

5-29-12 Westport Energy Committee meeting with the Board of Selectmen

On 5/29/12, at 6:45 PM a Joint Meeting of the Westport Energy Committee with the Board of Selectmen was convened. Present were Richard Spirlet, Antone Vieira, Craig Dutra, Steve Ouellette and Mike Sullivan from the Board of Selectmen and Antone Vieira, Walter Barnes, Tony Connors, Kathy Cummings, Karl Daxland and Ed Goldberg from the Energy Committee along with Town Administrator Jack Healey.

Seth Pickering of the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources and Regional Coordinator of the South East Region gave a audio-visual presentation on the Green Communities Act and Technical Assistance Grants. He can be reached at 508-946-2838.

His presentation included

1. Going Green - what does it mean
2. Programs or resources - energy efficiency participation
3. Green Communities Grant Program - 5 qualification criteria
4. Green Communities Designation and Grant Flow Chart - (1) as of right siting, renew or alternative; as of right generation over 600 MW wind turbines; as of right generation over 250 KW solar PV; (2) expedited permitting; (3) energy baseline and 20% energy reduction plan; energy turnkey tool; (4) fuel efficient vehicles looking forward and administrative in nature; over 8,500lbs are exempt; (5) minimize life cycle costs and use energy efficiency.

Green Communities number about 86 plus 17 new ones; STRETCH Code Communities number about 118; and Green Communities Designation and Grant Program number around 86 and requires the qualifications for energy savings. 200 out of 351 cities and towns of the Commonwealth are using the free on-line tool of MA Energy Insight Powering Efficiency..

Mr. Daxland pointed out that under the STRETCH Code there is a 1% per square foot in additional costs in new construction, such as a rule of thumb, \$1/sq.ft for a 3000 sq. ft. house. According to Mr. Pickering, the cost/benefit analysis is coming from new houses.

Mr. Connors wanted to know how many towns have energy offices. Mr. Pickering said that community volunteers were common or that could be a Town Administrator or other Town personnel.

Mr. Goldberg wanted to know about the relationship with the Department of Energy and was told that once a community is designated a Green Community there is grant money each year and there is a five year window on the energy reduction plan. Mr. Pickering said the money for the grants is not subject to appropriation procedures. There are no budget cuts. The fossil fuel generators must pay the monies. Some attendees believed that penalizes an industry.

Mr. Barnes was told that Boston is the largest Green Community and Eastern is the only town in South Eastern Massachusetts.

Mr. Dutra said the best way for energy independence is to use less energy.

The joint meeting ended at 7:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Walter Barnes