

Conservation Commission Energy Committee Meeting

Thursday, June 28, 2018

Parks and Rec Conference Room, 2nd Floor, Town Hall

In attendance: Rusty Parker, Robert Brady, Steve Hall, Urling Searle, Skip Parker

Also in attendance: Patricia Sesto, director; Sarah (Nahabedian) Coccaro, conservation resource manager; Daniel Watson, director of School Facilities

1. **Call to order-** 9:02 am by Ms. Patricia Sesto
 - a. Welcome- Committee members introduced themselves to Mr. Daniel Watson
2. **Approval of Minutes**
 - a. May 24, 2018- approved
3. **Discussion of Board of Education (BoE) facilities-**
 - a. Strategic energy plan-

Ms. Sesto introduced Town-wide strategic energy conservation plan, the plan's history and to-date actions (such as the Town Hall energy audit) to Mr. Watson. Ms. Sesto also briefly discussed future strategic energy plans regarding town buildings and incorporating commercial and residential components. The Town energy profile only makes up a small fraction of energy-use in Town. To make this plan successful, energy conservation needs to be Town-wide. Ms. Sesto also mentioned having had Al Monelli, superintendent of buildings, at energy committee meeting last month.

Mr. Watson described the budgeting process, stating there is no cost preference provided at the time of acquisition in favor of long term savings. Likewise, the process does not properly account for initial costs vs. lifetime costs of projects.

Mr. Watson inquired about the Town's relationship with Eversource and our history with the Town. Ms. Coccaro explained that Eversource has had a long-term relationship with Greenwich. Eversource asked to work with the Town towards reducing energy usage and reducing peak demand. By assisting with benchmarking energy use across municipal buildings and incentivizing the Town with higher rebates if multiple energy conservation projects were grouped together. Eversource has also assisted with setting up the Town Hall energy audit through Steven Winters Associates.

Mr. Watson expressed interest in being part of an energy plan, but he isn't able to pursue Eversource. Mr. Watson would be more inclined if Eversource could approach the BoE with incentives and energy savings opportunities.

Mr. Watson stated that there are a number of energy-related for BoE buildings to be implemented over the summer pursuant to the KG+D plan. The energy plans for this summer were decided on in the last fiscal budget. The Energy Committee

discussed timeline for decision making and budget planning. Ms. Sesto asked about who/what/how decisions for picking plans/projects.

It was noted that Eversource's interest in partnering with Greenwich stems from a project three years ago to provide for more power. The Town is interested in energy conservation and members of this energy committee have met with Selectman Sandy Litvack to get the Town on board. A lot of the education buildings appear to be suitable for solar panels. Mr. R. Parker discussed benefits for solar panels and their economic value.

Mr. Steve Hall discussed the benefits for conducting a Phase 1 energy audit on every BoE building to set the ground work for the most cost effective and most energy saving opportunities. Mr. Hall believes that there should be Phase 1 audits done and then contract out with other groups to apply the energy efficiency measures.

Mr. Watson directed the conversation towards the Greenwich Facilities Master Plan. (<https://www.greenwichschools.org/uploaded/district/departments/facilities/Facilities Master Plan/GPS Master Plan Presentation 052218.pdf>). Even though the plan is years away from "breaking ground," he believes the energy committee could be helpful in moving energy conservation policies through the plan. Mr. Watson said that if this energy committee could help with anything, it would be to help enact changes to the plan (in terms of energy conservation) and those changes need to happen soon.

Mr. Watson stated there are 15 buildings under the BoE, with nine different HVAC management systems. Selection of the systems was driven by low bid, which has, among other things, resulted in having six different major AC systems. There is no proactive maintenance program and this is needed to prevent premature failure and replacement of equipment. The constraints of the town's bidding process are part of the problem. The public bid prevents proprietary specifications in RFP's and energy efficiency is sacrificed in favor of initial cost savings.

Members requested a representative from the Purchasing Department attend a meeting to help them more fully understand the bidding and selection process.

Mr. R. Parker recounted previous discussions with a BET member. If a project had a 5-6year payback and that a program would be able to be funded. Discussion ensued regarding the drivers of these policies, the difficulties changing an established mindset, the focus on budget caps for the one given fiscal year, a process that can't account for lifecycle payback through conservation of resources

It was suggested that the town could benefit from a capital budget committee who could factor in lifetime expenses along with the initial investment.

Mr. Watson described the geo-thermal system at the Hamilton Ave school, which he states was a good idea 20 years ago, but the school doesn't rely on it anymore. The school uses its secondary system as its primary, indicating that this is not a good method, but the geo-thermal is unreliable. One of their main issues with the system is that they have to go back to an outside vendor to service it. There are solar panels on Glenville, but Mr. Watson has not yet been able to evaluate if they're a net positive. Solar panels are planned for the New Lebanon school.

Mr. Watson expressed his position that geo-thermal system needs to be recommissioned. A phase 1 audit would help identify what the benefits are and how it can be utilized efficiently. Landcare(?) and AKF did a cursory walk through on one school already regarding the Greenwich Facilities Master Plan.

Mr. Brady and Mr. Hall concurred there needs to be public awareness and conversations with BET members. This isn't about conservation per se, rather long-term savings..

Mr. Watson stated recommendations by this committee for phase one audits need to be dove-tailed with the facilities master plan. Energy conservation is not a major theme in the plan. It comes down to upfront cost and public bidding; there is no way to factor in maintenance and performance.

Ms. Sesto asked Mr. Watson could quantify the cost of reactive maintenance vs hiring more staff for proactive maintenance. Mr. Watson said no. R. Parker brought up the unreliability of equipment and how that impacts school, staff and students. Mr. Watson stated that there is a substantial ongoing program which will take years to get implemented. The plan set in place by his predecessors will be moving forward. Central Middle School needs the most help, followed by Riverside, Old Greenwich and North Mianus. The work mainly focused on getting the schools ADA compliant and other more pressing issues than energy conservation.

Mr. Watson asked the committee to look into changes to the purchasing and bidding processes. There is always going to be a question of proprietary and the adopted standards. The challenge to including energy efficiency standards is that most manufacturers can change finagle specs to technically meet the standard.

Mr. Watson indicated he is moving forward with his capital improvement plans- AC, water towers, new windows, a lot of things in his capital improvement but he would need to know now what is in the Energy Committee's plan as soon as possible. Ms. Sesto commented that is sounds like energy conservation is a factor

but not a priority- when discussing new window installation and choosing window models as energy efficient, to which Mr. Watson agreed.

Ms. Sesto would let Mr. Watson know when a representative from purchasing would join the committee.

4. Strategic Energy Planning

a. Stakeholder engagement:

Ms. Sesto discussed the status stakeholder engagement. A member of the BET, Andy Duus stepped forward to work with the committee, but has yet to engage. She also recommended Jeanine Behr Getz, from BYO Greenwich, to join this Energy Committee. Ms. Behr Getz is a member of this community, has a grassroots organization background, is very involved and passionate about conservation.

Ms. Sesto will follow up with Mr. Duus and also reach out to Sandy Litvak.

b. Desired presentations, needed information:

The Committee would like to meet with a representative from purchasing for the next meeting.

S. Parker asked the Committee about “waste” in terms of budgeting. Mr. Brady stated that we waste money on energy efficiency and foregone opportunities. “Buying the cheap model and spending more money to operate.” Mr. Skip Parker followed up- “is staffing a waste?” Mr. Brady- “staffing is driven by how we used to do things, rather than taking advantage of new technologies.” But he admitted these changes are huge leaps to overcome in a Town government, and no one is trained to this.

c. Work session for committee involvement:

Topics to investigate- Mr. Brady recommended Jill Oberlander and Leslie Moriarti from the BET to educate the committee on the budgeting process.

5. Next meeting – July 12th, 2018 @ 9:00 a.m.

- a. Speaker (someone from Purchasing)
- b. S. Parker’s meeting with Eversource
- c. Eversource/SWA energy audit

6. Adjourn- 10:30am