

NWEAC Municipal Officials Meeting at Mt. Kisco Library

Mt. Kisco Library, April 8, 2013

Present: Howard Arden (Armonk); Lee Roberts & Mark Theilking (Bedford); Lee Beauchamp (Cortlandt); Leo Weigman (Croton); Peter Parsons & Mike Gordon (Lewisboro); Michael Cindrich, Jim Palmer & Joe Cerrantani (Mt. Kisco); Mark Rubeo (Mt. Pleasant); Beth Sauerhaft & Barrett Silver (New Castle); Amy Rosmarin (North Salem); Mary Foster & K Kain (Peekskill); Peter Scherer (Pleasantville); Jon Powers (Pound Ridge); Susanne Donnelly (Ossining, Town); Mary Beth Murphy (Somers); Jerry Robock (Yorktown); Nina Orville (SWEAC); Herb Oringel (NWEAC Chair); Dan Welsh (NWEAC Vice Chair); Victoria Gearity (NWEAC Secretary); Vince Salvatore (NWEAC Treasurer & Counsel)

The meeting began at 5:11. NWEAC Chair Herb Oringel welcomed the attendees, offered a brief agenda overview, and updated attendees on the expanding collaboration between NWEAC and SWEAC. Together these groups represent more than 2/3 of Westchester's population, and conversations are ongoing with more communities that are considering joining NWEAC/SWEAC.

Community Choice Aggregation (CCA)

Mike Gordon walked attendees through a PowerPoint presentation on legislation for a potential pilot program of Community Choice Aggregation (CCA). This effort is in response to meeting with NYS Assemblywoman and Chair of the Assembly Energy Committee, Amy Paulin, who asked NWEAC to provide information that may be used by the committee to craft legislation for a CCA pilot.

Mike offered an overview of CCA programs that exist in various forms in six states (CA, IL, MA, NJ, OH, RI). CCAs address the source for buying and building energy supplies from an energy service companies (ESCO). Energy delivery, line repairs, service and billing would continue to come through ConEd or NYSEG.

Regarding the cost of CCA, municipalities will be eligible to consider responses to RFPs that offer a lower rate than the current ConEd/NYSEG rates. There may also be options such as fixed price contract or renewable sources that customers can select.

If NYS approves CCA pilot legislation, NWEAC municipalities would send out RFPs allowing ESCOs to compete for large blocks of customers. The city, town or village board can then opt-in to a three-year agreement for all customers in that municipality. Individual customers can choose to opt-out. Exceptions to the municipality blanket opt-in are customers who currently have an ESCO.

There was also discussion about which commercial customers will be eligible to be included. It was understood that small businesses that pay a residential energy rate are inherently included. For larger commercial consumers, the answer was unclear. Mike and members of the NWEAC exec committee will look into that possibility.

A CCA also introduces the possibility of including a small percentage of the savings to be directed into a fund that NWEAC could apply toward further energy efficiency programs that don't require NYS enabling legislation.

Wednesday, April 17 at 12:30 there will be a conference call with people working with CCAs in IL and Marin County. During this call, participants will discuss details of how other programs have succeeded or learned from failure. One question that will be asked will be why current ESCO users are not included.

An initial draft for the Assembly Energy Committee has been created. It will be presented to the Public Service Commission before being officially introduced as legislation for consideration in Albany.

Municipality Facilities Energy Reduction

Lee Beauchamp presented the results of an ambitious initiative undertaken by the town of Cortlandt. The town council sought to reduce the municipality's energy consumption by 25%. In the five categories measured (gas, diesel, heating, electric, natural gas) they saw significant reductions, in some cases exceeding or closely approaching their target.

Some of the actions that lead to the energy reductions were use of a grant to change lighting fixtures and occupancy sensors. Intellidyne units were installed on boilers to improve the HVAC efficiency on an old system. Also, their Green Team helped change habits through staff education.

Cortlandt is considering future projects that will expand their efficiency measures, such as energy performance contracting to bundle projects. Nina Orville reported that one example of energy performance contracting being successful is Yonkers' new street lights where they anticipated saving \$1M over the coming 10 years.

Nina also recommended that municipalities look into Utility TRAC, a software that identifies existing problems in facilities & potential efficiency improvements, as well as measures green house gas impact. SWEAC municipalities that have already implemented this software are White Plains and Greenburg. Most municipalities opt for the free set-up and 15-month access, after which time there will be a reasonable fee.

Solar, Municipal

Vince Salvatore reported that we are still in the early stages of identifying potential municipal sites for solar installations. Small facilities qualify and should be included, but it is the larger spaces that cover the costs. For this reason schools are being approached to be part of this effort.

NYPA customers are less responsive because they do not qualify for NYSERDA grants. NWEAC & SWEAC is asking to restructure the systems benefits charge by delivering a petition to the Public Service Commission. NYPA customers are invited to sign to the consent letter that states, "yes, add us to the public service petition."

The systems benefits charge could be applied on a meter-to-meter basis, allowing customers to opt-in only for meters that are good solar candidates. Opting-in to the systems benefits charges opens the door to solar array financing.

Municipalities interested in pursuing these opportunities in solar should contact Vince (vincent.d.salvatore.jr@gmail.com) so he can connect you with Ted Jenkins.

Solar, Residential

Nina Orville updated us about the Solarize Program which would encourage individual homeowners to install solar arrays through an NWEAC-SWEAC residential solar aggregation program.

One of the impediments to bringing down the cost of solar installations in Westchester is the diversity of the regulations process across municipalities. All NWEAC & SWEAC community leaders are invited to attend a half-day workshop on Wednesday, May 1 at Pace Law. The focus will be on streamlining the permitting process. Register online today for this free workshop.

<http://solaroutreach.org/events/westcheste-solar-permitting-workshop/#.UW6Y2aJwpXe>

Energy Improvement Corporation (EIC) & Energize

Mark Theilking reported that the EIC membership has grown to six municipalities, plus three more that have passed their enabling legislation, and others have begun this process. An additional half-million dollars has been offered by NYS to expand eligibility for the EIC across the state. As funding and credit capacity grows, the challenge now turns to getting leads on commercial property owners that seek to take advantage of this program.

As Tom Bregman was unable to attend, Mark gave an Energize update as well. Energize has launched across 13 NWEAC municipalities. They are expanding their reach by developing a library sponsor program to help facilitate the application process. Also in the works is a program to engage high school students in Energize. A few stats updates: 2,000 sign-ups; 1,100 assessments; and more than 300 homes have been Energized. That represents a savings of \$325,000 in energy costs, and 744 metric tons of CO2.

Herb Oringel thanked all who attended. The meeting adjourned at 6:45.