overall goal of increasing energy efficiency and reducing negative climate effects. The Chair expressed her hope that a Energy Coordinator would be hired and would assume responsibility for confirming details and directing implementation of the Plan.

B. Projects

1. Conversion of City's small tools to electric models

Mr. D'Alessandro reported that he and Mr. Holden had not yet met. They agreed to get together in two weeks' time to discuss the conversion.

2. Solarization campaign

Ms. Mendillo said she had learned from J. Pugliese that EverSource did not currently have a project promoting solarization other than for EV charging stations. She would look into the CT Green Bank's initiatives when her duties at the Chamber of Commerce allowed. Mr. Lumpkin reported that EverSource was in fact eager to rent residents' roof space for solar panels and was working with companies such as Trinity Solar and Posigen for the installation. Mr. Loffredo asked why large commercial roofs were not included: were there legislative obstacles? No one knew the answer, so he said he would make further inquiries. Mr. Holden mentioned that site work was now under way for mounting a solar array on the former landfill, a project that would probably take two years.

3. Resilience Planning

Mr. Holden reported that he had had no response from the Building Department. The Chair asked him to inform Michael Trahan that his presentation would not be scheduled at present.

4. Appointment of an Energy Coordinator

Mr. Holden informed the Task Force that a job description was being developed. The Chair asked whether CETF would be consulted on the criteria; Mr. Holden advised her to bring up the matter with the Mayor. Mr. Loffredo noted that the salary grade and job description would have to be put on the Common Council's agenda for approval; CETF would be the appropriate sponsor for this item.

C. Building Committees and Projects

1. The Boat House

In the absence of Mr. deFrance, Mr. Holden reported that the architects had been authorized to complete 40% of the design, which would make possible cost estimates on which further decisions could be based.

2. School Roofs

Mr. Loffredo reported that the purchase of materials for the Farm Hill School roof had been authorized. Mr. Giuliano said the Snow School roof would be patched but not replaced this summer, and no other roofs were currently scheduled.

3. Veterans' Park

Mr. Holden said construction had now started.

4. Middletown Recreation Center

According to Mr. Holden, work was preceding apace, with the opening scheduled for late fall. Battery storage and other energy-efficiency measures were being installed.

5. Former Canoe Club

The structural problems identified when the building was gutted had necessitated bringing in a structural engineer, Mr. Holden said, adding to the expense and further delaying completion.

5. New Business

A. Community Impact Residency

The Chair summarized this Wesleyan year-long course for students who would spend five hours per week working with local entities on projects involving sustainability and/or environmental justice. She asked members of CETF to suggest suitable projects; outlines of proposals would be due in two weeks.

B. Informal Get-together for Members

The chair noted that the year had brought a multitude of challenges and she felt that an opportunity for members to get together informally, exchange ideas, and recommit themselves to the effort would be beneficial. Through a show of hands the members expressed their support for the proposal.

6. Adjournment

There being no more new business, Mr. Loffredo made a motion to adjourn, seconded by K. Winston; the motion carried, and the meeting adjourned at 7:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Krishna Winston
Secretary pro tem