

Neighbors See the Light at the Town LED Forum

2015

About 50 Town residents braved the cold to come to the Town Hall on the last Saturday in January. They were greeted with hot cider, cookies, and fruit, and a wide array of LED light bulbs and fixtures displayed on showroom tables. Marcie Meditch opened the meeting on behalf of the Climate and Environment Committee. She introduced the topic of the day, and then turned over the microphone to Mr. Gino Hefner from Bethesda Systems. Mr. Hefner explained how his company came up with an "LED Diet" program that involves helping homeowners and businesses trim their lighting energy use by replacing their now obsolete incandescent bulbs with new energy efficient LED's.

Upon request, Bethesda Systems* will send a truck to your house, and for no charge, do a lighting audit for you. The lighting audit will document each light bulb you have, and recommend replacement LED bulbs of equal light quality as the original. The audit will tell you how much the LED bulbs cost, and how much energy and money you could save over time by making the switch. Of course, changing to LED bulbs in high usage areas like kitchens and family rooms is likely to save you the most. Town residents Beth Morrison, Julia Craighill, and Betsy Johnson made use of the lighting audit service, and all had positive things to say about the experience.



Francis Kline Photography

LED bulbs are expensive, about \$20 for example, for a 75 watt equivalent bulb for an overhead lighting fixture. But because they can last for a decade or more, and they are so energy efficient, they are much cheaper than other bulbs on a life cycle basis. Because LED's are solid state devices, they are less likely to break than regular bulbs, and they don't contain mercury like CFLs do. Plus, LEDs run much cooler and they come on instantly rather than gradually warming up like CFL bulbs. LEDs originally produced a fairly harsh white light, but now come in different "color temperatures" so you can find bulbs with the right color and brightness level for specific fixtures in your home. If you wish, the Bethesda Systems team will replace bulbs for you on the spot, and dispose of your old bulbs. Or, you can keep the audit and contact them later if/when you decide you want some of the new bulbs. You can also pick up LED bulbs on your own at places like Home Depot or Strosniders, both of which participate in an LED discount program with Pepco.



For more information about LEDs, visit the following websites:

<http://www.bethesdasystems.com/>

<https://homeenergysavings.pepco.com/lighting-program/how-to-participate>

<http://wapo.st/1xsY7in>

* Bethesda Systems no longer offers home LED audits, although other companies may offer similar services.