

West Tisbury Energy Policy

Introduction

As the Town of West Tisbury enters the 21st Century, it has become increasingly evident that:

1. Global warming, coupled with air and water pollution, threaten the quality of our environment.
2. The activities in which the Town is involved are increasingly energy-intensive.
3. The cost of energy is highly volatile and will increase dramatically over-time.

The events since September 11 have added a new level of urgency to these issues. Our dependence on foreign energy resources, and the security of large power plants and fuel storage facilities are now of greater concern. Localized and smaller generation facilities - whether they be high-efficiency gas turbines, fuel cells, solar or wind powered - are increasingly attractive alternatives in this new environment. As a nation, we must become more self-sufficient and economically independent in our use of energy. As a community, we should become more energy conscious, environmentally sensitive and fiscally prudent.

Public projects are financial investments by taxpayers. One purpose of this Policy is to ensure that the design, construction, and maintenance of the Town's public projects provide the best possible return on investment as measured by long-term economic, health, and environmental benefits. Public buildings are also highly visible and symbolic in our community, so their construction provides an excellent opportunity to set an example for the residents of West Tisbury.

The following energy policies, therefore, seek to enhance the ability of the Town and its residents to shape their own energy future. They not only target the design, selection and use of Town land, buildings and vehicles, but also the energy consumption of all the Town's residents. They emphasize the need for conservation, the use of clean, preferably renewable sources of energy and, where feasible, the development of local energy production.

General Policies

1. Enhance the ability of the Town and its residents to shape their own energy future, by placing emphasis on local initiatives that increase the security, self-reliance and economic independence of the Island, the Town and each individual resident.
2. Provide the leadership necessary to sponsor the development and implementation of a clear, comprehensive energy program for West Tisbury and, ultimately, the entire Island.
3. Assist groups and individuals in gathering public and financial support, including financial incentives, for the successful operation of local energy projects, which are consistent with the overall energy goals and policies of the Town and the Island.
4. Monitor energy use within the Town. Encourage increased energy conservation and improved management of energy resources. Include conservation initiatives related to public and private buildings that take into account the cost of energy embedded in the cost of construction: the materials used as well as operating costs.
5. Increase the development and use of solar and wind energy as well as other clean, fuel-efficient technologies, not only for heating and electricity, but also transportation. Promote projects that enhance local business opportunities.
6. Promote fuel conversions: e.g. from electric heat to either oil, propane, solar or a combination thereof.
7. Develop zoning bylaws and building code supplements, which promote energy-efficiency.
8. Promote energy-efficient alternatives for transportation including: increased public transit options, hybrid and electric vehicles, bicycles and bicycle paths.
9. Increase community awareness of energy issues and their impact on the Island by encouraging further development of citizen education programs and participation in local energy activities.