

TOWN OF HAMDEN

ENERGY USE & CLIMATE CHANGE COMMISSION MEETING

JULY 16, 2012

7:00 PM

**HAMDEN GOVERNMENT CENTER
2750 DIXWELL AVENUE
HAMDEN**

Commissioners in attendance: Frank Gasparro, Chairman
Frederick Schramm, Vice Chair
David Bruhn
David Cooper
Martin Mador
Amy Sowitsky
Giovanni Zinn

Others in attendance: Mayor Scott Jackson
Chris Marchand
Peggy Craft, Commission Clerk

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Gasparro called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance was taken as noted above.

MINUTES OF THE JUNE 13, 2012 MEETING

Chairman Gasparro asked if there were any additions, deletions or corrections to the Minutes of the June 13, 2012 Meeting. Hearing none he called for a motion to approve the Minutes as presented. **Commissioner Zinn made the motion that was seconded by Commissioner Cooper and passed unanimously.**

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Chairman Gasparro said Franklin Van Ness who is a partner with Prince Charles in England will be a guest speaker this evening. Mr. Van Ness and Prince Phillip are looking into creating a "green town" in England. Mr. Van Ness has spoken to Mr. Gasparro's class regarding energy conservation.

Mr. Gasparro also said he has received an e-mail regarding the Masselli Farm.

Andrew Pallotto, CEO/President, Pallotto Enterprises will also be a guest speaker. Mr. Pallotto is working with an investment group who are meeting with politicians to discuss an Evergreen Cooperative. Mr. Cooper explained their work.

Chairman Gasparro invited the Mayor to address the Commission.

Mayor Jackson said green is good and waste is bad. He said we need to do better. He said if we had ample resources, we could do all that could be done – but we don't – so we need to be the best modeling town in the USA, and we need to find out how to do this.

Next, he discussed the Masselli Farm. He said there could be a lot of solar energy generated there, but we would have to think about what it would look like; will it be visible from people's home; will there be water runoff, etc.

He next discussed geothermal projects, and what depths would be required and what would have to be gone thru to get there.

The Mayor next explained how he does he does his job. This is accomplished by spending other people's money, and to do this he must be responsible. He said people are not looking for massive experimentation. As far as a Solar Farm is concerned, he believes we can get there. He added that in large measure, much of what we have done has been successful, and we now have an opportunity to do more, but we don't want to wipe out our successes with a failure . He said that many of the things that need to be done need to be funded, and to do that we need to convince our Board of Directors – the Legislative Council. He said we need new, good data to do this. He added that we have generated good will from the good work that has been done over the last four and a half years. The Town has received eight awards for energy conservation from the State this year. This is good for the Town and good for taxpayers. He said the money saved could have gone to the utility companies but didn't. These projects are done, and we are now ready to move to next step, and it must be something we can sell to the public, who could possibly be resistant. We must be able to show long term saving and optimum efficiency. The Mayor said he came here this evening to find out what's next on the agenda. He added that we have to overcome the mistakes of the past and move forward.

Mr. Cooper said he would like to know what is expected of this Commission, and asked for recommendations regarding working with other Commissions. He also asked what is the charge of the Commission.

Mr. Mador asked how this Commission interacts with other forms of government; how do we work with the Mayor. He added that if the Town is going to sign an energy contract we should have a strong advisory position.

The Mayor said he always consults with Mr. Marchand when making energy decisions. He said should there be a different way to go about this? He said possibly. He added that we should prepare for a day when Mr. Marchand is not here. He doesn't think there are gaps in the present process. He said if there are changes it would mean opening up the ordinance. He believes that the Council would find this onerous. Mr. Mador asked if it could be written that any contract regarding energy must go to this commission for 30 days for review before it is signed. The Mayor said that this involves authority and he doesn't know if the Council would cede their authority to a Commission.

Mr. Mador said we are not looking for a yes or no. He suggested that if the Council is going to vote on anything that involves energy, it is sent to the Commission for review.

The Mayor discussed the process regarding items going to Council. He said the item must be submitted 17 days before the meeting. He added that the committees meet on the last Monday of the month and the full Council meets on the first Monday.

Mr. Mador asked if the Mayor is sending something to the Council, could he send it to this Commission first for review.

The Mayor said as opposed to writing something into the ordinance, prior to submission to the Council, based on time line constraints, there could be an informal agreement that it would be sent to the Commission for review. The Mayor said he would ask the members of this Commission that if there is something that sounds good to tell the Council.

Mr. Schramm said sometimes the Commission find out things after the process. He said he would like to know prior to what is done. The Mayor again said we can have an informal agreement that as things develop he will send them to this Commission for review based on time constraints.

Mr. Mador said if contracts/projects come to the Commission, the Commissioners can then decide what kind of recommendation to make.

The Mayor asked for examples of what came to the Commission after the fact. Mr. Mador said Power Point. The Mayor said this happened in 2007. Mr. Zinn said he couldn't think of anything in the last year.

Next, the Mayor discussed a Solar Energy Park at the Masselli Farm. He said the first step would be an RFP, and explained the RFP process.

Mr. Marchand has met with Fire Chief Beradesca. The Chief would like input into the new building Fire Department building. Mr. Marchand added that a new building or new construction would be a good opportunity for this Commission to provide input.

The Mayor further discussed the RFP process. He explained this is done with a five-member panel. He said placing a member from this Commission on the panel would be difficult.

There was a discussion on design builds.

There was further discussion regarding the Commission's input into energy contracts/projects.

Mr. Zinn asked if there could be an informal agreement that an RFP concerning an energy contract/project come to the Commission prior it going to the Legislative Council. Mayor Jackson said yes.

The Mayor next asked what else is out there, and where are the institutional organizations on this issue. He also briefly discussed climate change, noting that his children and Mr. Marchand's children will see the year 2100. There was a discussion regarding the change in temperature by then.

Mr. Gasparro suggested that the Commission come up with a book to inform the public about energy.

Mr. Mador asked the Mayor what the Commission could do to inform the public. The Mayor said not everyone needs to be reached. There was a discussion regarding clean energy sign-ups.

Mr. Bruhn asked about turning off streetlights. The Mayor said there is nothing that has to be done legally it is more of a moral issue. Mr. Bruhn suggested that a survey be sent out to see how many residents would agree to turning off some lights. Mr. Jackson said that in urban areas light deters crime. There was a discussion regarding areas where lights could be turned off. Mr. Zinn said based on his experience, people can be very passionate about street lighting. He added that light is a deterrent to crime especially in urban areas. He also said that UI is not interested in selling the lighting system to the Town.

The mayor compared turning off streetlights to requiring the public to pay for trash collection – both would bring about “Armageddon”.

Mr. Mador asked the Mayor for recommendation as to how the Commission should spend their time.

Mayor Jackson discussed the impact of the ridiculously low cost of natural gas. He said this can impact everything we do. The Mayor discussed this and the additional gas installations in Town. There was a discussion regarding this subject.

Mr. Mador asked about the old middle school, and if the Mayor want the Commission to look into this. The Mayor said the Town needs the fields behind the school for athletic activities.

Mr. Gasparro introduced Mr. Van Ness. His family has been farmers in England for many generations. He is here to discuss a project that he has been involved in for the last 15 months. Mr. Van Ness said he would make a presentation on green energy and sustainable energy. Mr. Van Ness explained the various ways that energy can be generated. He did a projector presentation explaining how creating a green town could be accomplished.

Next, Mr. Pallotto gave a presentation on Geothermal Energy. There was a lengthy discussion regarding this subject. Mr. Pallotto explained the process of installing this type of system, and the energy savings that could be gained. Chairman Gasparro asked Mr. Pallotto what he would like to see happen. Mr. Pallotto said he would like to see the system installed in the Town.

Mr. Gasparro said his personal take home message is that we need a "big idea". he said this will get peoples attention. He said if we are going to do something to get the Town's attention we need a big idea. Mr. Pallotto said he suggests bringing Economic Development Director Dale Kroop to the next meeting to discuss geothermal energy installations.

The next meeting will be on August 20th. Mr. Gasparro polled the Commissioners to see who would be in attendance. Mr. Bruhn will not be in attendance. All the other Commissioners will be able to attend.

ADJOURNMENT

There was no further business to come before the Commission and Chairman Gasparro called for a motion to adjourn. **Commissioner Cooper motioned to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mador and passed unanimously.** Chairman Gasparro adjourned the meeting at 9:40 AM.

Submitted by: _____
Peggy Craft, Commission Clerk