GREEN ADVISORY BOARD
MAY 12, 2014
AGENDA

ACTON MEMORIAL LIBRARY - 486 MAIN STREET
CONFERENCE ROOM
6:30 PM

1. Approve Minutes - April 14, 2014
2. Behavior Modification Update
3. Solar Landfill Update (Photovoltaics (PV) spread sheets / PelleVerde) *(030)*
4. Energy Aggregation - webinar outcome
5. Open Meeting Law: Agenda Items / Document submittals prior to meetings / email deliberations
6. Recent Energy Conservation Measures
7. Creation of Sub-Committee – attracting new members
8. Green Communities Grant Status Update - Projects as submitted: http://doc.acton-ma.gov/dsweb/View/Collection-6338
9. Town Report Questions 2009 - 2013 *(090)*
10. Green Advisory Board Budget

Next meeting: June 16

GREEN ADVISORY BOARD
MAY 12, 2014
MINUTES

ACTON MEMORIAL LIBRARY - 486 MAIN STREET
CONFERENCE ROOM
6:30 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT: David Keene, Bruce Friedman, Mary Smith

MUNICIPAL PROPERTIES DIRECTOR: Dean Charter

ENERGY CONSERVATION ANALYST: Pamela Cady

RECORDING SECRETARY: Andrea Ristine

VISITORS: Renato Nakagomi

6:33 Mr. Keene called the meeting to order.

Minutes

Ms. Smith moved to approve the minutes of April 14, 2014, Mr. Friedman 2nd; unanimous.

Behavior Modification Update

Mr. Charter reported that it is a little tricky to decipher the results of the behavior modification program (BMP). The Town started with energy conservation measures (ECMs) and later initiated the BMPs, so it is hard to segregate resulting factors; the Schools on the other hand started with a BMPs and later initiated ECMs. The first grant round provided energy education funding used to initially hire Ms. Crosby as a contractor when BMPs were initiated at the Schools.

Ms. Cady presented spread sheet showing FY'14 energy consumption versus FY13 noting that the Municipal Properties Department shows a significant drop vehicle in fuel consumption. The Public Safety Facility (PSF) has consistently showed less consumption of utilities. *(The spreadsheets presented can be found within the 05-12-2014 "Extra Information" in DocuShare®)*

The winners for behavior modification for the month of March are:

- Most electricity saved: PSF: used 77% of the electricity from the same time last year
- Most natural gas saved: PSF: 89% from the same time last year
- Most gasoline saved: Municipal Properties: 51% from the same time last year
- Most diesel saved: Cemeteries / Recreation / Natural Resources: 96% from the same time last year
- Most overall fuels saved: Town Hall: 95% from the same time last year

The ECMs were done before BMs, again making it hard to tell which produced the greatest results. The engineering study and predicted energy consumption reduction for the PSF done by AECOM was accurate.

Mr. Charter noted that the Municipal Properties Grounds Crew was handed down his older Ford F150 pick-up when the Town purchased his new F150. Prior to this truck rotation the crew was driving a Ford F550 whenever they had to go to work sites, whereas now the F150 is used more often than the F550 thus reducing fuel consumption.

Solar Landfill Update (Photovoltaics (PV) spread sheets / PelleVerde) *(030)*

Mr. Charter reported that the first couple months when the solar array came online it had a lower production rate due to winter weather conditions and now is producing well.

Ms. Cady presented a landfill solar production graph from data provided by AMERESCO which reports recent productivity.

Mr. Charter reported that currently the net meter credits are not being accounted for on the NStar bills, so the Town is paying double bills per month. This also occurred when the DPW Building solar project with NEXAMP went on line; it took several months for NSTAR to catch up. The Town will receive retroactive credits on the NStar accounts listed on the Schedule Z once they catch up. The problem is that the Town is paying bills to both PelleVerde and NStar; until NStar starts accounting for the solar credits. There is also an annual rent payment due to the Town for the solar landfill array. He is in the process of trying to get this revenue into the Green Revolving Fund since this revenue is what it was created for.

Mr. Charter reported that there has been a hardware failure on the DPW Building solar facility therefore production is not being recorded in a billable format, although once repaired no data should be lost. He expects a large invoice once it has been repaired; the Town has not received a NEXAMP bill beyond January 2014.

Energy Aggregation

Mr. Charter reported that both he and Ms. Cady have watched the Department of Energy Resources and Department of Public Utilities webinar; it strikes him as being a controversial issue and may present potential problems. If annual town meeting votes to approve the aggregation all consumers in Acton will be forced into the chosen aggregation company unless they individually opt out. Ms. Cady noted that several entities in Massachusetts have gone to aggregation.

Ms. Smith noted with her experience, the Town might want to put out a request for proposal (RFP), NStar has been the most competitive and currently the market is volatile.

Upon query by Mr. Keene, Mr. Charter noted that an RFP is a big process the Town Manager would first have to discuss the issue with the Board of Selectmen.

Open Meeting Law: Agenda Items / Document submittals / Email deliberations

Ms. Ristine discussed the issue of Open Meeting Law (OML) and transparency to members of the Board and the public, submittal of any items that the Board might want to discuss at a public meeting should be submitted prior to sending out the agenda. Agendas must be posted no later than 48 hours in advance of the public meeting (Thursday prior to a Monday night meeting). These items will be put in DocuShare® and a link to the documents will be provided with the agenda. This will allow members time to review documents, reports etc. prior to the meeting and be able to review and make decisions without being pressed with time constraints. Board members need to remember when replying to an email to not 'reply all' since it would violate the Open Meeting Law.

Recent Energy Conservation Measures

Mr. Charter reported that last month LED lights were swapped out to replace outdoor high pressure sodium and metal halides at the Public Safety Facility (PSF), the Central Fire Station and a lighting motion sensor was installed the DPW Building lunch room.

Mr. Charter also noted that an energy upgrade was done by Burnell Controls installed new hardware and software in the energy management system for the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) at the PSF within the past month.

This now allows the EOC room to have heat or air conditioning when needed and is no longer running 24/7 even when the room is not in use. This upgrade allows room occupants to press a button and the room will come up to temperature for three hours and can be reset or will automatically shut down after the initial three hour start up.

Ms. Smith suggested that an article be published in the Beacon informing the public of all the changes and energy control measures (ECMs) that have been done along with the results they have produced.

Creation of Sub-Committee - attracting new members

Mr. Keene reported that he and Mr. Loria have been working on trying to have an ongoing initiative to cultivate new members to the Board. He will defer the subject to the next meeting when Mr. Loria is present.

Green Communities Grant Status Update

Projects as submitted can be viewed at this link:
http://doc.acton-ma.gov/dsweb/View/Collection-6338

Mr. Charter reported that the grant was submitted after close of business on Thursday April 17th. Final documents to complete the submittal were received from the Schools after 5pm, later than the requested deadline. Document with all necessary figures was signed by the Town Manager; staff stayed late to complete the submittal to the State. As voted by the Board on April 14th, a reduction of $5,000 on both the Town's and School's projects were made. The total grant submittal totaled $235,000. Since there are over 100 communities eligible for the grants, he felt it gave Acton a little more creditability not to ask for the full potential of $250,000. Ms. Crosby had stated in an email to the Board that she was going to change the requested dollar amount for the School's projects and would submit to the State directly. Mr. Charter noted that the Town Manager is the signatory, not himself or Ms. Crosby; he considered it tantamount to fraud to change the numbers signed and agreed upon by the Town Manager and the Board, comparing it to changing the written value of a signed check. There were several contentious exchanges of emails on Friday April 18th, the absolute deadline for the grant submittal. There was not enough time according to Open Meeting Law to legally post another public meeting with the Board prior to the State's deadline and the Town Manager had already signed the application. Later the next week of April 21st, the State requested more information for the School's proposed projects. Mr. Charter had also made it clear that supplemental information requested by the State was to be sent to him to submit to the State since he is the designated representative of the Town for the grant submittal. Ms. Crosby did provide the additional information requested but chose to not follow due process and sent it directly to the State with a copy to him. Mr. Charter stated that he also felt that it was in improper fashion for Ms. Crosby to submit directly to the State and not through the proper channels or protocol. It has been, and will be, Mr. Charter's responsibility that all State laws are abided by in consideration of bid processes, State bid lists and prevailing wages, etcetera.

Mr. Charter noted that the State expects to notify all grant applicants by June 30, 2014 if their application is approved; there are 110 eligible communities and only $7,000,000 available, which works out to approximately $63,500 per community if they all apply for grant money.

Mr. Keene thanked Mr. Charter for the update and efforts noting that the Board has limited powers as an advisory Board to the Town; he stated that he agrees that the process follow through the proper channels. Mr. Friedman also agreed.

Ms. Smith stated that she understands and agrees with following due process but found it disturbing that the payback for the Memorial Library project was greater than initially noted. If the Town went down on the price (requested amount) she felt that they could have asked for the full allowance request of $250,000. It is important to remember that one of the reasons Acton property values are so high are due to the quality of the schools. The Town needs to be taken care of but the total picture should be looked at and keep the property values up. There is a need to have a more comfortable process, what is good for one is good for the other. She feels that if there is an opportunity to apply for the full dollar amount available then the Town should go for it. Deadlines should be set and should be met.

Mr. Friedman agreed suggesting that a process of submitting everything for review at least two weeks or more prior to the due date.

Mr. Keene agreed noting that the process jumped the tracks, it is sad that the full available grant amount was not applied for but the process should be respected.

Mr. Charter agreed that the provision of documents well in advance for all to review to make the proper decision is needed.

7:50 Ms. Smith moved to adjourn, Mr. Friedman 2nd; unanimous.

Items not addressed on the agenda will be forwarded to the June 16th meeting.

Bruce Friedman
Vice Chair

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