

ENERGY ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

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Town of Somers
WESTCHESTER COUNTY, N.Y.

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HERB ORINGEL
CHAIRMAN



MEETING MINUTES

March 5, 2014

The meeting was called to order at 6:10 p.m. The following members were in attendance: Michael Blum, Rick Warren and Mike Yee.

Town Councilman Richard Clinchy was also present.

The Committee has not formally met since last November as the weather has been inclement on the scheduled meeting nights. In December the meeting was cancelled and teleconference calls were held in January and February. The notes taken at those meetings are attached to these meeting minutes.

Minutes – Mr. Warren made a motion to accept the minutes of the November 6, 2013 meeting as submitted. Mr. Blum seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Becoming a 501(c)(3) Non-Profit Organization – Mr. Blum, Mrs. Harsha and Mr. Oringel are researching the possibility of a sub-committee of the Somers Energy Environment Committee becoming a 501(c)(3) Non-Profit Organization, so that donations and grants can be sought in a more easily fashion. There is a group of attorneys in Westchester that will assist in this effort so that it may be as smooth a transition as possible at no charge. Councilman Clinchy suggested that it might make sense to create a list of projects and the costs involved to move forward in this effort.

April Town Board Presentation – Mr. Yee will be addressing the Town Board at their April meeting to getting a better grasp on the process of, communications relating to and project managers for obtaining grants to complete projects as part of the Somers Sustainability Action Plan. Ideal is for the Town to assign a Grant Coordinator to not only benefit the SEEC, but all Town Departments, Boards and Committees.

Collaborating with the Somers Central School District – Mr. Blum has been working

with Julie Gherardi, Assistant Superintendent for Learning for the Somers Central School District in an effort to get the students involved with projects as set forth in the Somers Sustainability Action Plan. A couple of sessions have been held with staff members, both the National Honor Society and Environmental Club are interested in getting involved. Students will choose the project they would like to work on/complete with the assistance of their teachers. Mr. Blum will create a template of projects suitable for the youngsters. A request has been made for the Somers Energy Environment Committee to provide mentors to the students. All were reminded of the designated sub-committees:

Complete Streets – Chair: Mr. Warren and Mr. Yee
Energize Somers – Chair: Mr. Maricic, Ms. Brodley and Mrs. Vourakis
Sustainability – Chair: Mr. Blum, Mrs. Harsha and Mr. Oringel.

Mr. Zaberto has yet to be assigned to a sub-committee. Mr. Blum asked that all review the projects in the Somers Sustainability Action Plan and be prepared to help these students as needed.

March Town Board Agenda – At their meeting tomorrow evening, the Town Board should be passing a resolution adopting a form of application and permit referred to as the Universal Solar Permit to be used by the Building Department with associated fees to be based on construction costs.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m. The next regular monthly meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 2 at 7:00 p.m. at the Recreation Center in Van Tassell Park.

Respectfully submitted,



Denise Schirmer, Secretary
Somers Energy Environment Committee

cc: Energy Environment Committee
Town Board
Town Clerk

attachments

Minutes from SEEC Conference Call: February 10, 2014

- These notes will be integrated with prior Minutes for approval at our next team meeting on March 5, 2014
- Attendees: Herb, Flo, Jane, Chris, Michael, Stacie
 - Absent: Mike B., Frank, Rick, Richard, Jerry
- Discussion elements:
 - Herb opened the call with an update on conversations with Rick Morrissey about engaging Karen Merritt to discuss Commercial Energize program and Anthony Ciriaco about engaging SCSD re: Expanding Solar in the School Districts. In both cases there was not much progress to report.
 - Due to Mike Blum's absence we were not able to get a detailed update about the SCSD/SEEC collaboration although Herb described the intent and status as far as he knew it. This effort will help advance the SEEC Plan while working with and mentoring some of the "best and brightest" from SCSD. Herb also made the point that we need to develop a "buddy system" on projects so that we are not dependent on any one teammate to make progress. **"Buddies" TBD** based on projects selected.
 - We had a discussion about creating an SEEC NFP Corporation with a longer term goal of achieving "501C3" status from the IRS to enable fund raising. **"Buddies" Mike, Jane and Stacie.**
 - Michael Yee described his investigation about Funds for Municipalities. We have questions that need to be answered about the SEEC's degree of freedom. Herb will set up a meeting with the Town Board to gain some clarity on this and other questions that need to be clarified.
 - Flo described her "Energize Somers" tabling effort at our Library. Thankfully Jane has volunteered to be **Flo's "buddy"** in this effort schedule permitting. Flo to obtain updated Somers data from the Energize team.
 - Herb briefly informed the team about :
 - Fuel Cell Tax Abatement legislation
 - Solarize
 - CCA

SEEC Telecon: 6January14

Attendees: Michael Yee, Mike Blum, Flo Brodley, Frank Maricic, Chris Zaberto, Jerry Robock, Rich Clinchy, Herb Oringel

Chris Zaberto was welcomed, and gave a short rundown on his background as a hazardous-material specialist in NYC, EMS worker and special instructor with the NY police department.

Discussion topics:

SEEC/SCCD- Mike Blum has successfully launched an initiative for Junior Class projects, which will be year-long, in which the students will gain value and SEEC will mentor them. Mike is meeting the teachers/administrators on Jan 7. Mike also announced happily a new arrival in his family.

PACE Law School Grant- Herb reported that PACE received a grant for projects to upgrade CMPs in 3 selected municipalities, of which Somers is one. Elements include:
1. Elevating the Complete Streets resolution to a Town policy and working on biking/pedestrian walkway improvements...including sidewalks.
2. Accelerating the adoption of and installation of renewable energy sourcessolar, wind, hydro...

Solarize Westchester- Herb discussed the impending residential solar program called Solarize which is funded by a NYSERDA Grant and will be directed by Nina Orville of SWEAC. Once launched municipalities will volunteer for inclusion in the first wave and positioning will be decided based on municipality readiness.

Sustainable Westchester is about to be created by merging NWEAC and SWEAC. We await word from the NYS AG. Once launched we will cover more than 1,000,000 people and leverage this scale in implementing projects that deliver value to municipalities, citizens and businesses.

In addition we should continue to pursue a business development initiative the aim of which is to capture resources which we can deploy for priority projects without creating a burden on the Town's budget. Michael Yee has begun the exploration of grant possibilities.

An Earth Day Expo was briefly mentioned. Flo suggested that because of all prior discussions and positive happenings, it would be important to hold such an event. Herb asked us to consider this and will put it on the agenda for next month.

Mike reiterated our decision at an earlier meeting to ask the Town to allow us to form

a non-profit organization in order to raise money for our projects. This should be an SEEC initiative for this year.

The team agreed to shift our meeting times back to the first Wednesday of each month at 6pm, next month's is on Feb. 5th.

Addendum

In my haste, I neglected to mention the following:

1) Climate Smart Community (CSC) project that we have signed up for.

CLIMATE PROTECTION PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED

1. Update local government operations GHG inventory
2. Renewable energy on local government facilities
3. Increase uptake in Energize Somers and overall residential energy efficiency
4. Create an Adaptation Plan
5. Increase outreach and engagement of the community in climate protection activities

2) An environmental issue du jour is hydraulic fracking and the potential impact on our water etc....we have many interested parties here and it would be good to prepare a position to present to the Town Board.