

Carl Bulger presided.

Mr. Matthew C. Reno, Project Manager for the City of Bowie's Department of Community Services, spoke about the installation of photovoltaic systems (solar panels) on a number of city-owned buildings. To date, they have been installed on the Park Maintenance Facility (on Mitchellville Rd.), the PG County Genealogical Society (on Tulip Grove Dr.), the National Capital Radio & TV Museum (on Mitchellville Rd.) and most recently on the Senior Center. The Senior Center project was done in conjunction with the reroofing contract.

Mr. Reno discussed the terminology and pros and cons of installing solar systems. The Genealogy Library, Radio & TV Museum and Park Maintenance Facility have reduced their electricity consumption by 99%, 32% and 13.35%, respectively. Excess electricity generated feeds back into the electric grid.

We learned that the first system installed was a "string inverter system" which uses one main inverter to convert DC current to AC current. A negative aspect of this type system is that if shading blocks any one panel the entire string shuts down. The more expensive microinverter system used in the last three buildings uses individual microinverters at each panel and shading shuts down only the affected panel.

Additional facilities are being considered by the City of Bowie for installation of solar panels.