

Harlan Township
Community Strategic Energy Plan
Steering Committee Meeting
9/4/19 11:30

Meeting Notes

Attendees:

Rick Howry, President, Board of Township Trustees
Dusty Vinup, Township Administrator / Fire Chief
Jeff, Township Maintenance Department
Rob McCracken, Greater Cincinnati Energy Alliance
Skylor Miller, Greater Cincinnati Energy Alliance
Andy Meyer, OKI Regional Council of Governments

1. Introductions

All attendees introduced themselves. Mr. McCracken provided background on the Energy Plan Project and its goals.

2. Outline the Planning Process

Mr. Meyer provided an overview of the process, including public participation, Township facilities assessment, and the process of drafting, reviewing, and adopting the plan.

3. Discussion of Broader Planning Issues in Harlan Township

Mr. McCracken asked those present to talk about the important attributes of Harlan and planning issues it might be facing, whether there might be a connection to energy or not. Those listed were:

- Development pressure for large-lot residential
- The ability to keep up with future road maintenance demands is a concern
- Fire staffing is a concern. All volunteer department – largest all volunteer around. Growth may force transition to professional fire personnel.
- Hydrant locations are sparse. Necessitates bringing water to the fire, which takes time.
- Greatest attribute is rural character. County zoning requires nicer houses. Mobile homes not permitted.
- Potential light manufacturing development along 132, south of SR 28. Possibility to TIF or JEDD?

4. Discussion of Energy Plan Materials Packet

Mr. McCracken turned the group's attention to the packet of data and analysis provided to the group prior to the meeting.

As expected for a bedroom community, residential land use consumed the majority of energy in the community. Of particular note is the lack of access to natural gas in most of the community. Mr. Meyer asked if expanding resident's access to natural gas is a priority. Mr. Howry stated it's not cost effective because houses are so spread out.

Mr. Meyer pointed out that reportedly a higher percentage of township residents walk or bike, compared to peer communities and the county overall. Since there's no pedestrian infrastructure, this suggests that people are walking and biking on the streets – and feel comfortable doing so because traffic is light. This is something to keep in mind for future development. The additional traffic will hurt pedestrian access, and effort should be made to provide sidewalks or paths as land develops.

Mr. McCracken talked about the residential building stock, noting that a large portion of homes use either electricity or propane. It was asked what role they see the township having in promoting energy efficient improvements for residents' homes. Mr. Howry said the main focus should be on improvements to township facilities that will save taxpayers money.

The Energy Burden analysis isn't very conclusive because there's only three census block groups and two of the three don't have natural gas customers. It was pointed out that a significant area of the township is served by Dayton Power and Light, and this might also have an effect. Mr. Meyer explained that this would reduce the sample size in the affected census block groups, but since the analysis looks at average household cost, the results are still valid.

On the section that outlines current programs aimed at boosting energy efficiency, Mr. Miller noted that we should add GCEA's "Get Efficient" and "solarize" programs to the list. Mr. McCracken said that DP&L programs should also be noted.

Development patterns can have a big influence on future community energy use. Cluster developments can be a way to accommodate development in a way that minimizes new roads that will be a burden on the township to maintain.

On the topic of food waste, Mr. Meyer noted the township fire station could be used as a convenient location for residents to donate unwanted food items to area pantries, and that other communities do this. Mr. Howry said that Harlan Township also tried this a few years ago, but received very few donations. He said that the local churches are very active in gathering food donations, so it seems they are covering the need well enough.

5. Discussion of Options for Public Outreach

Mr. Meyer stated that public outreach will be an emphasis in the planning process, accomplished with a website, survey promoted by social media, and in-person at a community event. Mr. Vinup stated the township hosts its annual Ham and Turkey Dinner for residents on October 18th and 19th. This would be an excellent opportunity to have displays about the energy plan.

6. Discussion of Focus for Facility Assessment

Mr. McCracken discussed the facility energy assessment portion of the project. Mr. Howry asked about the need for a local match for the incentive funds. Mr. McCracken explained that the Duke CBF Board has stipulated that a match is required when the incentive funds purchases materials, equipment, or vehicles for the local government, but not when used for a program or campaign that directly benefits residents or businesses. Mr. Howry countered that improvements to the township facilities do have a direct benefit to the taxpayer. Mr. McCracken said that if there's a particular situation that an equal match can't be made that would result in some of the funds going unused, then he could see if the board would be willing to grant an exception.

7. Final thoughts / questions

Mr. Meyer outlined next steps as beginning the public involvement and drafting a mission statement. Mr. McCracken will work to schedule the facility assessment. The group looked at a map showing the area of the township served by DP&L.