WNYEA Energy & Climate Change Working Group Meeting Recap

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by The GrowWNY Team on February 08, 2013

Terms: Dark Green, Energy & Climate, Environment & Region, Light Green, Medium Green

In November of 2012, the Western New York Environmental Alliance (WNYEA) presented its 2013 Action Agenda. The agenda contains 10 planks from 7 of the Alliance’s Working Groups, all dealing with environmental issues impacting the Western New York Region. To learn more about the Action Agenda items of the WNYEA and their progress, get involved in the Alliance through the Working/Process Group Meetings, signing up for a listserv, or visiting the WNYEA section on GrowWNY. Or continue reading to learn about the latest Energy and Climate Change Working Group meeting.

Attendance: Terry Yonker, Fred Bristol, Brian Smith, Cara Matteliano, Robert Knoer, David Stout, Don Duggan-Haas, Kristen Kaszubowski, Sandy Chelnov, David Bradley, Derek Bateman

On Thursday, February 7, 2013, the Energy and Climate Change Working Group held their regularly scheduled meeting. The key focuses of this meeting were:

- Discussion of a guest speaker from Smart Home Buffalo for the March Working Group meeting. This organization is working on renovating and energy retrofitting the century house within the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus

- Great Lakes Wind Collaborative webinar on Renewable Electricity Futures by Ed DeMeo and National Renewable Energy Laboratory.

The full webinar can be viewed here, but some of the key take away points were:

- In all the scenarios that this research lab studied and modeled, they did not find one in which we would not be 80% renewable in the U.S. by 2050.
• It’s a challenge to decrease the renewable power output to meet low-demand, but there is no problem meeting the peak demand with renewable energy.
• In the 80% renewable electricity by 2050 scenarios, they found about an 80% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.
• The Great Lakes Region could become the logistical energy center of North America, with all of our wind, solar, and storage capacity potential.

The group spent most of their meeting watching and discussing the webinar and learning from the studies that were presented in it. Since the group has discussed performing a renewable energy study in Western New York as part of their 2014 Action Agenda, the webinar was helpful in thinking about this potential action item. The group also gave updates on the current action items:

• There was a suggestion to call our legislators to encourage them to push for a FIT. A draft of a letter of support from the Alliance to Gov. Cuomo is in the works.
• League of Women Voters sent a letter to the mayor to encourage Buffalo’s participation in the Climate Smart Communities Program.
• A connection with the State Coordinator of Climate Smart Communities has been made, and a webinar was held with the municipalities of East Aurora, Evans and Amherst. Future informational sessions may be set up.

Next meeting will host a guest speaker from National Grid on the Smart Home Buffalo project to educate the group on the work being done on the demonstration house on the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus.

For a full summary of the meeting, please check the Working Group’s page for the meeting minutes. Minutes from last month’s meeting have been approved and can be found here.

Do you have feedback or suggestions for this group? Tell us in the comment section below, or come to the next meeting on Thursday, March 7, 2013 at 4:00 p.m. at the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo Offices at the Larkin at Exchange, Suite 525, 726 Exchange St., Buffalo, NY 14210.