

Conservation Commission
Sherman, Connecticut



December 14, 2011

The Conservation Commission Meeting was called to order at 7:13 PM on December 14, 2011.

Present: Joe Keneally, Chairman, Ashleigh Blake, Pat Bailey, Colette Shulman,
Helen Bray, Clerk

Guest: Tony Mitchell, Northwest Conservation District (NCD)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

No minutes were approved.

ENERGY TASK FORCE

Tony Mitchell from Northwest Conservation District was at this meeting to speak about energy. He started by saying that the NCD at one time was known for soils and water, and still is. Now they work with most natural resources. It is a group of natural resource professionals whose job is to provide scientific assistance to towns, organizations, and individuals. They do receive some funding from the state. NCD applies for grants which are now used to help towns with energy conservation. Their website is conservect.org. Their goal is to convert energy use in northwestern Connecticut away from fossil fuels.

The NCD accomplishes this by providing help in three ways - (1) Conservation (2) Energy efficiency. Connecticut Energy Efficiency Fund is administrated by the power company and they collect money on electric bills. The power company uses this money to get people to conserve energy. They will inspect buildings and recommend what needs to be done to be more energy efficient. (3) Renewable sources of energy. This is the harder one to get people to do since it costs some money. Sterling Planet will no longer be providing this. Cornwall, Ct. Has done the best to get people to use clean energy. This is because of their hard work, such as going door to door, and showing up everywhere to educate people. They got the free solar panels on the town hall.

Sherman had 2.8% committed to clean energy. There will be a community outreach program available to towns since people lack knowledge on why they should have clean energy. Right now the numbers are not rising and education should help. Colette suggested that if people were to go door to door they should have a simple packet of information to hand out.

Tony had handed out copies for the Energy Program of the NCD. The NCD staff would like to meet with each Town Energy Task Force to promote sign-ups to the Clean Energy Options and Home Energy Solutions, to help plan Energy Programs. Tony would like to help Sherman get their information into the Portfolio Manager which is an interactive energy tool that allows you to track and assess energy and water consumption in all buildings in a secure online environment. The Portfolio Manager can help manage energy and water consumption for all buildings, rate building energy performance, estimate carbon footprint, set investment priorities, verify and track progress of improvement projects and gain EPA recognition. Joe had sent Tony the spread sheets that were done for the Sherman buildings and he found it useful for a start.

Tony discussed his own solar panels on his home that he leases. Colette mentioned that most people do not have the time to work all this out. Tony replied that the best place to get information is with the people that sell solar panels and if you are interested in buying they do all the paperwork.

Anyone needing help and information regarding solar panels should contact Clean Energy Finance & Investment Authority.

Soon, the Connecticut Energy Efficiency Fund and Clean Energy Finance and Investment Authority (formerly the Connecticut Clean Energy Fund) will unveil a new jointly-administered community based initiative promoting efficiency and renewable energy programs to Connecticut's residents, businesses and municipalities. The new Clean Energy Communities program is the successor to the Connecticut Clean Energy Communities programs and will feature new community action steps and rewards. The following is a brief outline of the key elements of the program. (1) Make the Municipal Energy Saving Pledge, 20% by 2015. (2) Make the Municipal Clean Energy Pledge. (3a) Earn Clean Energy Points. (3b) Earn Energy Efficiency Points.

Home Energy Solutions is a place to contact to have an audit done on a home. A certificate can be acquired for a new refrigerator and it can be tracked to your town and the town will receive credit for it.

Tony feels there is potential in Sherman for sign-ups. A place to put the information to educate people would be on the town website. Joe thought the commission should have another energy fair since the first one on the town green was successful. This time it could be held during winter indoors. Tony suggested showing films regularly. The best way to educate people is to speak to them directly if they were to attend meetings dealing with energy. Tony volunteered to do walk-throughs in any of the town buildings, starting with the school. Joe agreed to do it with him. Tony would also like to get together with some of the commissioners to get started on entering the data for town buildings for the Portfolio Manager. Joe had spread sheets that Art had put together and hopefully he can help out.

Heating with pellets, which is clean energy was discussed and also geothermal which is highly efficient, since you do not pay for the source, which is in the ground. It does use electricity. The building must be well insulated. There is a website that lists renewable energy resources in northwest Connecticut.

Joe would like Tony to come back for the billing records and a walk through school. Tony also suggested looking at the building permits to be sure of the amount of people that have installed geothermal and solar panels. The CC should have their own page on the town website containing all the information on energy conservation, and the minutes of the CC meetings. Tony would like to receive a copy of the minutes.

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Since Joe is planning on leaving the Conservation Commission he asked the commissioners that were present, and Art Crane, if anyone would be interested in serving as Chairman. No one accepted. Colette suggested making sure all commissioners attend the next meeting, even if it means changing the date, and Joe agreed to attend.

There were two re-appointments, Ashleigh and Pat, starting January 1, 2012. Joe will postpone his resignation for now.

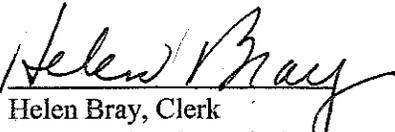
SCHOOL WALK-THROUGH

Joe suggested meeting with Frank Spaziani and Tony Mitchell before the meeting on January 11, 2012 to walk through the school and then they can discuss their findings at the meeting at 7 PM.

There being no further business Joe made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Colette and so moved. Meeting adjourned at 10:15 PM.

THE NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED IS ON JANUARY 11, 2012

Respectfully submitted,


Helen Bray, Clerk
Conservation Commission