

Clean Energy Task Force
Meeting Minutes

Date: May 20, 2015

Location: City of Middletown
Municipal Building
Room 208

RE: City of Middletown
Clean Energy Task Force
Meeting No. 112

Attendees:	Jennifer Kleindienst	Absent:	Jeff Pugliese
	Peter Staye		Audrey Scotti
	Dmitri D'Alessandro		Larry Chatfield
	John Hall		Tom Serra
	David Bauer		Judy Yoder
	Augie DeFrance		
	Kim O'Rourke, Staff		

The meeting opened at 12:35 p.m. The minutes of the April 15, 2015 Clean Energy Task Force meeting were approved unanimously.

There were no members of the public present for the comment.

John Hall gave a brief update on projects that he continues to work on. He said there have been issues with Eversource in getting the street lights repaired. A number of lights are not getting power and it is Eversource's responsibility to fix these, but it is taking a long time to get them repaired. John reported on the sale of the RECs for the fuel cell at the High School. Last year it had only 2/3 of its original output, which is as expected. He is trying to get a contract to sell the RECs, but it has been difficult and procedural.

John Hall said his contract is ending the end of June and he is not renewing it. As far as he is aware no steps have been taken to hire a replacement. Augie De France asked if there was anything that could be done to move this along.

David Bauer asked about the budget for the police department upgrades and fixes. John Hall said these were being included with the other items.

David Bauer mentioned different fuel cell projects across the state: one being installed in Glastonbury, one in Beacon Falls. Members weren't sure if they were financially feasible without subsidies.

Jennifer Kleindienst reported that six Wesleyan employees have chosen to install solar PV on their homes through to Solarize Wesleyan. There will likely be only one more municipal Solarize program through the Green Bank.

Members discussed the Middletown Energy Plan. Dmitri D'Alessandro offered to organize a subgroup to revamp the document and get it into a current state. He felt there could be big savings in facilities management, landscaping, grass cutting, transportation and waste. Augie DeFrance talked about the savings at Mortimer and Riverside Cemeteries. A new type of grass is being used and it doesn't need to be cut as frequently, which saves money and the stones. David Bauer asked who the audience would be for this document. He felt the current document jumps around and serves more as a brainstorm list, instead of a priority document. He'd rather see it more as an action plan where everyone would understand their role. Dmitri D'Alessandro felt it could be developed into a document that had a framework of who, what, where and when, but the group needed time to develop it. John Hall said he was booked most nights and would have a difficult time making night meetings. He felt there were different directions to go in but whatever was decided, the task force needed to talk to the Mayor and Department Heads to get their support. One direction to take is to work through city personnel and encourage city employees to take advantage of programs. Another is to reach out to the schools to educate and get action. The Mayor wanted more detailed information on these programs, but the committee never decided which way to go.

Peter Staye announced that this will be his last meeting. He will be taking a new position in Manchester and will no longer serve on the task force. Members thanked Peter for his service on the task force and wished him well in his new position.

Members discussed who to target: homeowners, businesses, the general public. There are so many options. Peter Staye felt it was better to be focused and realistic. Better to do two things instead of sixty things. Members discussed this. What the direction and focus of the task force should be. How it is directly related to the passion of the members. Dmitri D'Alessandro suggested contacting other towns with successful task forces to see how they achieved what they did. John Hall said this task force is successful. It is just that they have accomplished what they set out to and now they are not sure what to do next.

Members talked about the Home Energy Solutions Home Insulation Workshop and the suggestion of using money from the Bright Ideas grant for a light bulb swap. It might be a gateway to get people in. Jen Kleindienst talked about opportunity for initiating social change. She passed around the book *Fostering Sustainable Development* by Doug McKenzie-Mohr for members to look at. She felt an energy outreach campaign could help change behavior. She felt fostering this type of change could be discussed at a future meeting.

Jen Kleindienst reported on the Home Insulation Workshop. She said that although there were only 12 participants, those who did attend seemed interested in pursuing insulation for their homes. She reported that similar efforts in other towns have been more successful because they occurred after sending out a letter. The next letter should be sent in September.

Members expressed disappointment at the tabling effort at the Riverfront Festival. Their table was way in the back and not many people came out to it. They estimated losing \$700 in revenue to the tree fund because of the placement of the table. Members felt this event had less of a focus on environmental practices than the first Feet to the Fire event. They were disappointed in how this festival itself impacted the environment. John Hall mentioned the lack of signage as well. Better signage might have brought more people to the table area.

John Hall said the task force really has to set up the plan. Dmitri D'Alessandro felt that they had to find a financial motivator; a way to prove cost savings. He felt the task force should find the "low hanging fruit", which could have good results and be easier to accomplish. John Hall felt it was important to decide which sector to focus on: municipal, business, residential, schools? The task force had to decide which direction to go in. More members were needed as well. The task force has many vacancies that need to be filled. Peter Staye felt the task force tried to work with the business sector, but they didn't really respond well. He felt the connection to the Chamber was tenuous and perhaps it was better to work with the residential sector. Dmitri D'Alessandro agreed that the business community was very busy with maintaining their operations. They are very busy. He said businesses will come around when energy costs rise, which they will be rising. John Hall suggested members think about the focus of the task force and members can discuss it further at the next meeting, which will be June 17th.

Dmitri D'Alessandro motioned and Augie DeFrance seconded that this task force send a letter to the Mayor encouraging him to fill John Hall's position. All members voted in favor. John Hall said he had a slideshow demonstrating \$500,000 in recurring savings. He will send that to members.

Peter Staye made and Augie DeFrance seconded a motion to adjourn at 1:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitting,

Kim O'Rourke
Middletown Recycling Coordinator