

ONEONTA, NEW YORK - MAY 9, 2012 - 7:00 P.M.

REGULAR MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL BOARD PG. 1

PRESENT: Chair David Hutchison
Commissioner Tracy Allen
Commissioner Dan Rorick
Commissioner Richard Denicore
Commissioner Dale Burrington
Commissioner George Palladino
Council Member Larry Malone

ABSENT: Commissioner Lucille Wiggin

Chair Hutchison called the regular meeting to order and called the roll.

Chair Hutchison recognized Mark Davies for a brief summary on the Sustainability Working group.

Mr. Davies of the Sustainability Working Group gave a brief history on how and why the group was formed and gave a brief update on their working to develop some sustainable direction in the 4 areas outlined in the 2010 'Oneonta 2030' report, community environmental and stewardship, transportation, energy and food. He said the challenges were in trying to find volunteers to commit time to the group and also try to find direction. He said basically the group was currently down to about 3 people and he wanted to try to get it going again and re-energize the membership and be able to move forward to try to do research into some of those particular areas. He said he would like to begin looking at how the group could work with other granting organizations to begin to bring money into the projects.

Chair Hutchison stated some of the areas mentioned have or were happening such as the city audit by Johnson Controls and recommendations were being implemented.

Mr. Davies stated that Johnson Controls has done a great job at identifying some of the areas in need. He said Johnson Controls took some of the items off the group's plate and the group just needs to find direction again and the energy behind it. He said the group had informally about 4 members and it was struggling with what exactly was their mandate and having people in the group with the expertise.

The board held a brief discussion on the matter.

Chair Hutchison suggested that Mr. Davies let the board know when the group was meeting.

Mr. Davies stated the group had been meeting on the 2nd Thursday of the month and was using the Basement Conference Room. He said their last meeting was in November. He said he was hoping to meet with the board and perhaps get some direction and try to re-energize everyone. He said he currently had more time to get folks going.

Chair Hutchison stated he could e-mail the board members the 'Oneonta 2030' report that had been presented by the group.

Commissioner Palladino questioned what Mr. Davies' saw the group doing in 2013.

Mr. Davies responded his first goal was to get a group of about 10-12 committed individuals that were really gung-ho about trying to work to make this happen and to begin re-examining what the group was doing. He said there were those 4 areas but perhaps they needed to open it up and begin to focus on how they would move those things forward. He said the initial idea was to have these 4 subcommittees that would then meet on their own and also begin moving forward and then have larger meetings where they would all come together and bring their information together. He said he would like to have things to offer to the Environmental Board and the Common Council as well as having long term plans and getting some grant money in. He said he would like to educate the public, work with the city and the local businesses in those 4 areas identified and long range, as well as short range plans.

ONEONTA, NEW YORK - MAY 9, 2012 - 7:00 P.M.

REGULAR MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL BOARD PG. 2

Chair Hutchison suggested that Mr. Davies takes some of the booklets in the lobby that were distributed by New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) regarding energy home audits.

The board held a brief discussion on other sustainability issues.

Commissioner Allen stated on campus there was a committee on related energy issues of about 16 very qualified people that he could ask if they would consider being a part of the group if Mr. Davies wanted him to do that.

Mr. Davies responded yes. He said he would plan an organizational meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Hutchison stated that the correction made to the March 14, 2012 minutes on page 2, paragraph 6, 1st line of removing “Rehab Building Specialist House” did not need to be made and should be reentered as Rehab Building Specialist Jeff House.

Without benefit of a motion, the board approved the minutes of the regular meeting held April 11, 2012 with the comment of reentering “Rehab Building Specialist Jeff House” on page 2, paragraph 6, line 1 of the March 14, 2012 minutes.

PETITIONERS (limited to comment)

Chair Hutchison recognized Mr. Jonathan Gell, Oneonta.

CORRESPONDENCE

Chair Hutchison reported on correspondence received.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS, BOARDS AND STANDING COMMITTEES

Creek Program [Allen-spring –odd years only]

Tree Program [Hutchison]

Watershed Protection District [Hutchison]

Sustainability Working group [Allen]

Creek Program [Allen-spring –odd years only]

Chair Hutchison stated that would be reported on in the spring of 2013.

Tree Program [Hutchison]

Chair Hutchison reported 31 trees were on order for delivery within the next couple weeks. They would be the ball and burlap type and there was no great urgency to get them planted but hoped arborist Brian Fawcett of Asbury Gardens does get them in shortly after delivery. He said the board could probably try to request more money for tree plantings because there was more money coming in from the city’s harvesting of trees and he suggested trying to do another 31 trees for fall planting on private properties.

Commissioner Palladino asked if that included the Dietz Street parking lot.

Chair Hutchison replied no even though it was all one program now.

Commissioner Palladino spoke briefly about the Dietz Street parking lot tree plantings, the costs and being done in coordination with the resurfacing of that lot. He said that in a meeting with the Mayor the Mayor said that the phases of the resurfacing of the Dietz Street had not been decided by the

ONEONTA, NEW YORK - MAY 9, 2012 - 7:00 P.M.

REGULAR MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL BOARD PG. 3

(Reports of Officers, etc) continued

Common Council yet. He said if it was done in a single phase it would allow them to put all 20 trees in providing there were sufficient funds.

Chair Hutchison stated that Mr. Gell had submitted some good ideas regarding plantings in that parking lot for the board to consider.

The board held a brief discussion on the matter.

Watershed Protection District [Hutchison]

Chair Hutchison stated he received an e-mail from Town of Oneonta Supervisor Bob Wood saying that at a recent Town Board meeting the board was not sure where the town was going with the watershed protection district overlay because there may be a moratorium on drilling and therefore, the overlay may not be needed. He said this just made no sense after all the time and effort spent by Town Code Enforcement Officer Paul Neske and many others on developing this overlay

Sustainability Working group [Rorick]

Chair Hutchison stated that the board heard earlier from Mark Davies of the Sustainability Working group. He said at the last meeting the board had accepted the change of the liaison to this group of Commissioner Allen to Commissioner Rorick.

REPORT OF SPECIAL COMMITTEES

There were no reports from special committees.

UNFINISHED/OLD BUSINESS

Discussion with churches about energy audits and energy efficient programs

Chair Hutchison reported he attended a meeting recently in Cooperstown held by Sustainable Otsego and there were representatives from NYSERDA and Equity Energy there that spoke about energy audits and solar power. He said he briefly spoke about what Oneonta was doing. He said it was indicated that over half of the energy produced was wasted in this country through buildings, homes, businesses, etc. He said the huge thrust was to get this retrofitting done in homes such as using geothermal, solarized water and similar technologies. He said if there was no objection from the board he would like to say that the board was sanctioning and encouraging people to take advantage of the free home energy audits being offered by NYSERDA.

Commissioner Palladino wondered if the board should sponsor an invited event in the city on the issue of home energy auditing.

Council Member Malone stated that a built-in audience would be at the First Fridays held in the city in Muller Plaza or at the Farmers' Markets in the plaza.

Commissioner Palladino offered to help the Chair with organizing that.

Hearing no objections from the board the Chair said that they would pursue sponsoring this in the name of the Environmental Board and would send out the letter he had composed.

The following is the aforementioned letter.

ONEONTA, NEW YORK - MAY 9, 2012 - 7:00 P.M.

REGULAR MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL BOARD PG. 4

(Unfinished Business) continued

“FREE HOME ENERGY AUDIT

It has been well documented that over half of the energy produced in the United States is wasted through buildings including homes, industry, etc. The highest waste is from homes. Consequently, we need to respond to this waste.

NYSERDA (NY State Energy Research and Development Authority) was established in 1975 to provide "innovative programs, technical expertise, and funding to help New Yorkers increase energy efficiency, save money, use renewable energy and reduce their reliance on fossil fuels." Now NYSERDA is offering YOU the opportunity to have a FREE ENERGY AUDIT ON YOUR HOME, SMALL BUSINESS OR NON-PROFIT FACILITY (including religious facilities). (Note: If your annual income is greater than \$200,000 you may have to pay for part of the audit).

Their studies show that "a typical home wastes about \$700 worth of energy per year". After the free energy audit you can decide if you want to reduce you energy loss all at once, a bit at a time, or not at all. If you chose to correct your energy loss you can get low interest financing (or if your income is below approximately \$60,000

for a family of 4 you may qualify for a 50% incentive toward the cost of energy improvements). Certain very low income groups will get 100% coverage for weatherizing.

Also you may get a 10% cash back incentive on eligible measures and on your federal tax return you may be eligible for a 10% tax credit. You may also get up to 30% Federal Tax Credit and 25% NYS Tax Credit for Solar Energy improvements (check with your tax consultant).

You may be able to have payments of the loan applied to you gas/electric bill. As you will be using less energy your gas/electric bill may not change much.

NYSERDA will send you a list of Home Performance contractors accredited by the Building Performance Institute (BPI). For more information call 1-877-NY-SMART or visit GeoEnergy.org.

Ask for the Home Audit Forms and if available a copy of "Comfort at Home" (an application form is included). If you are interested you can also get the flyer "Small Business/Not for Profit Efficiency Financing Program". When you send in your form for a free home energy audit, you will have to send in two monthly bills ONE YEAR APART (such as March 2011 and March 2012 or any other two months a year apart).

It takes about 3 weeks (or less) go get an appointment for an audit. My audit is for May 21.

Copies of "Comfort at Home" (including the application form for the audit) are available in the Oneonta City Hall 258 Main Street, Oneonta, NY,

*For the Environmental Board, City of Oneonta
David M. Hutchison”*

Chair Hutchison stated there was another opportunity for small businesses, which included churches, to have these audits done.

Commissioner Burrington stated he did not know that religious institutions would be a high priority for an energy audit because there usually was not a lot of energy usage in the first place due to most of them just try to keep their pipes from freezing in the winter and then before the day of worship turn the furnace up. He said the same thing goes for electricity usage.

ONEONTA, NEW YORK - MAY 9, 2012 - 7:00 P.M.

REGULAR MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL BOARD PG. 5

NEW BUSINESS

Chair Hutchison stated he would distribute a picture and copies of a drawing of a slump in Wilber Park that occurred last year in the erosion process. He said from a geologist point of view it was a very dangerous situation. He said Engineering and others were aware of it and he was very concerned about it. He said the slump was unstable and someone could get injured. He said he talked to the Facilities/Technology/Operations Committee about it and suggested installing an inexpensive 4' vinyl coated wire fence around the slump to just alert people to not go down there. He said this was not a permanent fix but it would warn people of the danger. He said the slump will probably continue to go up and eventually take the road out.

The board held a brief discussion on the matter.

Chair Hutchison stated that traditionally the board does not meet in June, July and August unless there was a need to.

Commissioner Palladino questioned why that was.

Commissioner Burrington stated that historically there had been a problem with having a quorum during those months and the board had decided to not meet when there was that possibility. He said the reason for that was because the colleges were out, and vacations.

Commissioner Palladino stated if there was business to be voted on the board should meet.

Chair Hutchison and Commissioner Burrington said they agreed with that.

Chair Hutchison stated that the board will not meet until September unless somebody has reason for him to schedule a meeting and he asked that he be notified of that by e-mail.

Commissioner Palladino indicated that a possible reason to meet may be the tree planting project in the parking lot.

The board held a brief discussion on the matter.

There being no further business to come before the board/commission, Chair Hutchison adjourned the regular meeting at approximately 8:00 P.M.

JAMES R. KOURY, City Clerk

JRK/pab