

# VMICC Sustainable Practices

## Draft Minutes 2-5-09

Attendees: Kyle Cruver (chair), Carmen Chalon, Eddee Edson, Marie Browne, Troy Kindred, Pam Wise, Beth Lolley, Ellen Kritzman, Karen Rayes, Tag Gornall, Jason Williams, Michael Nulander, Michael Laurie, Kathleen Davis, Merrilee Runyan, Janie Starr, Charline Rogers, Ann (?), Karina Juliana, Andrea Walker, Barbara Wells, Jake Wade, Jessica Geegen, Patti McClements

Presentation: Puget Sound Energy on Home-based Renewable Energy.

Meeting started 7:10pm

PSE Community Service Supervisor Patti McClements welcomed the crowd and talked about the Vashon Solar Cooperative project that was recently approved. Participants from Sustainable Vashon, including Janie Starr and Jason Williams (of Artisan Electric), were happy that their effort is coming to fruition. The plan will install solar panels on the Land Trust Building and Charter House, made possible through \$20,000 in grants through PSE. Patti noted that the staff at the new office on Vashon looks forward to collaboration on renewables or efficiency projects that folks are pursuing here. "Go See Patti!"

Jake Wade, PSE renewables specialist, spoke about some of the infrastructure that PSE has invested in in the past several years. These include the Wild Horse wind project, solar panel arrays near Hanford, and a biogas power generation facility at a dairy farm in Lynden. More will need to be done to keep up with increasing consumer demand as the area grows.

Jake noted that photovoltaic (PV) technology continues to advance, and will keep getting cheaper with time and efficiency. Washington-made panels are coming online as soon as this year, being manufactured in Eastern Washington. Locally made panels and inverters capitalize on the payback matrix from grid-tied solar systems. Jake noted that, even with the economic downturn, its a good time to install solar.

Even though the Northwest is frequently overcast, we still have better solar exposure than Germany, which enjoys some of the highest installed solar capacity in the world. We're not in the league of California, with its long sunny days throughout the year, but our best summer months are competitive with the best months in sunnier climes.

Regarding wind power, Jake noted that the large windmills are doing a good job generating capacity. Success with wind power is based on proper siting. Must have a fairly strong, steady wind to really make windpower viable.

Jessica Geegen, PSE's Green Communities manager, talked a bit about energy efficiency and weatherization programs. Energy Star appliances have a pretty rapid payback, and there are rebates available for efficient appliances. Compact florescent lights are also a big energy saver, and last up to 10 years between charges. In-store rebates are available, and dead bulbs (which contain dangerous mercury) are recyclable at PSE offices. Simple things like weather stripping and caulking can make a big difference in customers' energy bills. Likewise, a more efficient furnace could pay back rapidly if yours is old and poorly maintained. Jessica reminded folks to replace their furnace filter every three months, and have their hot water heaters checked for proper operation as well.

Patti urged anyone with questions or interest in increasing energy efficiency should stop by the office to discuss their choices.

Next month's meeting: Master Gardeners and Vashon Fruit Club talk about pruning and Spring planting techniques.

Meeting concluded 9pm.

Kyle Cruver

VMICC Sustainable Practices Committee

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