

SUSTAINABLE ENERGY COMMISSION
Regular Meeting
Public Works Department, 4 Turkey Hill Road, Newtown
Thursday, May 18, 2023
Called to order at 7:00PM

*THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL BY THE SUSTAINABLE ENERGY
COMMISSION*

Present: Kathy Quinn, Allen Adriani, Derek Pisani, Mike Oristaglio, George Brown

Absent: David Stout, Damian Bednarz, Carol Walsh, Robert Bohn

Also Present: Director of Public Works Fred Hurley

Communications – Cross Roads Solutions has reached out to Newtown for business development which includes Sustainable Energy (att.).

Public Comments – None

Acceptance of Minutes – M. Oristaglio moved to approve the minutes of the April 20, 2023 meeting. D. Pisani seconded, all in favor.

Update to Smart Power residential storage program – They held the launch meeting last Tuesday. There were about 20 people that live streamed it. It is on the town website under video recordings.

Vote on option to skip July 20th or August 17th meeting – To be discussed in June

Discuss possibility of doing and Energy Fair later this year – It was discussed to doing an energy fair with a neighboring town to attract more vendors. K. Quinn will reach out to Sustainable Southbury.

10K Grant decision – Fred reported that the grant is committed to EV charging stations at Edmond Town Hall.

Sub-Committees

EV Charging stations – Edmond Town Hall has finalized the location and have proposals from the manufacture and the electrician. Now they can move forward with the grant application.

Energy Storage – K. Quinn found a company that uses iron in their batteries and now lithium. There is concern about the hazardous waste at the end of the battery's life with lithium. M. Oristaglio will look into this.

Portfolio Manager – No update

Status of solar projects

Buy All Program– All 4 applications are technically reviewed and acceptable. The two smaller projects, Canopy at PD and the Municipal Building roof, are on a wait list. The WWTP and Head of Meadow School are still pending.

Off site 1MW VNM – Still pending.

Other Solar Opportunities, Batchelder Site, Hawley School, High School Auditorium -

Once Hawley School is done they are going to consider it for solar as well as Middle Gate School. Batchelder remediation has been very slow. F. Hurley may make a request for Public Works to take over the project. There have been 2 inquires of interest for 2MW solar projects. An anaerobic digester is also being proposed for that property.

School Updates:

Hawley - Waiting on the switch gear.

RFP for Energy Management and Conservation Services – That is officially declined and will be taken off future agendas.

Town Building Strategic Plan Committee – They are still working to move the data to the town's server.

Municipal Energy Plan – This is something that some towns have, there is a frame work for this. K. Quinn questioned if this is needed for Newtown. F. Hurley responded that from a grant application stand point, it can be helpful to have this type of document on hand.

Social Media – No update

ADDITIONAL ITEMS TO BE ADDRESSED

Changes to recycling/composting efforts – The Town received 2 grants, one is a solar aerated static pile system for food scrap and leave composting and the other is for a Unit Based Price for household garbage. Each family will get 2 bags per week, if they need to get more bags they will be available but tracked to determine pilot programs success.

Lighting at FFH – No update

Next meeting is June 15, 2023

Having no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:55pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Arlene Miles, Clerk

Crossroad Solutions

**358 Cross Hill Road
Monroe, Connecticut 06468**

March 31, 2023
First Selectman Daniel Rosenthal
Town of Newtown
3 Primrose St.
Newtown, Connecticut 06470

Dear First Selectman Rosenthal;

Thanks to Newtown's "Connecting businesses to the resources that they need" strategy and consistent ranking as one of the safest municipalities in Connecticut, Newtown enjoys a robust business community. It is important to continue building on that foundation.

In keeping with that forward thinking philosophy, I would like to introduce you to a business enhancement program organized by Branford First Selectmen Jamie Cosgrove, local utilities and Bob Babcock of Branford Clean Energy Committee. Attached is an article from the Business Section of the CT POST from March 14th. They created a program that enhanced the ability of local small businesses to participate in the various Energize Connecticut programs. The response of the Branford business community has been beyond expectations.

We would like to meet with you and the Newtown Director of Economic Development to review how Babcock with the CT Energy Solutions team could assist in creating these programs in Newtown. These programs will highlight Newtown's continued commitment to local small businesses.

We will contact you in the near future to discuss the possibilities of bringing this to Newtown.

Sincerely,

W. Gary Peters

Bob Babcock

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CC: Kimberly Chiappetta, Director Economic Development
Newtown Chamber of Commerce

How one CT town is teaming with Eversource to reduce energy bills

[CT Post 3/13/23](#)

[NH Register 3/14/23](#)

[Luther Turmelle](#)

March 13, 2023

Branford has a total of 1,800 businesses and if you give Bob Babcock enough time, he will visit all of them in an effort to extol the value of energy efficiency programs and clean power sources.

But right now, the Branford retiree is the point man in an effort to help the town's small businesses achieve maximum savings. Using a \$25,000 grant from the Energize Connecticut Community Partnership initiative - and using the full backing of First Selectman Jamie Cosgrove - Babcock and the [Branford Clean Energy Committee](#) has taken their message to the streets over the past year.

The committee's energy efficiency outreach efforts focus on directing local small businesses to explore the Energize Connecticut programs Eversource offers, primarily the Small Business Energy Advantage program, according to company spokesman Mitch Gross. The group refers to the outreach campaign as Branford "BEE," the acronym stands for Business Energy Efficiency.

Out of the 82 small businesses, organizations and houses of worship that Babcock and the committee reached out to in the first year, nearly 60 have taken, or are taking steps to save energy.

"I love the challenge of a sale," said Babcock. "What I'm doing now is fun for me."

Babcock is on his second retirement. The first came in 1996, when he retired as president of Hartford Fire Equipment. Babcock then became president of another company, Fire Protection Testing, Inc. and was there for nearly 15 years before retiring again in 2017.

Cosgrove said it's important for the town to do what it can to help keep Branford's small business community thriving.

"There is so much related to energy costs that is outside the control of a business," he said. "What is within your control is how much energy you use."

The [Energize Connecticut Community Partnership Initiative](#) provides funding for local community groups, non-profit organizations, and municipalities to leverage their local knowledge and relationships to raise awareness and measurable participation in energy efficiency programs by those who live and work in their community.

Babcock said small businesses are often overlooked when the discussion of energy costs occurs.

"Big companies have staff that have a high level of expertise when it comes to energy," he said. "The little guy doesn't the level of expertise and he doesn't have the money to hire someone to do it for him." One business that sought to take advantage of the energy efficiency offerings was Branford's Parthenon Diner and Restaurant. Owner John Soulas had more efficient lighting and refrigeration units installed. He said has seen a 10-to-12 percent decrease in his electric bills.

"That may not seem like a lot, but every little bit helps," said Soulas, who owns three other Connecticut diners in Danbury, Old Saybrook and Mystic. Two of them have undergone similar efficiency improvements, he said.

"We like to stay ahead of the curve," Soulas said.

Another small business that has done the efficiency improvements done is Be Salon at 887 West Main Street. Owner Beth Tramontano, who has owned the salon for four years admitted she wasn't an easy sell at first.

"I said, 'What is this?' " Tramontano said. "I didn't want to get involved. It sounded too good to be true."

But through word of mouth and through visits to other small businesses around town that had already had energy efficiency improvements done, her resistance was broken down.

"It was so easy to work with everybody," Tramontano said.

All of the improvements at Be Salon involved lighting. Lights in the salon's rest room were linked to motion sensors, she said.

"The fluorescent lights were really hot," she said. "We'd be in here during the winter with the air conditioning on."

Those fluorescent lights were replaced with more efficient light-emitting diodes, or LEDs, which are semiconductor devices that emit light when current flows through them.

Work on Tramontano's salon was finished last August. She said her electric bill shrunk by between \$100 and \$150 per month over the final four months of 2022.

Tramontano said her share of the energy improvement only came to \$900. She will have it paid off in a year.

Ron Araujo, Eversource's director of energy efficiency implementation, said "the incentives the company offers are quite lucrative."

If a small business participates in the energy efficiency effort, Eversource pays for 80 percent of the cost for implementing the improvements using money coming from the energy efficiency fund which comes from a charge on customers' bills.

The remainder of the cost is paid for the by the participating, business, church, or organization, in monthly increments that are included in a customer's bill until the cost of the energy efficiency improvements is paid off.

"It makes it hassle-free for the customer," Araujo said of rolling the business' share of the cost of energy improvements into their monthly electric bill.

Babcock said the cost of the energy efficiency projects in Branford has been in the \$12,000 to \$16,000 range.

The top end of that range Church of Christ Congregational, where interior lighting was replaced in classrooms, the sanctuary and its Fellowship Hall. The church underwent some weatherization. Gross said.

Pastor James Hill said he's heard no complaints about the new lighting in the sanctuary.

"If they didn't like the lights, I'd be the first to hear about it," Hill said.

Later this month, the group will submit an even bigger grant request to the Energize Connecticut Community Partnership. Babcock declined to say how much Branford Clean Energy Committee is seeking this year.

"It's substantially more," he said in an interview at Town Hall.

Part of the reason the group is seeking a larger grant is that East Haven officials have asked the group to reach out to small businesses in that community.

During last year's grant funding round, seven other Connecticut communities - Bethel, Hamden, Middletown, New London, Waterbury, West Hartford and Wilton - received Community Partnership Initiative grants and are focusing their energy efficiency efforts at various

audiences, according to Gross. Those audiences can include income-eligible, renters and those with limited English proficiency as well as individuals residing within an Environmental Justice census tract, he said

But of those seven other communities, Wilton is the only other community joining Branford in focusing its efforts on small businesses. The Fairfield County has a program called Wilton Go Green.



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ctpost

How one CT town is teaming with Eversource to reduce energy bills



Bob Babcock
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