

Dear Council Members,

I ask that you consider the following points when making your decision about how to manage the funds the City has received through the sale of RECs.

- **These funds exist because a previous City Council had the foresight to invest in renewable energy**, rather than a coal-fired electricity plant. I encourage this city council to demonstrate the same foresight.
- **Temporary rate reductions (estimated at \$7.50/month for the average household) provide minimal, short term benefit.** If invested in permanent improvements in our community, the long term cost savings for citizens will be dramatically higher and longer lasting.
- **The City of Oberlin has committed to achieve climate neutrality by 2050.** This is an ambitious but achievable goal that will cost money to reach. What more appropriate use of REC monies than moving our community towards climate neutrality?
- It is not entirely clear right now what the best use of these funds is. I can understand why that could make some of you hesitate to commit money when there is no compelling vision of what it can achieve. ***Lack of clarity about what to do does not mean there is not a real need.***

I speak from my experience as co-Chair of the Energy Committee for the Oberlin Project and as Chair of the Board of POWER. Currently POWER runs a highly successful Energy Advocacy program; it might seem obvious now that this is a smart way to promote energy efficiency in Oberlin. It was not at all obvious 4 years ago. Even though we started with a high level of agreement about what our goal was, it took a lot of time and discussion among citizens, city staff, and consultants to identify this winning solution. It was worth every minute of the time we spent. Engaging in (sometimes heated) dialog made the solution better.

- **It takes time to identify the right solutions for the problems we face.** To date, ***it has not been anyone's job*** to identify, research, and vet possible investments of REC monies that would have wide community benefit and move us towards our carbon neutrality goal. The City's Climate Action Plan can probably provide some guidance here. Heather Adelman is compiling a list of citizen suggestions, which will also provide good food for thought. Some of these ideas will be great, some of them will probably not work. ***We won't be able to tell the difference unless we engage in thoughtful conversation, and that takes time.***

I urge City Council to take the long view. Set aside the majority of REC funds, and **invest in the process of identifying real workable solutions that will benefit all.** I am one of many who would happily contribute energy and ideas to such an effort. Based on my past experience I feel confident that citizens working with committed and knowledgeable city staff like Steve Dupee and Doug McMillin can make great things happen. POWER's success is living proof of that. We work best when we work together.

