

February 4, 2009 meeting on Energy at UMass Dartmouth, Woodland Commons

Presentation by Megan Amsler, Cape & Islands Self Reliance Corp.

Megan Amsler talked about how building energy audits are done. Understanding systems' performance and building envelopes takes a year. A blower door test is critical to see what's going on with the building envelope. Many audits do not include this test; you must ask for it. Falmouth is going to hire a private auditor for one building assessment.

In Falmouth: the Town joined ICLEI in 2001, did a greenhouse gas inventory and developed a Climate Action Plan with the help of the Falmouth Energy Committee. The Town did another GHG inventory in 2006 with a summer intern. Getting knowledge about the amount of energy being used is a challenge.

Falmouth Energy actions:

- Selectmen appointed Energy Committee
- Joined ICLEI and received support from them
- Trained facility managers through programs provided from utility companies
- Signed up with EPA's Energy Star Portfolio
- Town Administrator gave a challenge to all department heads to reduce energy

Presentation by Catherine Miller, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

Pioneer Valley Planning Council (PVPC) serves as a clearinghouse. They received funding to create a regional energy plan. There is no consensus on specific projects, but consensus exists on the principles to guide the work. The plan is a signal to developers that the region is a good place for energy projects.

In creating the regional energy plan:

- the participants said where in our backyard, instead of not in my backyard (siting alternative energy sources)
- did a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats analysis
- held stakeholder interviews
- did lots of education and outreach

Each municipality was asked to sign a Memorandum of Agreement to work with PVPC to implement the plan's recommendations. The group met quarterly and informed each other about what they were doing. Process is as important as the final product, in order to get buy-in.

One outcome from the plan has been jobs created through energy audits and weatherization. Another outcome of the plan is the Pioneer Valley Sustainability Network (www.pvsustain.com) with an expanded list of invitees to cover all sustainability issues. They meet every 2-3 months. Next is a regional Economic Development plan that focuses on green jobs. This plan's goals will work with the regional energy plan goals. WGBY TV is helping with fundraising for a massive outreach campaign. Maintaining a social community collaborative is a challenge. Involve residents and small businesses, diversify and grow.

In the subsequent discussion, participants expressed the need for assistance with the following:

1. Help our municipalities with energy programs.
2. Help municipalities to document success stories. Put them online for easy access with contact names. Tell us what's going on around us.
3. Coordinate a regional energy strategy on behalf of all municipalities.
4. Get Energy Committees started at the regional and local level.
5. Coordinate interns to assist municipalities.
6. Bring building managers together to learn/share good energy strategies and best management practices.
7. Develop a program to recognize "superstar" people to help transfer knowledge and to provide an incentive to keep making improvements.