

Envision 2020
E2020 Energy Conservation Taskforce meeting
December 9, 2010, 8-9 am
Greater Mankato Business Development Center

MINUTES

Present: Ojoye Akane, Bill Anderson, Monika Antonelli, Ted Downey, Mike Fischer, Paul Gorman, Jon Hammel, Paul Lindfors, Leigh Pomeroy, Lou Schwartzkopf, Paul Vogel, Katy Wortel

I. Ted Downey opened the meeting at 8:00 am, and welcomed new member Mike Fischer, City Planner for North Mankato, to the group.

II. Old business

A. Greenhouse Gas Inventory

Lou: We have data from Xcel and Centerpoint, but not from Benco or Greater Minnesota Gas. Lou will e-mail Paul Vogel the exact information we need, then Paul will write letters requesting the information.

B. Expansion of Meters for Libraries

Monika has contacted Marcus Hendrickson about meters for the library at Minnesota State, Mankato. Leigh will contact Tim Hayes, Blue Earth County Library Director, about new publicity to remind library patrons about the program.

C. Home performance with Energy Star

Leigh contacted Congressman Walz's office about a possible extension of the federal tax credit for home energy efficiency improvements. The tax credit will expire at the end of this December and will not be extended.

D. New Ulm power company proposal to burn coal

Leigh: It's unlikely that the plan will go forward. It's opposed by the community, and the Sierra Club is on top of the proposal as it moves forward; it requires approval of its Environmental Assessment Worksheet by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. Bob Anderson: The Chicago office of the Environmental Protection Agency is keeping track of the proposal, also. Paul Lindfors: The New Ulm City Council and the New Ulm Public Utilities Commission have voted approval of bonding in the amount of \$23 million for the proposal; Kraft and 3M are the two companies in New Ulm pushing it. Lou will e-mail a petition from the Sierra Club supporting a coal-free New Ulm to task force members.

III. New business / New initiatives

A. Home Energy Score.

Lou circulated copies of an article from USA Today announcing a new federal program, Home Energy Score, in which homeowners can compare their home energy use to homes comparable to theirs; find out how much money they can save by adding insulation, sealing air leaks, or doing other upgrades; then seek federally insured loans at or below market rates to make improvements. Nine U.S. communities will test the program before it's rolled out nationally next summer. Lou will alert the Free Press about this program after the first of the year, then contact them again closer to the roll-out date.

B. Energy Conservation Task Force table / workshop at the Home Show at the Verizon Center in March.

The group expressed an interest in having a table and possibly organizing a workshop at the Home Show at the Verizon Center in March. Paul Vogel, Paul Gorman, Katy, and Ted volunteered to work on this. The workshop could be based around the idea of the Pyramid of Conservation, promoted by Minnesota Power, and found at their website:

http://www.mnpower.com/powerofone/one_home/index.htm

[After the meeting, Leigh spoke with Barb Embacher about a table for the task force at the Home Show. There is a cost for a table, which Greater Mankato Growth will pay for us. GMG will cut the check by the end of the month.]

C. Youth Energy Summit

Katy: The Youth Energy Summit is a program of Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center (PWELC) and the Southwest Initiative Foundation (SWIF) to get young people involved in energy action projects. The SWIF is looking for an organization to act as a project overseer in the Greater Mankato area to field a team in a local school. If you are interested, contact Katy.

D. Facebook page for the task force

Monika volunteered to set up a facebook page for the group, to interest younger people in our work. The name of the page will be Greater Mankato Energy Conservation.

[Monika created the page on Thursday after the meeting and notified member of the group by e-mail.]

IV. Announcements

A. Ted and Leigh talked about their participation in the leadership training retreat sponsored by the Blandin Foundation.

B. Ted showed the group an ENVI meter, a meter for measuring household electricity use which is more versatile (and more expensive) than the Kill-A-Watt meters used in the meters for libraries program.

C. Lou reported that Centerpoint is now using inverted block rates for their residential customers to encourage energy conservation. (A residential customer is charged at a higher rate for any gas used in excess of 30 therms in a billing period.) A flyer went out with the last Centerpoint bill explaining the new rate structure.

C. Ojoye asked the group if they liked what he has been doing with the task force webpage at the E2020 website. Lou will check out the webpage and respond to Ojoye.

D. The next Region Nine Renewable Energy Task Force meeting will be Friday, December 10, 9-11 am at the Mankato Intergovernmental Center, to work on developing a legislative agenda that diverse groups and organizations can collectively support.

V. Agenda items for our next meeting

Paul Gorman raised the question, What is the business model of the Minnesota Valley Action Council (MVAC) for their weatherization program? Katy will contact Pam Wild about speaking to our group about their work, possibly at our next meeting in January.

VI. Meeting adjourned at 9:00 am. Next meeting: Thursday, January 27, 8-9 am, Greater Mankato Business Development Center, Classroom B.

Respectfully submitted,

Lou Schwartzkopf