

**Agawam Energy Commission Meeting Minutes September 11, 2018**      **APPROVED**

**Present:** Marc Strange, Jen Bonfiglio, Christopher Golba, Ronald Wieners, Rosemary Sandlin, Les Tingley, Douglas White, Mark Morris, Leslie Joseph, Bob Rossi, Anthony Suffriti

**Not Present:** Mayor William Sapelli, Erik Wight

**Visitors:** Karen Bouquillon (RISE Engineering), Susan Olshuff (Ener-G-Save), William Clark (resident), Corinne Winegard (resident)

**1. Minutes from the 6/12/2018** meeting were unanimously approved. Ron Wieners name misspell was corrected.

**2. Emergency Fuel Assistance program (formerly called Fuel Assistance)** was discussed. Mayor Sapelli referred this program to the Energy Commission with the possibility of a subcommittee being formed to manage the application and approval process. Rosemary Sandlin provided some background and concerns about the program. The program has been funded (< \$4000) from various fundraising activities and from resident donations solicited through their water bills. The Mayor's Cup, a golf tournament at the Agawam Golf Club, was proposed as a possible fundraiser, but will not take place on September 29.

Much discussion questioned the legalities around the program. Was it permitted and designated as a charity (Bob Rossi)? The program has been described as non-profit, but legally may not be one. How is the money dispersed? Currently, Erik Wight's billing department staffers decide who will receive \$100 fuel (oil) allotment. Is this program in line with the mission statement of the energy commission? (Leslie Joseph). Is there funding available for fuel assistance in town through other means? Should this program stand on its own? Mark Morris made the motion to form a subcommittee of the commission on this issue. The motion was seconded and voted on. **The motion did not pass.**

**3. Karen Bouquillon, RISE Engineering, Energy Specialist,** presented information to members about a Mass Save Program designed to provide energy-efficiency assistance to multi-family buildings (5 or more units) in town. Examples of entire building assistance: insulation, heat system replacement, boiler replacement, lighting, Energy Star appliances. A free energy energy assessment is provided from Columbia Gas of MA. Part of this funding comes from resident gas and electric utility bills that will expire in December 2018, so this is a good time for owners to make this kind of change. Karen asked the group for assistance in generating ways to get the word out to owners and residents who could benefit from this program. She gave some examples of what other towns have done; door -to-door visits; town meeting for relevant properties. Karen also stated that multi-family units that are commercially metered can benefit from a similar program with larger rebates. **No specific actions were motioned or voted by the commission.**

**4.** Marc Strange presented information about **PACE (Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy Program)**. It is a Mass Save program for commercial, industrial and multi-family (> 5 units) buildings in town. It offers a new way to finance energy improvements, such as energy-efficiency projects, renewables, and gas line extensions. The Agawam Town Council voted to adopt the state's PACE program in July 2018. Ron Wieners asked about a list of properties in town that could benefit from this program. **Marc has been developing a list of town properties and will share it with members** and he added that Agawam has not reached the \$250,000 threshold, the minimum investment required to be



able to take advantage of the PACE program. Mark Morris raised the question about what should this group be doing to get the word out. Les Tingley, “We need to think efficiently and larger,” in getting the word to the residents, possibly quarterly press releases. Susan Orshhuff shared that Chicopee sponsored “Pub Sessions” to promote the program. **Marc will refer this question to the Communications Task Force.**

5. **Susan Olshuff, Ener-G-Save**, (second visit from Ener-G-Save representative; first visit in May 2018). She asked for the group’s assistance with outreach to Agawam homeowners to help them take advantage of Ener-G-Save’s programs for energy efficiency.

- a. One objective is to increase the number of people in town getting free energy assessments. Susan shared some promotion examples from other communities: East Hampton town officials getting energy audits, local businesses connecting with their employees, religious buildings having energy audits, stores (e.g. Rocky’s Hardware) offering coupons to residents getting an energy audit. Rosemary Sandlin raised the possibility of having an information table at the Harvest Fair on Sunday, October 13, 2018 (Susan Divilliari, manager of East Hampton Savings Bank, would be the contact person). It was also suggested that social media (Agawam’s Facebook page) could be used to promote the program. Susan is willing to work with the Communications Task Force to assist with promotion of the energy assessments. Bob Rossi stated he is open to filming an energy audit of his home.
- b. A second objective is to build energy awareness through the town’s schools with a project/contest. Students at all levels create projects, write letters to businesses and elected officials, calculate their environmental footprint and sign pledge cards to make a change. Projects could be presented at a town spring event (possibly Earth Day Fair). Last year’s winning town was Concord, MA. One town will be selected for the 2018-2019 school year. Ener-G-Save can provide some funding for this project. Susan was impressed with the enthusiasm of this group as an indicator that Agawam could be a good choice for this project.

**No specific actions were motioned or voted by the commission on this agenda item.**

#### **5. Sub-committees (Task Forces)**

- a. **Communications Task Force** - Les Tingley reported that new camera equipment has been installed at the Junior High with a larger broadcast studio. This is a great opportunity for Agawam to improve its transmissions to residents.
- b. **Green Energy Task Force** - William Clark asked for an update on Green Community designation, specifically asking about requirements to maintain that designation. Marc Strange stated that there is a five-year plan in which Agawam has spent the allotted amount of money on energy saving projects and that in 2019, the town will be able to apply for more grants. **The Green Communities Task Force and Marc Strange will check on Green Community requirements.**
- c. **Grant Writing Task Force** - Anthony Suffriti questioned the need for a grant writer. There was discussion by the entire committee about this. It was suggested that possibly someone could be hired to teach department heads how to write grants, but that presents a time issue.



**6. Any other topics relevant to the committee's scope and purpose**

- a. Referring back to the bylaws, Leslie Joseph motioned to make no wording changes to "climate change" language in Article V. **The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**
- b. Leslie Joseph suggested that time limits on agenda items be added so that the meeting could run more efficiently. The next agenda will experiment with suggested time estimates for items.
- c. There was a concern raised about the wasted water by the drain at the School Street Splash Park. The cost of a well was too expensive (\$80, 000) and developing a recycling plan was too complicated, so having a drain and paying an on-going water bill was chosen.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:47 p.m.

**Next meeting of the Agawam Energy Commission  
Tuesday, October 9, 2018, at the Agawam DPW at 5 p.m**