

Greening the Village of East Hampton - Part 11

We have taken a number of steps to reduce the carbon footprint of the Village of East Hampton.

Solar Energy

We completed a report on the energy use and potential solar energy alternatives for our government buildings.

In March of 2009 our first solar electric system was installed at our Emergency service building at a cost of \$75,000 (\$45,000 was received from the LIPA Program for a net cost to the village of \$30,000). This 10 kilowatt system is designed to produce over 300,000 kilowatt hours of electricity and save over \$100,000 over its lifetime.

In August of 2009 the village issued a Request for Proposals to build the 2nd Phase of this project to add an additional 10 kilowatts of solar electricity to this system.

In addition we have prepared a grant application seeking funds from New York State to complete phase 3 at the E.M.S. building and to install solar electric panels on the Department of Public Works Building.

Ultimately the village plans to install solar electric systems on a number of our municipal buildings for savings over \$300,000 over their lifetimes. This will result in a substantial reduction in our use of LIPA generated power and make a contribution to reducing global warming.

Energy Conservation

We have replaced all of our traditional incandescent interior lighting of our municipal buildings with compact fluorescent light bulbs. They use 75% less in electricity and contain substantially less mercury. The EPA estimates the U.S. is responsible for the release of 104 metric tons of mercury emissions each year. Most of these emissions come from coal-fired power plants, but none-the-less the more we all reduce our mercury emissions the better.

Organic Lawn Care

The village adopted a policy several years ago requiring only organic maintenance practices of our public parks, green areas, and lawns. The use of pesticides and herbicides are prohibited on village owned property. We believe this helps to protect public health and reduces potential impacts on ground and surface waters.

Electronic Records

We completed the first phase of a project to convert many of our paper records to electronic records. This includes computer software and records scanning of paper documents. The ultimate goal to be achieved over a number of years is paperless record keeping, transactions, and permitting consistent with and to the extent it is allowed under state law for maintenance of public records and freedom of information laws. Over time we can be more efficient in our public business and we can eliminate a lot of paper waste.

We will be submitting a grant application to provide additional funding to supplement village funding to continue this project in the coming year.

Vehicle Use and Efficiency

We have begun the implementation of a plan to replace fuel inefficient vehicles and trucks with more efficient ones. We completed a report reviewing the types of vehicles, their uses, and the energy use of the fleet. Not surprisingly we found duplications and fuel inefficiency in our fleet. The report made a number of recommendations to increase overall fuel efficiency as vehicles are replaced. Again, there are strong financial rewards to limiting fuel consumption while contributing to the health of the environment.

I think these are solid steps in the Greening of the Village, but obviously there is much more to do. If we believe in acting to protect the environment then there are many things that need to be done. The Board of Trustees in East Hampton Village wants to do its part.