

Howard County Energy Task Force

Tuesday, September 6, 2016

8 a.m. to 10 a.m.

Howard Building: Columbia and Ellicott City Rooms

Attendance:

Task Force Members		Present
Kenneth	Boras	
Randy	Clayton	
Orien	Dalton	x
Richard	Deutschman	
Steve	Estomin	x
Karen	Galindo-White	
Abdul	Majid	x
Bob	Marietta	x
I. Katherine	Magruder	
Ray	McGowan	x
Daryl	Paunil	
Janice	Romanosky	x
Tony	Rosano	
Doug	Ruch	
Jeremy	Scharfenberg	
Rizwan	Siddiqi	x
Diane	Sweeney	
R. Daniel	Wallace	
Ed	Wilson	x
Guests		
Elissa	Reineck	x
Rich	Reis	x
Meagan	Breganza	x

Introduction:

Ed introduced the meeting. Attendees and guests introduced themselves.

Meeting Content:

Rich Reis presentation:

Rich Reis is the co-chair of the Maryland Sierra Club's energy committee and also a delegate from Maryland to the national Sierra Club. Sierra Club's priorities in energy include conserving energy, promoting renewables, reducing climate change and workforce development through green jobs.

Some points brought out in the presentation were:

- Reducing energy demand can be promoted through behavior changes like increased carpooling, telework, and walking/biking to work.
- Energy savings is less expensive than all forms of energy generation, even efficient ones.

Mr. Reis also presented a case study of a lighting retrofit at British American Auto, located in Columbia.

- The retrofit included installing light pipes to increase daylighting. They also switched from metal halide lighting to efficient lighting and installed occupancy sensors.
- If they did it now, they would convert to LED's which have improved very much. British American received rebates and incentives for the changes in lighting, but not for the light tubes, that part was denied. The payback was estimate3d at 3-4 years and was self-financed.
- British American also added a rooftop solar panel after the lighting retrofit.
- Technology continues to improve and costs continue to come down for efficient lighting.
- Another example of the benefits of energy efficiency retro fits is the Empire State Building. They reduced their energy use by 38% through renovated windows and other methods. The windows caused a reduction in A/C use. \$2.8 million was saved in 2014 alone.
- Sierra Club also retrofitted their office in College Park. They chaged T-12 lamps to T-8 lamps. They were able to use the EMPOWER program

Mr. Reis reported that recent changes to the members of the Public Services Commission are jeopardizing the success of the EMPOWER program. BGE regulatory affairs department has noted that the conservation and energy efficiency programs have high customer satisfaction rates, reduce the need to build new energy generating plants, and reduce peak electrical demand.

Mr. Reis described how the relatively cheap price of fossil fuels does not reflect the external costs that are being paid by society. Some of these costs are due to:

- Health – estimated at 1/3 to ½ trillion dollars annually from coal burning. Asthma rates are higher in cities such as Baltimore than surrounding areas. This had environmental justice implications as well.
- Global temperature rise
- Glaciers melting/sea level rise

Question and Answer Session:

- Ed Wilson asked what Sierra Club position is on nuclear energy since when nuclear plants close, the energy generation is replaced with fossil fuel. Mr. Reis replied that Sierra Club doesn't support nuclear and would prefer that energy conservation and renewables were substituted. Mr. Reis indicated that the Maryland Sierra Club's main focus is on cleaning up local coal plants. Wagner coal plant is an example. They have especially bad sulfur dioxide emissions.
- Sierra club is opposed to nuclear energy and also doesn't support that in Maryland trash burning for fuel is counted as a "renewable" source.
- Ray McGowan noted that energy codes enforcement varies widely by state. Maryland has decent enforcement and high ICC codes compared to other states. Perhaps Sierra Club can promote tighter energy codes where they are lacking.
- The group had a discussion on the pros and cons of leasing versus buying solar panels.
- Natural gas is cleaner than coal and oil, but also has hidden costs including releasing methane into the environment.
- Ed asked if there were any additional recommendations specific to Howard County.
- Rich replied that government buildings and schools should be models for energy efficiency. Vacancy lights, day lighting, LED's efficient AC, and improving the building envelop are specific tactics that could be used.

Renewables Sub-Committee:

Steven Estomin presented the draft recommendations from the Renewables sub-committee. These are posted to the Energy Task Force's internal communication tool basecamp. Some items that were discussed were:

- The effect of zoning regulations on renewables.
- The ability of the state's Public Service Commission to make decisions that affect solar projects in counties.
- Putting priority on getting Howard County in on the ground floor of community solar projects up to 2 megawatts since that program is time sensitive.
- Consider adding that recommendations will also help achieve goals in the Climate Action Plan and with resiliency.
- Consider adding that the county should prioritize by pay-back periods. 15 years and 20 years were discussed.
- In the Federal government, if an energy project has a 10 year or less pay back period, it has a good chance of being done.
- Rizwan advised all sub-committees to make the recommendations as specific as possible.
- Steven will revise the draft recommendations.

Items for the Next Meeting:

The October meeting was moved to Tuesday, October 18th. We will be in a conference room on the third floor instead of the first floor. At the October meeting, the group will discuss the remaining subcommittee recommendations and begin to pull together the overall recommendations.