



Door Opens to Energy Efficiency at Wainwright House

By Bill Lawyer



JUDY MARTIN AT THE WAINWRIGHT HOUSE FRONT ENTRY

Upgrading the historic Wainwright House mansion outbuildings and grounds was sort of like opening one door after another in the quest of the “holy grail,” in this case, energy efficiency and lower energy costs. But it had to be done to enable the Center to spend more of its income on programs, and to provide the public (and other institutions) with the opportunity to see how energy-efficient components and processes can be put in place.

Back in the summer of 2014, Rye resident Judy Martin, who runs a local energy conservation company, Green Home Consulting, joined the board of Wainwright. Her mission was to guide the nonprofit through all the steps it would take to transform it into the 21st century. This was a two-part process: designing and pricing the new systems and then finding the funds to pay for them.

For the former, they joined forces with New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), which supplied them with a list of approved contractors who could be hired to carry out an energy audit and determine what needed to be done.

Next came the effort to get low-interest loans to cover the cost, estimated at \$340,000. Through the support of the Rye City Council, they joined the Energy Improvement Corporation, which would require the City to collect the loan payments through the tax process.

Unfortunately, they found out that the project would have to pay prevailing rate for labor costs, which would have raised the cost to over \$500,000, and then the project would no longer be cost efficient.

But with help from the Energize New York organization, Wainwright was able to get acceptable-rate loans through the municipal bond market, avoiding the burden of higher labor costs.

Work on the project began last August and the final touches were put in place earlier this month.

The improvements will provide energy savings of over \$34,000 per year. Of these, the largest portion of the savings (72 percent) will come from the heating system: a new, gas-fired steam boiler, a new, gas-fired

hot water heater, high-tech pipe insulation, and programmable remote thermostats.

Before these changes could be installed, however, all the asbestos pipe insulation had to be removed. Some of the pipes had no insulation at all.

The other main portion (15%) is, as Judy Martin put it, “massive amounts of green insulation in all three buildings and air sealing throughout — everything from caulking to lock-top dampers on the facility’s ten chimneys.”

New LED lighting and controls were installed in the main building’s kitchens and offices.

The most visible component of the project is the beautiful, brand-new, and tightly weather sealed front entrance to the main building. Ironically, while it may be the first thing people see, it was the last task to be carried out.

Date: Thursday, August 23, 2016

Source: <http://ryerecord.com/business-orgs/door-opens-to-energy-efficiency-at-wainwright-house.html>