

Haverhill Mayor's Energy Task Force

19 April 2007 Meeting Minutes

Mayor's Office, Haverhill City Hall (moved from Room 301)

Monday 19 April 2007 7:00 pm

Task force members in attendance with asterisk:

- Mike LaBonte, Chairman *
- David Swartz - Haverhill City Council
- Jeff Dill - Haverhill Building Department

Others in attendance:

- Ted Becker, Haverhill citizen
- Jack Bevelaqua, Haverhill citizen, Mass. DOER
- John Kauppinen, NORESKO

Mike LaBonte conducted the meeting

Mike LaBonte made materials available to attendees:

- Agenda sheet
- Draft task force report document
- Earth Day Fair press release
- State energy efficiency initiative press release
- MTC Clean Energy Choice program web pages

Mike said he had received a phone call from Vinny Ouellette, director of the Haverhill Citizen's Center. Vinny needs to provide additional information regarding energy initiatives in Haverhill to the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative (MTC) in conjunction with his grant application for the photovoltaic array project for the Citizen's Center. In particular he needed biographical information for task force members as part of a package due to the MTC by Friday, April 20. It was Mike's understanding that the City Clerk's office had since been helping Vinny with this. Jack Bevelaqua said that Vinny should call him for help should there be any confusion over MTC reporting requirements. There was some discussion about who the official task force members are. Mike said that appointments for Ted Becker and Jared Fortna were under consideration, and he would check with the Mayor's office to clarify membership.

Mike said that he would meet with Bob Ward of the Water and Waste Water Department the next day. It was noted that this department is the single largest electric power user on the city budget. Jack suggested asking for information regarding the breakdown of electric power usage within the department.

An email was received from Jenna Wells of HealthLink, a non-profit organization based in Swapscott.

Jenna had spotted our web site and asked Mike to complete a survey on local energy initiatives. Jenna advised Mike on the MTC Clean Energy Choice program, suggesting that Haverhill make use of this.

Mike said that he would be attending the DOER Energy Savings Performance Contracting Workshop in Worcester April 26, 2007. This should be a valuable source of information for the task force. Eileen McHugh of DOER has asked if Mike can bring certain information about one Haverhill school building. This would be used to run a benchmark on software being tested by DOER.

Mike will also be attending an Earth Day Fair Sunday, April 22, 2007 at the Haverhill Universalist Unitarian Church. The press release for this event mentions the task force, but mistakenly calls us the Environmental Task Force. Mike will have his own photo-voltaic solar panel on display for the event.

Referring to the MTC Clean Energy Choice program web pages, Mike explained this program. All Massachusetts cities accumulate grant credit as their citizens buy green power. According to the latest MTC report Haverhill has accumulated \$9,002 in credits due to the green power purchases of 61 Haverhill households. These credits can be used for a number of clean energy purchases. We discussed ideas for encouraging more Haverhill citizens to buy green power, to boost the credit accumulation rate. It was agreed that information regarding these programs is confusing, and a public education program might help.

The subject turned to energy savings performance contracts (ESPC). Mike invited guest John Kauppinen of NORESKO to inform the group regarding the general workings of ESPCs. John distributed a presentation. This explained the legislative changes behind the new RFQ process, and showed examples of what other Massachusetts cities have done to improve energy performance. One question that came up concerned the selection of facilities to be analyzed. John's recommendation was to leave that up to each company responding to an RFQ. Mike wondered if Haverhill school buildings might already be optimized. John said that in Belmont, the school received most of the work under an ESPC. Jack pointed out that water conservation can also be part of an ESPC.

We discussed the challenges that might be faced by the city in pursuing an energy saving performance contract. John said that some cities simply find it difficult to choose once they have the responses to their RFQ, due to lack of apparent differentiation. Although pricing is not a part of the RFQ process, John advised asking each ESCo for their open book pricing on a few hypothetical services or installations, jobs that are well defined and should be easily quotable by all. Nothing in the RFQ legislation prevents this. Quincy had trouble deciding their ESPC because they did not ask about cost. We discussed the reasons why costs would matter when the net expenses are guaranteed, and decided that it should result in greater energy savings after the term of the contract, simply because more changes likely would have been made.

Concerning funding, John said that municipal leases were almost always used. The city's bond rating would be a factor. Mike recalled from an earlier meeting that the Moody's rating was stated as AA. Mike asked if the city might have to allocate unusual resources to coordinate the work. John said that as far as he knew no city has been hiring extra help for servicing ESPCs, although some had hired contractors to help evaluate the RFQ responses. Jack said that some of the challenges might lie in clarifying legal issues, and he recommended that the task force consult the City Solicitor to begin an interchange of ideas.

Referring to a state press release, Mike pointed out the announcement of a new \$2 million initiative to promote energy efficiency in Massachusetts. It states that Boston and four other cities, to be determined, would be chosen to replicate the success seen in Cambridge. Jack said that DOER was not involved, and therefore he could not advise on how to contact those responsible for the initiative. It was suggested that Brian Dempsey be contacted, and Mike said he would do this.

Mike said that he had met with Jared Fortna to outline a task force report. Mike then prepared the draft, which is little more than a skeleton at that point. Looking at the various appendices of the draft task force report, Ted Becker pointed out that he had sent MTC wind site survey grant application documents with as much information filled in as possible to Mike. Mike will attach those. The draft recommendations were discussed, and were found acceptable on a preliminary basis. Mike explained that the research section is intended to convey the findings of the task force that lead to the recommendations.

We discussed future meeting dates. Mike suggested accelerating the pace so that we might finalize the report by the end of May. May 3 was suggested for the next meeting.

The meeting ended at 8:55 pm

Minutes by Mike LaBonte