

Dedham Sustainability Advisory Committee

February 6, 2012

Present: Steve MacAusland (SM), Russ Poole (RP), Joanna Hamblin (JH), Deb Harrison (DH), Virginia LeClair (VL)

Guests: Travis Estes, Next Step Living

Discussion Next Step Living on Residential Energy Efficiency Program

JH opened the meeting of February 6, 2012 and introduced the first item on the agenda, a discussion with Travis Estes from Next Step Living about home energy audits. Next Step Living is working with several communities in MA including Newton, Natick, Needham and Worcester. They provide energy audits through the MassSaves program. The MassSaves program is an initiative sponsored by Massachusetts' gas and electric utilities and energy efficiency service providers. He showed a PowerPoint presentation.

S. MacAusland has had many audits, but he did not feel like he has gotten a lot out of them. He wondered how this program was different. Travis Estes responded that the program has changed. He said that they no longer offer the blower door test during assessments, only during weatherization. He discussed all the various ways to insulate your home and the hidden spaces like bathroom fans and plug sockets that leak air. They will now look at mold and water issues and other safety issues. The assessment usually takes between 2 and 2 ½ hours. As part of the assessment they will install free of charge CFLs and a programmable thermostat.

He reviewed the rebates offered, which include:

- 75% off up to \$2,000 per year towards insulation and weatherization
- 100% rebated of air sealing
- 0% HEAT loan
- Energy efficient appliance rebates

The biggest difference in working with Next Step Living is the incentives they offer through partnerships with municipal and community groups. They have found that a community based approach allows for greater trust and therefore a greater number of audits conducted. To entice people to have an audit they offer program deals such as funding a group of your choice, school, church etc \$10 per assessment conducted. For solar assessments they would pay that group \$50 per assessment conducted. This has been used by many organizations as a fundraiser and no purchase is necessary to receive the incentivized money.

If the Committee would decide to work with Next Step Living they would co-brand with the Town on their energy audit brochures and provide an energy auditor that could visit schools and talk about a career as an energy advisor.

Green Fire, the story of Aldo Leopold viewing discussion

The Committee decided that this was not the right movie to show, but that they would like to show a movie in conjunction with Earth Day. JH suggested that for the next meeting we each come prepared with one movie that we think is worth showing for Earth Day.

Earth Hour

VL explained that Earth Hour is a one-hour event starting at 8:30pm on Saturday, March 31, where cities, businesses, and residents around the world turn off all non-essential lighting for that one hour. The purpose of this event is to create awareness of energy-related emissions and initiate conversations around how personal and systemic changes can help reduce energy consumption and attendant emissions. The Committee discussed writing a letter to the Board of Selectmen asking them to support this event by evaluating non-essential lighting that could be shut off at Town properties for one hour. Non-essential lighting would include lighting at monuments and architectural lighting on municipal buildings and non-essential signage, such as found at parks and playgrounds. We discussed how since this is on a weekend that the Town would have to pay a custodian overtime to come in to turn off any non-essential lighting for that one hour, so it would be best to select lighting that could be turned off for the entire weekend. We will be asking residents and businesses to do the same.

DH made a motion to write a letter to the Board of Selectmen asking for their support of Earth Hour. JH second. All in favor.

Green Fair

The Committee discussed how best they wanted to focus their energy and what projects they wanted to take on. VL said she would contact the Executive Director of the Community House to find out when they are planning to hold their Music/Art Fest. DH stated that we need to get on their radar early this year so that we can ensure good publicity for the Green Fair.

Community/Member Update

Minutes of 1.9.2012 were reviewed. JH made a motion to approve the minutes of 1.9.2012. SM second. RP abstained since he was not present at the last meeting. All in favor.

JH said that she was still planning to write an article on the solar PV installed at Town Hall and the HS. Liz O'Donnell was still working on the anti-idling campaign.

VL updated the group on the MAPC meeting with Westwood and Dedham. The Town of Dedham, through a very competitive process, has received assistance from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) for help in identifying pedestrian and bicycle networks within our community and beyond. The Town of Westwood applied at the same time with a similar project and therefore MAPC staff will be assisting both communities in advancing pedestrian and bicycle planning goals. The purpose of this meeting was to kick-off this collaborative process and to evaluate in both communities existing conditions, potential opportunities, and priorities. From the Town of Dedham the DPW Director, Police Chief, Health Director, Planning Director, and Planning Board Vice-Chair were all present. The next meeting will take place in about two weeks.

Adjourn

RP made a motion to adjourn. DH second. All in favor.