

BOROUGH of METUCHEN
Environmental Commission
Minutes of the February 17, 2010 Regular Meeting

A meeting of the Metuchen Environmental Commission was held on Wednesday, February 17, 2010 at 7:10 PM at Borough Hall. Present were: , Council Liaison Will Waldron, Mark Herzberg, Chair, Tom Rudel, Arline Zatz, Brian Weeks and Pat Donahue. Visitor: Linda Hamdan, Steven Winter Associates. Absent were: Kathy Busch, Mike Vissichelli, Steve Toth, and Ann Sardone.

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 PM.

CORRESPONDENCE

- Two editions of the DEP bulletin were reviewed; there was nothing of immediate interest to the Commission. Three ANJEC training sessions are scheduled for March. The county sent a letter to Conrail indicating their interest in acquiring the Greenway extension from Conrail. ANJEC issued a brochure on ‘smart growth’ grants. No news regarding the letting of the contract for the landscaping of the existing Greenway.

OLD BUSINESS

Annual report – there were two submissions reporting on individual activities of the commissioner. Pat Donahue put the report together and needs further input from other commissioners by the end of the month.

Global Warming – the Jitney service ended due to budgetary woes on January 1, despite concern from the commissioners.

Energy Audit presentation by Linda Hamdan from Steven Winter Associates. Winter Associates did the field audit of Metuchen municipal buildings. She described their methods. They looked at bills for energy, toured the buildings, looked at light bulbs, and inspected the appliances. They compared the borough’s expenditures with standard expenditures for similar buildings in the region. Discussion ensued about how to interpret the analyses of each building. How do we train municipal employees in the maintenance of the new technologies. This type of training work is referred to as retro-commissioning. Some discussion occurred about how to present the report to the council and how to find out about government programs that provide subsidies and rebates. We then went through the audit, building by building.

Town Hall – The auditors recommend demand controlled ventilation for the pistol range and interior storm window systems. They also noted that retrocommissioning the building has a short payback period.

Senior Center

They suggest high efficiency lighting, new cooling condensing unit, demand controlled ventilation. The unfinished state of the building on the second floor raises a large number of issues about the efficient use of the building. The building is not, however, an 'energy hog'.

DPW (Department of Public Works)

It is an old building and an 'energy hog'. The issue is how much money do you want to spend on the building as opposed to replacing the entire building. Most likely, the borough will want to continue using the building for a number of years.

Intuitively you would think that demand control ventilation and window replacements would be recommended. The highest priority would be replacing the furnaces. There is a program called 'Direct Install' they could defray some of the costs here. It is a 'cash for clunkers' program that applies to furnaces.

Library –

The town should replace the fireproofing above the boiler and install air sealing interior storm panel for existing windows. The discussion turned to renovations of the new section of the library as opposed to the old 'historic' section of the library. The lighting in the library, long fluorescent lights, could be replaced with a quick payback, even without incentives. There are incentives here which we must investigate. We should inquire at New Jersey Clean Energy, an office within the Board of Public Utilities of the State of New Jersey.

We then started discussing the rates for natural gas and electricity that the municipality pays. Has Metuchen joined up with other towns to negotiate lower base rates collectively? Apparently so. The natural gas rate is very good relative to the costs for electricity

Ms. Hamdan then reviewed the various energy subsidy programs available through NJ Clean Energy that could defray some of the costs for these investments

Priority Items in the Audit were as follows:

Lighting (across three buildings)

VSD (variable speed drives) on the fans in the Municipal building.

Furnaces in the DPW building (fastest payback of all of the recommended items).

Condenser at the Senior Center

Retrocommissioning the municipal building generates the fastest returns; these are smaller investments in terms of the size of the items, but it may require an additional study to generate a plan. The other expenditures do not require this intermediate step.

We then reviewed the various **program incentives** for each of the high priority items. We generated the expected financial gains from the various subsidy programs for each of

the high priority items. For the boiler/furnaces it would be around \$6000. For lighting measures in the senior center, it would be \$2000; lighting savings for library would be similar in magnitude.

NEW BUSINESS

We then discussed the possibility of doing an energy fair on Earth Day (April 24th). We have already something of a commitment to an energy presentation. Who would come? What kinds of energy foci would we have? We would probably want to focus on energy improvements that could be applied to daily life here in Metuchen. That would rule out biofuels and wind power for example. We would also discuss energy audits.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 9:40 PM. The next meeting of the Metuchen Environmental Commission will take place on March 10, 2010 at 7:00 PM at Borough Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Rudel