

## NHCETF Meeting Minutes for February 10, 2014

Present: Letty McPhedran, Hugh Davis, David Cooper, Richard LoPresti, Caroline Dumont, Sarah Baird, Kenny Foscue, Maggie Treichel (from CT Solar Challenge), Peter Callan (from Lantern Energy), Ben Koren (from Next Step Living), Joe and Joanne Gandolfi (guests from North Haven).

1. Sarah volunteered to take the Minutes. Introductions were made around the table.
2. The January 2014 minutes were reviewed and approved unanimously.
3. Maggie Treichel described CT Solar Challenge as a nonprofit town-based initiative promoting clean energy through educational outreach and cost reduction efforts. The CT Solar Challenge engages town leadership in a commitment agreement to promote solar locally. CT Solar Challenge then conducts solar workshops and Clean Energy demonstrations for the schools and helps homeowners to navigate the solar process. Educational workshops and a focus on transparency about the process are important in the initiative. An initial workshop is held for the Clean Energy Task Force in order to train the Task Force members. Points toward the Bright Ideas Grants can be earned through this program. Maggie explained that collective buying power and volunteer outreach and community networking efforts help to reduce the cost of going solar. CEFIA gives 3 points for every home that installs solar in your town, and for every KW of solar sold through the CT Solar Challenge, the town earns more points. Participation rates influence the size of the town-earned system. The typical Return on Investment (ROI) for a solar installation is about 7-9 years. There also is a projected increase in home equity value. If the town agrees to participate, the CT Solar Challenge sends out a launch date and has the first of three community solar workshops and begins to sign up residents for solar systems. The solar contractor does go through CEFIA, and the state pays a 33-34% rebate in addition to the 30% tax credit given by the Federal government (through 2016). Loans and Leases are available to the residents. Solar Systems are sales tax and property tax exempt. The town must sign a Letter of Commitment to initiate the program. Then the town designates a town Liaison (usually a task force member) to act as the primary contact between CTSC and the town. Volunteers and civic organizations are recruited. A space is provided by the town for the workshops. A streamlined process with a set permit fee is set. The Challenge includes a wide effort to engage the residents through various outlets and educational efforts. CT Solar will respond to the needs of each community. They table events and are present at events to promote the program. They also will offer solar tours of new installations when appropriate. Maggie noted that an HES (Home Energy Solutions) audit is a first step before any solar is installed. Hugh asked how long they have been in existence and how many towns are involved. Chester, Bethany, Madison, Clinton are currently involved, and Westbrook is about to sign on. A list of references is available upon request. A six month campaign with the possibility of an extension is typical. CT Solar has been operating for about one year, and the contractors are carefully vetted and have at least 5 yrs experience installing solar locally and meet stringent licensing criteria. SmartE loans and Solar Lease options are available. All participating Con-

tractors and Residents sign a contract that deals with repairs and warranties (for 20 years). Richard asked how Solar CT Challenge compares to Solar City, which engages in a leasing structure. Ben Koren responded that it is usually beneficial to buy the system rather than lease the system. Richard asked for clarification about the differences in the available programs. Peter clarified that when selling a house, the purchased system is an asset, whereas the leased system is an ongoing purchasing agreement. David asked about the PPA (Power Purchasing Agreement) and the costing structure. There is a time limit for this availability. Hugh asked about the procedure for the Task Force. It was agreed that we will discuss the proposal at the next meeting.

4. Energy Forum - Three articles appeared in the local papers, a notice was posted on the town calendar before the forum, and two articles appeared in local papers after it occurred. There was also a well received TV program about the forum. Several HES sign-ups were received at the forum by both vendors. Joanne explained her interest in the HES program. Peter explained that there are great financing options for Solar. On-bill financing now exists for new upgrades. A HES auditor can explain the current rebates for those who have had audits in the past. There used to be a 90 day window after an audit in which to implement suggested efficiency upgrades qualifying for rebates, but that has been changed. Now, a homeowner can call the vendor who did the original audit and have the upgrades performed anytime and still qualify for rebates, which include up to \$1 per square foot for attic and basement insulation and \$.50 on wall insulation. Furthermore, there is on-bill financing and no upfront payment for installations. Poonham Sidhu and Sabrina Pond from Project Green at the High School attended the Forum and wrote an article for the NorthHavenNews.com blog. Kenny asked Caroline to have the students send the article to him so that he can post it on the Task Force's Facebook site.

5. HES Campaign - What to do now. Kenny explained that one of the next things to do is to educate residents about what to do after having a Home Energy Solutions audit (HES). We also need to publicize the availability of the rebates and on-bill payments. David asked about r-values for walls and attic. Ben explained current standards. Ben from Next Step Living and Matt from Lantern Energy explained that they have worked to put together a unified HES outreach campaign with time targets and concrete goals. Ben asked for the Task Force to make a decision about what to call the challenge. Next Step Living can have lawn signs made to display when an energy audit is happening. Letty asked what UI was currently calling the HES campaign. Ben asked what other outreach activities North Haven can do. It was noted that High School kids talking to their parents and friends can be very effective. Kenny recommended that the vendors reach out to Anthony Giordano of Project Green. Richard brought up that UI needs to be in the loop. The Energize CT logo will be on the signs. Letty said that we could put lawn signs on lawns that have already had audits. Sarah thanked the vendors for consulting with the Task Force members about a community-specific slogan or logo for the HES campaign and recommended that efficiency should be included in the slogan. One idea for the campaign slogan is - The North Haven Energy Efficiency Challenge. Caroline asked about the Energize Hamden Campaign. Richard explained that it was a campaign administered through UI over a three month period. Richard will email the UI sign to everybody and thinks having a branded name is important but must be coordinated through UI. Ben said

that the vendors want to commit themselves to greater outreach and to more products and to support this effort with tabling and a canvassing effort. All canvassers hired will be vetted. Many canvassers are college educated, and all will be very articulate. Letty noted that Sheri had worked out a canvassing system, and Ben said that the vendors definitely can do the canvassing, but they will need the town's blessing. Hugh and Kenny discussed the idea of having Project Green kids going out with the canvassers. Letty said that the Project Green kids may not be interested. Kenny recommended going to the group first before rolling out a canvassing program. Richard reminded the vendors that there must be two known and vetted canvassing adults with any student for safety issues. Kenny raised the issue of an incentive for Project Green. Hugh said that the Project Green grant can be used as an incentive. Peter said that there can be a team-to-team incentive. For instance, vendors can offer a \$25 donation for each HES sign-up to each team, creating a competition between teams. Kenny said that we can use the yearly grant that we give Project Green for an incentive. After building community support, the vendors could send out a letter about the canvassing program. Timed incentives can be effective. All of this is contingent on the approval of UI. Kenny summarized the discussion points and recommended that we determine the preliminary name of the campaign. All agreed to The North Haven Energy Efficiency Challenge. Hugh asked the vendors before they left if they could be at Earth Day on April 5 from 10-2pm. Both vendors agreed to be there. Kenny noted that we need to facilitate more media outreach and have a media timeline.

#### 6. Discussion of Relationship between the Task Force and UI -

Sarah asked that the Task Force discuss their evolving role in the town and to clarify the role of the Task Force in relationship to UI. It was determined that the Task Force is an advisory board for the town, and that it works with UI and depends on them for programmatic support. Richard noted that the work of the Task Force is definitely a collaboration with UI and that UI would like direction from us and would love it if we could come up with what we'd like UI to do to support our efforts. It was noted that UI receives money from CEEF and helps communities to pay for things like signs during Clean Energy and Energy Efficiency campaigns. That's why it's important to keep UI in the loop with the Challenge. And HES campaign ideas should be run by UI to make sure they are falling within the parameters of the program. Richard said that the vendors should have gotten permission first from UI for the HES name. Caroline asked which parts of the program should have been passed by UI first. Kenny clarified that this is partnership and that Task Force members are volunteers and are doing their best to help the town. The Task Force needs to know what solar and efficiency program alternatives are out there. At our next meeting we will talk about Solar CT and other programs. David noted that one of the things that came up in Hamden was that they asked the town to notify the Task Force about all energy projects going on in the town. The Task Force agreed that this is also important in North Haven. Richard will check with Sheri if other programs can be promoted during canvassing. Caroline noted that deeper and broader is something UI historically has been interested in. Caroline wondered if we should take another look at our mission statement. Kenny noted that the Task Force was interested in a broader focus than HES and that we will be doing other programs also.

7. Earth Day - Letty borrowed from Russ Charest an Energy Savings Device Display Board, and the vendors will be present and promoting the HES campaign. Letty is requesting that someone else take over the setting up the Earth Day table next year. Caroline said that she will be helping at Earth Day this year. It will be an educational format.

Letty will send an email thank you to our two guests.

8. Middle School Building Committee input - Letty will write a letter to the Middle School Building Committee on behalf of the Task Force requesting that there be an ongoing focus on and commitment to Energy Efficiency in the new building.

Respectfully submitted by Sarah Baird