

http://www.newjerseyhills.com/the_citizen/news/rockaway-pursues-lower-electric-bills/article_f00fffa4-3a9c-5778-8700-6f32ff466531.html

Rockaway pursues lower electric bills

Council also adopts noise ordinance

By ANTHONY LUSARDI Contributing Writer May 2, 2017

ROCKAWAY – The Borough Council gained a lesson in energy aggregation when it met on Thursday, April 27.

It also agreed to pursue a program which is intended to lower residents' electric bills.

The program was presented by Stacia Scaduto, business development consultant for Commercial Utility Consultants, Inc. (CUC), from Voorhees, which is partnered with Concord Energy Services (CES), from Trenton.

The presentation was on CUC's ability to lower the rates borough residents pay for electric, while service remains with Jersey Central Power & Light (JCP&L), from Morristown, and no changes to service or support is made.

"It will be an invisible transition if the resident opts into the program," said Councilwoman Melissa Burnside.

"The resident has the choice as to whether they will participate. They are guaranteed to never be charged more than the JCP&L rate, but will likely see discounts from eight to 15 percent. Wharton is already in enrolled and their residents saw a nine percent decrease in their electric bills."

Scaduto said that an energy aggregation program will benefit a municipality by offering protection from predatory contracts, providing options for a risk-free reduced rate and bringing additional competition to the marketplace.

She also said it keeps the energy delivery system the same, allows the town to proactively realize savings and keeps more money in the local economy, and also offers a guaranteed, non-variable rate.

“As your selected energy consultant, our team of experienced and licensed by the BPU (Board of Public Utilities), energy and public relation professionals, will provide the administrative, management and educational support necessary to create a seamless and successful program for the community,” said Scaduto.

“Our team provides all informational material and hosts all educational and outreach sessions for your community. Additionally, our team continuously monitors energy market conditions and the utility’s default and prices to compare rates for changes. In the event the utility’s default pricing (excluding monthly reconciliation rates) becomes lower than the contracted rate, our team will either negotiate to lower the contracted price with the awarded supplier or will proactively send all residents back to the utility company so they benefit from the lowest rate available.”

Following the presentation, the council majority introduced an ordinance that establishes an energy aggregation program in the district.

Councilman Robert Smith voted against it, but did not offer a reason.

Noise Ordinance

Later in the meeting, the council unanimously introduced a noise ordinance that sets brand new regulations for noise within the town.

The council had previously tabled the noise ordinance for revisions and to add input from residents.

“In response to residents’ comments, we modified the time limitations,” said Councilwoman Joyce Kanigel.

"The ordinance now says that between 8 p.m. and 8 a.m., noise from landscaping equipment and construction activities is prohibited. There is an exception for emergency situations when construction noise may be generated during other hours, but this can be done only by permit from the construction official."

Borough resident and former Councilman Joe Vicente had different opinions on both subjects.

"The energy aggregation program has been around since 2012 and out of the 566 municipalities, only 30 or so if not less have signed on.

"In Morris County, out of the 40 municipalities, only six have signed on. My question, if this is such a great idea, why are there not more towns signing up? The council introduced an ordinance which will be adopted on May 25 to begin the process to have the mayor and council pick the energy supplier. I recommended that they hold a special town hall meeting so that everyone fully understands this program instead getting a flyer in the mail." he said.

"They refused. I am sure there are a lot of residents who do not want our elected officials telling them what energy provider to use as they have a very poor record in entering cost savings ideas, like the court."

He also addressed the noise ordinance.

"They also introduce a new noise ordinance to be adopted on May 25 which removed the exemption for churches and other religious groups from playing their bells, chimes and other tones. In essence, if a resident finds these sounds to be annoying, they can file a complaint. Also, there is no provision in the ordinance to prevent someone in a park to play their music loud. Lastly, they are now using the term plainly audible which is a good thing, but they do not have a definition as to what plainly audible means," he said.

"Without this definition, this leave the ordinance to be challenged as vague."

