

Bedford Energy Task Force  
August 3, 2011

In attendance: Suzy Enos, Richard Jones, Brenda Kelly, Carrie Sarno, Kim Siebert, Walter St. Onge.

Also in attendance: Brad Hafer for the School Committee; Janet Powers for the Planning Board; Andreas Uthoff, prospective Task Force member.

**Minutes:** The June minutes unanimously approved.

The Task Force welcomed Ms. Suzy Enos to her first meeting as an official member. In Connecticut, where she lived before moving to Bedford, she was active in outreach to others who want to adopt greener skills/ strategies. Ms. Enos and her husband are re-commissioning their home so that it will be carbon-neutral.

Prospective member, Andreas Uthoff was also welcomed. Mr. Uthoff is a current member of the Conservation Committee. He has a deep interest in green issues and has just installed a solar hot-water system in his home.

**Task Force Chair and Clerk elections:** The question of who would step into the role of chair was tabled until the September meeting. Mr. St. Onge moved and Ms. Kelly seconded the nomination of Ms. Siebert for another term as Clerk. 5-0-0

Ms. Sarno agreed to chair the meeting.

**Grant submissions:** Bedford has received its Green Community designation, which includes \$148,150, contingent upon submission of a viable proposal for how the money will be used to reduce municipal energy use.

Mr. Jones discussed the need to arrive at a more detailed understanding of associated project costs. The details are needed before we can determine which of the possible projects would provide the biggest/ quickest return on investment. In order to satisfy the terms of the Green Community commitment—a 20% reduction—we need to reduce 16% by some means. Most of the projects on Mr. Jones list would require significant capital expenditures and possible bonding.

Mr. St. Onge proposed looking at projects already on the Town's list of needs to determine whether one or more match up with the grant guidelines. We do not have adequate time to dig deeply into the costs and the bonding process between now and the August 22<sup>nd</sup> deadline for submission.

Ms. Kelly expressed a desire to do something concrete with the grant funds and not spend it all on consultation. She worried also that Town Meeting might be leery of bonding a large project and that the necessary 2/3rds vote is a high bar to reach.

The 20% reduction commitment is a promise to make the effort, not a binding agreement. However, we do need to make large inroads to demonstrate good faith. There are conservation options and

occupancy behavior modifications to work on. Successfully reaching 20% will come from a combination of a lot of different efforts.

Since the grant proposal needs to come from the Town, not the Task Force, we must present it for approval to the Selectmen before we submit it. Mr. Jones will contact Mr. Reed so that the matter will come before the Selectmen at their August 15 meeting.

Mr. Jones will call Joanne Bissetta at the DOER to find out what projects have already gone through from other towns. He will then summarize a list of viable potential projects for Mr. Reed and for the Selectmen and send the Task Force members a copy of the summary.

Lighting is always a good place to find savings and the utilities will help with the cost. For example, the operating cost for LED traffic lights is substantially less than for conventional lights.

A caution about NSTAR was expressed in that they have a reputation for coming in with high bids. We do not have to hire them to do the work that they will subsidize.

Ms. Sarno suggested, for our work plan, that we go back to the matrix developed in our first year. The focus on building occupant behavior will be key.

Mr. Jones has spoken to the Superintendent of Schools about emphasizing energy conservation during the beginning of the year faculty/staff retreat. He is also considering how to publish individual Town department energy use in the fiscal year-end reports for Town Meeting.

If we can be of any assistance during the implementation of the energy policy, Mr. Jones will let us know.

During the budget process, energy efficiency projects should be given priority. There needs to be a shift in thinking, away from only upfront costs and toward life-cycle considerations. If this shift were to occur, what size projects would the Finance Committee and Capital Expenditures Committee consider?

**The Big Belly Trash Compactors:** With Green Community designation, Bedford also will receive 3 solar trash compactors from the State. Of the styles available, Mr. Warrington has chosen the one that has a recycling bin attached. In terms of placement, the DPW has some ball field sites in mind. It was noted that the compactors can be moved so that they are in the best locations for the various seasons. Springs Brook Park was mentioned as one possible seasonal location.

**Resources for the Town:** Ms. Kelly looked into what the Massachusetts Climate Action Network programs currently are to see if we can take advantage of them. MCAN has 2 programs right now: the “Cool Mass” program-- 7 participating communities---is one that requires 25% of town’s households to commit to lowering energy use by 25%. The second is called “Lo-cal” and is operated on a neighborhood level: 5-10 households sign, work to lower their carbon footprint, and host community meetings to share successes and strategies. MCAN offers tech support and education for residents in either program.

The “Cool Mass” program would need 1100 Bedford households to meet the 25% benchmark.

“Lo-cal” seems like a better match for Bedford. The initiative could potentially partner with the Transition Towns group that has formed which is also neighborhood or small cluster based.

All Task Force members should look at these two programs so that they can be discussed further at September’s meeting.

Ms. Enos suggested displaying a “progress bar” in one or more locations in town so that the whole community knows how well we’re doing toward the 20% reduction goal. It would also be great to publicize what the different school-based groups are doing to conserve energy.

The Task Force page on the website needs to be updated with expanded green resources opportunities. Ms. Kelly will consolidate info for residents to be posted on our website, including links to the Bedford TV home efficiency videos we made last year.

The Northeast Sustainable Energy Association’s Solar Tour is in October. We could provide a short list of the local houses people might want to see in. Joel Parks’ house in Bedford is always on the tour, for example. The Task Force could offer carpooling to the sites.

The infrared camera could be a big resource. Mr. Jones will talk to High School Principal Jon Sills to see how we might work this into a community service program. It could also be a good Eagle Scout project. Mr. Jones will update us in September on this initiative

Mr. St. Onge will talk to the Chamber of Commerce at their next meeting to see what kinds of energy needs the business community has that we could assist with. The suspicion is that most requests would come from smaller businesses since many of the big ones have already made big advances.

Knowing that word-of-mouth, neighbor-to-neighbor messaging works best, we need to create forums for residents to share information with one another.

Even though we will not have a booth on Bedford Day, we could create a hand out that would be available at the Bike Committee booth (or some other simpatico group’s booth.) Task Force members, as they stroll around Bedford Day, could wear “Ask me about the Energy Task Force” tags.

Members should let Ms. Kelly know if they want a tag.

Ms. Siebert will contact Cathy Silvestrone at the Planning office to confirm that we’ll meet with them in October. She will also send TF members the examples of submissions that Ms. Silvestrone forwarded to help us craft our energy draft for the Comprehensive Plan.

Ms. Powers remarked that the guidelines for the new comprehensive plan initiative has not yet passed at the State level but even if it weren’t to pass, Bedford could still include an energy component. The Comprehensive Plan will be guided by a Steering Committee and there will be a lot of chances for public input and involvement.

Ms. Siebert will summarize last year’s work for the Town Report. Submissions are due August 13<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Jones will ask Sherwood Ives' office to compile Task Force minutes archive packets for new/potential members, Ms. Enos and Mr. Uthoff.

**ACTION ITEMS:** TF to send resident resources to Ms. Kelly for website  
TF to contact Ms. Kelly re: "Ask me about the ETF" tags for Bedford Day  
TF to become familiar w/ "Cool Mass" and "Lo-cal" program options via MCAN

Mr. Jones: Contact Ms. Bisetta re: projects that have been approved  
Project summary for Selectmen/send final to committee  
Contact Mr. Reed to be placed on the 8/15 Selectmen's agenda  
Suggest alternative placement for solar trash compactors  
Arrange for info packets for Mr. Uthoff and Ms. Enos

Mr. Kelly: Collect resident resource info for the website  
Make "Ask me about the Energy Task Force" tags for Bedford Day

Mr. St. Onge: Chamber meeting

Ms. Siebert: Send Planning Board/Comprehensive Plan info  
Contact Ms. Silvestone @ the Planning office  
Year-end report for Town Report

Mr. Uthoff: Submit application to become TF member

**Next meeting: Wednesday, Sept: 14<sup>th</sup> 7:30.**

**Proposed agenda:** Election of chair

Mr. Jones: update on solar trash compactor placement  
Update on infrared camera/HS community service  
Preparing for the Planning Board meeting in October  
Mr. St Onge: Chamber meeting  
Flier for Bedford Day?

Mr. St Onge motioned that the meeting adjourn; Ms. Enos seconded. 5-0-0

Respectfully submitted,  
Kim Siebert, Clerk