

Northport Energy Action Taskforce, Inc.
Meeting Minutes
December 8, 2016

Meeting called to order 9:05 AM

Members Attending:

Doug and Ann McInnis, Jan Rygwelski, Joe DeFors, Jane Gale, Russ and Jane Packard, George Wellman, Peter Wolcott, Steve Smiley, Bill Collins, Phil VonVoigtlander, Lois Bahle, Jim Landes, Phil Loud, Dave Petrove, Kent Shoemaker, Kate Thornhill

I. Approve Agenda

II. Treasurer Report

Northport Energy Balance: \$1,305.42

III. Renewable Energy-Misc.

A. Michigan Senate Bills

State Legislature considering SB 437 & 438. Bills still contain provisions that eliminate true net metering by extending the payback period from 10 years to 30 years, and a grand fathering provision that limits net metering to 10 years - beginning with the original installation date. If passed will basically eliminate all future solar installations, thousands of jobs in Michigan. Call Ray Franz (517-373-0825) and urge him to Vote against these current bills.

B. Marketing and Outreach

Joe presented his ideas on our membership and fund raising drive. They included defining the campaign period, campaign goals, how to get the word out and fund raising details. Discussion followed.

Campaign period: End of year vs. spring time. End of year advantage - tax deduction time and a giving time of year.

Campaign goals: Need to be more specific with renewable energy ideas, such as, large solar array for Cherryland, electric vehicle charging stations for Northport and Suttons Bay, energy efficiency supplies for households.

Getting the word out: We have a basic email list but could promote our mission and goal in a monthly column/articles in local papers.

Fundraising: There could be an annual membership pledge drive that could feature, matching pledge challenges, pledges that may be general or directed and contributions that would be tax deductible. Membership categories: \$20 per Household, \$200 Sustaining Household and \$2,000 Life Member.

After discussing the above areas, it was decided that the Marketing and Outreach Committee immediately proceed with the membership drive for 2017. Steve made a motion that the Marketing Committee move forward with a holiday membership drive immediately. Motion seconded by Bill Collins and passed unanimously. The drive will be timely as our Annual Membership meeting is on January 12, 2017. Also, an increase in number of members is a plus marketing detail for future projects.

IV. Renewable Energy Projects

A. Cherryland Buy-all/Sell-all

Individuals or businesses who are Cherryland customers can contract with Cherryland to sell 100% of the power they generate for a rate of 10 cents per kWh. Grant money and tax credits are available making the project viable. However, some communities recently have considered the solar installations as personal property subject to property tax. Taxing solar property is counter-productive to the community, economy, business development and jobs. There is some effort to get the State to exempt solar, wind, etc. from property taxes.

B. New Committees

1. Public Policy Committee Recently proposed public policies can greatly affect our mission. It was decided that Northport Energy should establish a Public Policy Committee to identify and research policy issues that impact renewable energy initiatives. Peter, Tom, Kate, Doug agreed to be on committee. Skip Pruss will be asked.

2. Project Committee It was decided that a Project Committee would be an effective way to identify, evaluate and propose new renewable energy projects. Steve, Tom, Phil, Doug and John Todd agreed to work on this committee.

B. Cherryland Electric Board of Director

CE is seeking to fill a vacancy on their Board. Interested candidates can fill out an application on their website. Probably looking for someone who is rounded and broad experienced. Deadline is December 15th.

C. Leo Creek Solar Irrigation Project

Kate Thornhill discussed her Suttons Bay outdoor educational permaculture project. The 9.5 acre property has required a lot of work involving removal of invasive plants but is expected to be available to the public soon and will incorporate a solar drip irrigation system. A good public outreach for solar as well as permaculture. Steve and Tom are helping with the solar installation.

Meeting adjourned 10:50 AM