

City of Gainesville

*City Hall
200 East University Avenue
Gainesville, Florida 32601*



Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, June 10, 2008

6:00 PM

City Hall Room 16

Regional Utilities Committee

*Commissioner Craig Lowe, Chair
Commissioner Lauren Poe, Member
Commissioner Jack Donovan, Member*

Persons with disabilities who require assistance to participate in this meeting are requested to notify the Office of Equal Opportunity at 334-5051 or call the TDD phone line at 334-2069 at least two business days in advance.

CALL TO ORDER

Present: Craig Lowe, Jack Donovan and Lauren Poe

ROLL CALL

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Commissioner Lowe requested that Item #061214 be heard first as he had to leave the meeting early. The RUC agreed to revise the agenda.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

080039. Regional Utilities Committee Meeting Minutes for May 13, 2008 (B)

RECOMMENDATION *The Regional Utilities Committee approve the minutes for the May 13, 2008 meeting as circulated.*

This matter was Approved as Recommended. The motion carried.

RUC Meeting Minutes for May 13 2008.pdf

CURRENT RUC ACTION ITEMS

071064. Project Share Program (B)

The Regional Utilities Committee heard a presentation from Lewis Walton regarding Project Share which included a program status report and recommendations to increase giving.

Commissioner Poe asked how we solicited for donations and was advised it is through the bill stuffer. Commissioner Poe suggested sending e-mails and using the City's television Channel 12 to solicit for funds. Commissioner Poe also recommended contacting the Chamber of Commerce about using their weekly newsletter and asked about investigating the use of payroll deductions for City employees.

Commissioner Donovan brought up the suggestion of doing public service announcements (PSAs) using the Mayor and Commissioners as well as local personalities. He further stated that in addition to Valentines Day, other holidays throughout the year could be used to give gifts in honor of someone else. There was discussion regarding a donation by GRU to the three (3) administering entities. The Utilities Attorney cautioned that the bond covenant prohibit providing free service.

Commissioner Donovan recognized Harry Kegelmann who spoke to the matter.

The RUC requested staff to incorporate all the suggestions made at the meeting with what staff had presented and return to the RUC for a final review before taking it to the full City Commission.

RECOMMENDATION *The Regional Utilities Committee: 1) hear staff recommendations regarding Project Share goals; specifically, increase Customer awareness and opportunities to contribute to the program; work with partnering social service agencies to promote conservation strategies and resources for assistance with home efficiency improvements; and engage the faith based community, government and non-profit organizations in discussions to coordinate community-wide utility assistance opportunities; 2) provide feedback; and 3) recommend the item be removed from the referral list.*

Discussed

Backup for 071064 Project Share 6 10 08.pdf

061214.

Photovoltaic Policies (NB)

The Regional Utilities Committee heard a presentation by Sean McClendon from the Alachua County Environmental Protection Department on a funding mechanism to implement energy efficiency that is being considered by Alachua County.

Mr. McClendon introduced several members of the Alachua County Energy Conservation Strategies Commission (ECSC) that were in attendance and proceeded to discuss their review of the Berkeley First (Financial Initiative for Renewable and Solar Technology) Model. Mr. McClendon explained that ECSC concept differs from the Berkeley Model in that the ECSC put a strong emphasis first on weatherization conservation. The ECSC wants to implement a county-wide weatherization program financed through a weatherization bank available to people after they've had some form of energy audit.

Commissioner Lowe asked what factors went into the decision to focus on weatherization first.

Mr. McClendon responded that the thought was the community had not yet maximized the potential of demand side management and the need to take advantage of conservation because it's the low hanging fruit. The current concept for a weatherization program would be based upon a voluntary special assessment added to the tax notice of the property. He further commented the good thing about a program like this is the home owner doesn't have to come up with the capital costs to put solar panels on their home or provide for the expense of weatherizing all the home. They are also investigating whether this might also be tax deductible.

Commissioner Poe asked about using local leverage to bring in more federal dollars for this concept. Mr. McClendon replied that he had seen it work well in other places.

Commissioner Donovan brought up the issue of trees versus solar not being a big issue in Berkeley because the town faces the bay. Mr. McClendon replied that it could be an issue here because of our tree canopy and that how we plan for it and train people is critical. Mr. McClendon also stated there might be opportunities to look at big box environments or large areas of open land for solar use.

Commissioner Lowe asked how did Berkeley work to provide incentives to retrofit rental properties. Mr. McClendon replied that he did not know but the ECSC is looking at the issue.

David Barclay brought forward staff's proposal that the RUC recommend that the City Commission request the Tree Advisory Board and Planning and Development staff develop for the RUC's consideration guidelines to govern the interaction between solar energy and trees.

David Barclay also advised the RUC about staff's meeting with solar contractors on May 27, 2008 which was the first step toward introducing some performance criteria on GRU's solar rebate program. He advised that the contractors were open to talking about the issues.

Commissioner Poe brought up the suggestion that the recommendation should include an additional group to allow for input from those whose interest is in providing solar energy to homes. Commissioner Lowe recommended adding the Gainesville Energy Advisory Committee (GEAC) to the request.

Commissioner Donovan moved and it was approved to recommend that the City Commission request the Tree Advisory Board, GEAC and the Planning and Development staff develop for the Regional Utilities Committee's consideration guidelines to govern the interaction between solar energy and trees.

Commissioner Donovan asked if staff was proceeding on its own schedule analyzing the Berkeley model as it applies here. David Barclay replied that we are trying to work with the County on this.

Commissioner Donovan asked if there was a schedule for the ECSC analysis to unfold. Sean McClendon advised that they hope to be ready for roundtable discussions in the fall of 2008 and if possible run a project in the winter of 2009; but these dates are very tentative.

RECOMMENDATION *The Regional Utilities Committee hear an update from Alachua County Environmental Protection Department staff on the County's consideration of a funding mechanism to implement energy efficiency, including solar; utility staffs' efforts to develop solar rebate performance criteria and policies to implement net metering; and recommend that the City Commission request the Tree Advisory Board and Planning and Development staff develop, for the RUCs consideration, guidelines to govern the interaction between solar energy and trees.*

This matter was Approved as Amended. The motion carried.

Backup to RUC item #061214 Mar 19 2008.pdf

Backup for RUC item #061214 PV policies Mar 19 2008.pdf

070516. Conservation and Energy Use Goals - Mid Year Efficiency Program Update (B)

The Regional Utilities Committee heard a presentation by Bill Shepherd on the progress of the energy efficiency programs.

Bill Shepherd advised the RUC that we have signed a contract with KEMA for measurement and verification of our programs and to help us make our programs a little more efficient if needed. They will also confirm some of our assumptions that have been made throughout the year and through our relationship with Navigant Consulting.

Commissioner Poe asked about the timeline for this work. David Barclay replied that we are expecting a preliminary report around the first of July.

Commissioner Donovan asked about developing a rebate for people doing energy audits. Bill Shepherd replied that we're looking at the idea trying to figure the best way to approach it.

Commissioner Donovan stated that he wants to make sure we know what is happening next as far as the goals are concerned. We could make a presentation to the Commission at the end of the fiscal year as to how well we have done and the goals for the future year. Bob Hunzinger replied that it could be part of the budget process too.

RECOMMENDATION *The Regional Utilities Committee hear a report from staff on the progress of the energy efficiency programs.*

Discussed

Mid Year Energy Efficiency Report to RUC June 10. 2008.pdf

OUTSTANDING REFERRALS

080071. Regional Utilities Committee Outstanding Referral Status Report (B)

Commissioner Donovan reviewed the outstanding referral list. He indicated that he wanted to keep item #051194 (GRU Wholesale Sales) on the list for the time being.

Item #060294 (General Fund Transfer) may be something that needs to wait until further in the budgeting process. Commissioner Donovan stated that if the timing is such that it's important to get it in front of the Commission it could go on without coming back to the RUC, but he would be glad to hear it in committee if needed.

Item #061213 (Digital Cities) - Commissioner Donovan suggested we recommend to the Commission to remove this from the referral list.

Item #061214 (Photovoltaic Policies) - Commissioner Donovan stated that the big question for him is the amortization of purchasing residential solar panels and it sounds like things are moving forward. There is an outstanding issue regarding solar versus trees so the item stays on the referral list.

Item #070181 (Forest Certification Stewardship) - Staff is to come back with more information.

Item #070084 (Energy Policy-GEAC) - Rob Brinkman, Chair of the Gainesville Energy Advisory Committee, advised they are having attendance problems at their meetings. There was discussion about what the Commission could do to help. Mr. Brinkman expressed concern about the City's advisory committee's attendance policy. Mr. Brinkman advised there is a GEAC meeting scheduled for July 15, 2008.

Mr. Brinkman asked specifically about when Item #070528 (Nuclear Energy Option) would be coming back up. Mr. Hunzinger responded that we could do an update at the next meeting. There was discussion about the safety issues of a nuclear plant as well as the rising costs of building one.

Commissioner Poe asked if Item #071148 (Corn and Other Biofuels for Vehicle Fuel) could be discussed at the next meeting if it wasn't too full already. He asked what is the full cost of using biofuels especially ethanol.

Commissioner Donovan stated that as Chair, Commissioner Lowe would be the one to consult on items for the meeting.

RECOMMENDATION *The Regional Utilities Committee review the Outstanding Referral Status Report and select items for discussion at the next meeting.*

Discussed

RUC Outstanding Referrals status report June 10 2008.pdf

MEMBER COMMENT

CITIZEN COMMENT

OUTSTANDING REFERRALS

NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting date had not been determined at time of this meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.