
Chapel Hill Solar Roofs Committee

Annual Report

Presented to the Chapel Hill Town Council
November 22, 2004

Introduction

In April 2000 the Town Council adopted a resolution establishing the Town's goal of 500 solar energy systems to be installed locally by 2010, and to organize a steering committee to encourage, accelerate, and advise in fulfilling that goal.¹ In November 2000, the Town Council appointed a 20-member Steering Committee, which began meeting the following month. Committee members include experts in the solar field, architects, elected officials, representatives from the schools and local government agencies, and area residents with an interest in solar power.

Using \$6,000 provided by the Council, the Town hired a consultant who provided staff support for the Committee meetings and for the development of the Action Plan. The Steering Committee developed the Action Plan and presented it to Council on June 25, 2001. The Council approved implementation of the Action Plan on September 10, 2001, including the allocation of \$5,000 in Town funds (later reduced to \$3,000) and authorization for the limited involvement of Town staff in carrying out the recommendations over one year. The Committee and staff support were re-authorized in Sept. 2002 for one year.

The Committee completed the year extension and presented the annual report on October 8, 2003. At that time, the committee requested additional committee members and continued staff support. The Town advertised the committee openings, sought applications, and in February 2004, appointed five returning members and two new members to the committee. Town Council appropriated \$600 and approved continued staff support. The new committee had the responsibility of managing a grant awarded by the NC Solar Center in the amount of \$10,800. For more information, please see the grant proposal and statement of work, attached.

¹ Please see the CHMSR Action Plan June 2001 for details of our history and goals.

NC Solar Center Grant for 2003-04

The 2003-04 Million Solar Roofs (MSR) Grant from the NC Solar Center was \$10,800 to complete item in the attached Statement of Work, addressing the following areas:

1. Develop inventory of solar energy systems in Orange County.
2. Create public outreach materials
3. Organize workshops and/or "Meet-ups" in the Chapel Hill area
4. Update and upgrade website
5. Develop exhibit display unit and purchase solar demo materials

The plans for installing a solar water heating system at the Community Center have been delayed due to the Town's plans for construction and renovation at that facility. *(note: the Town appropriated \$600 to cover the cost of a welder needed to build a support frame for the solar panels. The Committee is requesting to use those funds for additional printing and promotional material.)*

Progress/Accomplishments

Following the presentation of the annual report in October 2003, the committee did not meet until after appointment of new committee members. The new committee first met in March 2004. The committee consisted of five returning members and two new members.

The committee sought help to accomplish some of its tasks. As a result, the Town entered into a contract with SURGE, Students United for a Responsible Environment, using grant funds, to work on a variety of the tasks. SURGE has been able to engage the student and community, bringing additional volunteer effort to help the committee meet its goals. Their primary task has been collecting information about installed solar systems and performing data entry to update NC Solar Center's system inventory database. In addition, SURGE has been very helpful in promotion and community outreach efforts.

The committee initiated projects as part of this years work, including:

1. Maintaining our database of solar installations. SURGE has identified and registered more than 125 systems across Orange County.
2. Organizing and running the 2004 Chapel Hill Area Solar & Green Homes Tour October 1 and 2, 2004. This was accomplished in coordination with the North Carolina Sustainable Energy Association (NCSEA) as part of their

- statewide Green Building Tour. The Oct. 1st workshop, "Introduction to Green Building", was presented by Dona Stankus.
3. Website improvements. The existing website included virtual tours of selected solar properties, including Smith Middle School (please see: <http://www.chapelhillsolar.org>). Blast, a Pittsboro web development company, is doing the web page design. The new site should be complete by January 2005.
 4. Sponsoring solar "meet-ups." These have proven to be an effective way to reach interested individuals from our community to provide information about topics such as daylighting, solar water heating, energy efficiency and other aspects of solar and other renewable energies. Initially, three meet-ups were scheduled once a month and held at local establishments, starting in September. A total of about 75 people have attended. With the success of the first three, plans are to resume the solar "meet-ups" in January 2005.
 5. Designing a Chapel Hill Solar logo and incorporated it into the design of informational cards distributed at all our public events.
 6. Printing t-shirts with the new Chapel Hill solar logo for publicity and recognition. The t-shirts were printed by TS Designs using organically grown cotton and environmentally friendly methods.
 7. Providing support for workshops on green building practices. Former committee member Alicia Ravetto, along with Paul Conove, presented a local workshop, "Green Building Design and Construction for Homes," on April 17, 2004, with Central Carolina Community College – Pittsboro branch.
 8. Participating in statewide MSRI annual meeting in Pittsboro on November 7, 2004.

Funding Opportunities

The Committee plans to submit a grant proposal to the NC Solar Center. They are administering \$46,000 in grant funds to be divided among the eight MSRI communities statewide. When awarded, the funds will be spent on a variety of solar projects, including covering equipment costs. The Chapel Hill Committee will request in the range of \$4,000 – \$8,000. Proposals are due by January 15, 2005, with notification of awards to be made in February 2005.

Future Plans

The committee is following the basic plans and strategies of the original Action Plan, dated June 2001. Due to the expected availability of grant funding, we do not anticipate requesting any additional Town funds to continue with Action Plan implementation. However, the committee plans to use the \$600 already

appropriated. A few specific projects and tasks we will pursue this year will include the following:

- ❖ Continue to track inventory of installed solar energy systems.
- ❖ Further development and enhancement of the ChapelHillSolar.org web site including case histories of solar buildings and installations.
- ❖ Participate in the NCSEA Statewide Solar & Green Homes tour.
- ❖ Promote solar education and outreach in the community.
- ❖ Foster and grow the relationship with SURGE.
- ❖ Promote the NC Green Power option for electricity purchases.
- ❖ Monitor status of the Chapel Hill Community Center solar water heating system and the addition of an energy monitoring system and informational display at the Center.
- ❖ Continue organizing and hosting informal solar meet-ups, and supporting local workshops aimed at our local builder and building inspection, financing, and sales community.

Future Role

The Steering Committee is application- and advocacy- oriented, and is currently the only Council organization in a position to respond to identified Million Solar Roof (MSR) grant opportunities and to pursue initiatives.

The NC Solar Center has a goal this year to grow the MSR program, to emphasize partnering, and to focus on tracking the inventory of installed systems. Chapel Hill is currently one of eight MSRI communities statewide. The committee has worked well with Town Council sponsorship, and the NC Solar Center is urging the committee to continue its efforts.

The committee focus for 2005 will be to grow committee involvement, submit a grant proposal to the NC Solar Center, and perform the tasks in the new Statement of Work.

<h3>Requests to Council</h3>

<p>The Committee requests the Council to:</p>

- | |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Authorize staff support for an additional year; |
|--|

<p>Authorize the \$600 of appropriated Town funds to be used for printing of promotional materials.</p>
