

Northport Energy Action Taskforce, Inc.  
Meeting Minutes  
November 10, 2016

Meeting called to order 9:05 AM

Members Attending:

Doug and Ann McInnis, Jan Rygwelski, Joe DeFors, Jane Gale, Russ and Jane Packard, Dick Lang, George Wellman, Tom Gallery, Peter Wolcott, Steve Smiley, Pat Scott, Bill Collins, Gene Garthe, Phil VonVoigtlander, Lois Bahle, Jim Landes, Phil Loud, Tom Van Pelt, Dave Petrove, Tim Overdier

**I. Approve Agenda**

**II. Treasurer Report**

Northport Energy Balance: \$1,255.42

**III. Renewable Energy**

**A. Cherryland Electric**

Tom Van Pelt had new cost information on the Cherryland Electric Community Solar Garden project. Participants will be eligible for a \$200 rebate on a solar panel purchase price of \$600. The new cost is \$1.21 a watt with an expected payback of 8 to 9 years. Investors earn 10 cents per kWh generated. The fixed array is located at Wolverine Power's headquarters east of Cadillac off M-55. Installation has begun and should be functioning this year.

Buy-all/Sell-all question - does solar installation need to be on Cherryland property? Tom said it can be on other property but needs to hook-up to Cherryland's electrical system. Legal and other contractual information still forth coming.

Local fire department training: In emergency situations fire/rescue personnel need to know more about home solar installations and potential hazards. Without rapid shut down high voltages from a solar system can be dangerous to rescue personnel. Tom is looking for us to help him find sources of information about solar systems. Steve Smiley offered to help.

**B. Senate Bills**

Today the full Senate will be voting on SB-437 & 438. Several of our members sent emails or made calls to Senator Booher recommending he vote against the bills because of the negative impact they have on net metering. Also, there is a grand fathering provision that limits net metering to 10 years - beginning with the original installation date. There are other provisions which weaken the State's overall renewable energy effort.

**C. Miscellaneous Renewable Energy Comments**

Phil Von Voigtlander commented on Consumers Energy Solar Gardens Program. They have two sites: Grand Valley State University and ----- . Solar energy credit is based on the participant's subscription level. For years 1 - 5 the credit will be based on a fixed energy and capacity credit of \$0.075/kWh. For years 6 - 25 of the program the credit will be based on market value of energy and capacity produced. For more information visit website, [consumersenergy.com/solargardens](http://consumersenergy.com/solargardens) .

Are solar systems subject to taxation? Some townships assessors have or may be taxing solar as residential personal property. A ruling by the State Tax Commission mandated that assessors follow this requirement. There is the possibility that the Treasury Department might reverse the Tax Commission ruling.

Northport Energy's goal of promoting 100% renewable energy for our local communities is facing many unknowns based on recent legislation proposals. Steve Smiley pointed out our emphasis may need to shift to larger solar installations (100 Kw systems) and locations where there is more space such as farms. REAP grants are a good funding opportunity for small businesses and farmers. Next deadline for REAP grants is April 30, 2017. Can build a system for around \$2.00 a watt.

Joe DeFors offered the idea of promoting electric vehicle charging system in Leelanau county. Worth considering when combined with costs offset by solar and attractive to businesses. One location - south roof of boathouse in Northport. Easily done said Tom Gallery. Have conversation with business community and Chamber of Commerce - want to be transparent.

#### D. Miscellaneous - General

1. Joe outlined future Northport Energy marketing ideas:

We have 160 people on our mailing list. Last week it was used to have people call legislators regarding the Senate Bills. This is an educating and informing tool.

Be more official in our annual membership drive. Perhaps in January - have an open meeting and refreshments.

Dues- more likely to be involved when have "skin" in the game.

Discussion followed the idea of raising dues from \$10 to \$20. The Board of Directors then quickly convened. Steve Smiley moved to change dues to \$20 a year and authorized Joe DeFors to promote the membership and dues to the people on his list and our webpage. Ann McInnis seconded. Board members Phil VonVoigtlander, Peter Wolcott, Steve Smiley, Jim Landes, Ann and Doug McInnis approve the change in dues to \$20 annually.

Lastly it was suggested we put more information out in different places. Despite our accomplishments there are local businesses and people who are not familiar with our nonprofit Northport Energy organization and its mission.

2. LWVLC Solar Tour: Thanks to several Northport Energy members who helped both in setting up the tour and who were docents at several tour sites.

3. Will be scheduling home energy audits. Russ Packard, Jim Landes, Don Frerichs, Steve Smiley offered to help with audits. Home audit will include the suitability for a solar installation.

4. Groundwork Fellowship Program: Northport Energy is supporting the Fellowship Program and is distributing information to our membership. The following has been posted on our website.

*The Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities has announced an ambitious effort to fund five new fellowship positions that would attract young innovators to provide program staffing support for Groundwork initiatives. Of the five, one in particular - the proposed Clean Energy Fellow - would benefit and support the Northport Energy 100% effort. Groundwork is seeking funding support to cover stipends, housing and mentoring for the new fellowship positions. If you are interested in supporting this worthy effort, you may download the full program description and contact information*

Meeting adjourned 10:50 AM