

City of Gainesville

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



Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, April 8, 2009

3:30 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

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was modified to add RUC Referral Item #070181- Forest Stewardship Issues to be discussed second on the April 8, 2009 agenda.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

080944. Regional Utilities Committee Meeting Minutes for February 11, 2009 (B)

RECOMMENDATION *The Regional Utilities Committee approve the minutes for the February 11, 2009 meeting as circulated.*

This matter was Approved as Recommended. The motion carried.

RUC Meeting Minutes for February 11 2009.pdf

CURRENT RUC ACTION ITEMS

080184. Water Conservation Policy (B)

The Regional Utilities Committee heard presentations from Dr. Jim Heaney of the University of Florida and GRU staff members Rick Hutton and Jennifer McElroy.

Dr. Heaney presented information on trends in indoor water use, trends in outdoor water use, an overview of the Conserve Florida Water Clearinghouse and the Guide and why water conservation is important. Dr. Heaney explained their methods for developing indoor water use trends and that the results showed toilets are the most cost-effective indoor retrofit. He reviewed their studies on outdoor water use and the determination that outdoor water use causes most of the peak demand that drives the need to expand the system with landscape irrigation being a major factor. He showed the trend of increasing outdoor water use in newer homes, which coincides with increased use of in-ground irrigation systems.

Commissioner Donovan brought up the concern of using a per capita standard of consumption versus a resource based standard.

Dr. Heaney stated that calculation of a gallons per capita day (gpcd) usage rate for residential single family homes provides a good metric for comparison between communities.

Commissioner Lowe asked if there were any special challenges or opportunities with respect to Gainesville being a university community and having a fairly large student

population.

Dr. Heaney responded that higher density development associated with apartments/condos reduces the irrigated area per person, reducing overall water use.

Rob Brinkman, citizen, was recognized and advised the group that Tampa Bay's City Council recently banned the use of irrigation systems in town.

Rick Hutton and Jennifer McElroy gave presentations on current conservation efforts, water use analysis and trends. Mr. Hutton advised the RUC that GRU is anticipating that Gainesville will be classified as a water supply caution area once the St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD) completes its ground water modeling analysis. GRU is working closely with SJRWMD and will be involved with the water supply planning workshops that are to be scheduled sometime in June 2009. Mr. Hutton reviewed GRU's current efforts related to water conservation which includes reclaimed water expansion, education, audits on as needed basis, an irrigation maintenance rebate program, a soil moisture sensor pilot program with the University of Florida and working with the Conserve Florida Water program.

Jennifer McElroy reviewed how GRU customers use water and where we can gain the most savings. She stated that GRU would like to focus efforts on reducing irrigation via its existing irrigation audit rebate programs, and through eventual broader application of soil moisture sensors. GRU also proposes low flow toilet retrofits in LEEP homes.

Rick Hutton completed the presentation with information on proposed new programs which included toilet retrofits for LEEP homes, a soil moisture sensor program, a commercial kitchen spray nozzle program and an existing irrigation system maintenance program. Mr. Hutton also spoke about current and proposed initiatives by the SJRWMD which includes a potential landscaping ordinance which Alachua County may consider adopting.

Commissioner Donovan asked if staff knew when the SJRWMD ground water modeling would be completed. Rick Hutton responded that staff was not sure but that GRU and several other utilities would be reviewing the models to make sure they are reliable. Commissioner Donovan further asked if there was a need to worry about salt water intrusion over the next 50 years for places like Jacksonville. Mr. Hutton responded that some of the models were predicting potential salt water intrusion in some coastal areas.

Commissioner Lowe commented that perhaps the City of Gainesville and Alachua County could come to an agreement on adopting landscaping ordinances that would promote more drought tolerant landscaping. Commissioner Lowe asked if there had been turf improvements making it more drought tolerant. Dr. Heaney responded that there several turf types that are more drought tolerant than St. Augustine grass.

Commissioner Poe brought up the issue of deed restrictions in some communities that require people to maintain their lawn to a certain green standard. He further expressed the concern that perhaps these covenants are written into what is being approved by the Commission. Commissioner Poe continued to comment that he was

interested in moving forward with some sort of landscape ordinance process.

Commissioner Lowe stated he would like to explore things that we can do with respect to community development to incentivize reduced irrigation and to have maximum effectiveness we would need to enlist the support and cooperation of the county. He further expressed that we need to look at and possibly update the information and educational materials on the website. Commissioner Lowe stated in closing that staff bring this back to a future meeting and look at educational materials and the list of recommendations for consideration.

Gus Almos (ACEPD) and Geoff Sample (SJRWMD) stated that Alachua County is considering enforcing the SJRWMD day of week watering restrictions countywide, but that there was uncertainty as to whether it could be enforced in cities outside the SJRWMD boundary. Commissioner Poe stated that the City should work with the County to allow enforcement of the restrictions within the City of Gainesville.

Commissioners Poe and Donovan both expressed concerns that Gainesville could implement aggressive conservation to preserve the resource, only to have another community pull more water.

RECOMMENDATION *The Regional Utilities Committee (RUC) receive a presentation describing water use patterns, current water conservation initiatives, and proposed future water conservation initiatives, and take action as appropriate.*

Discussed

Backup to RUC Item #080184 Water Conservation 12 10 08.pdf
Backup for RUC Item #080184 WaterConservation Apr 8 09.pdf

070181.

Forest Stewardship Incentive Plan Referral Item #070181 (B)

Protection of forest ecosystems is a critical concern related to the development of a biomass fueled power plant to serve the Gainesville Community. The Regional Utilities Committee (RUC), working with staff, an advisory group of professionals involved in the forest industry, consultants, and concerned citizens have developed a plan to help assure protection of forest ecosystems. The key elements of this plan are minimum standards that assure that industry best management practices are followed for any fuel acquired for the proposed power plant, and a financial incentive plan to reward growers that invest in superior forest management practices as certified by selected independent certification programs.

This item (#070181) was added to the RUC meeting agenda of April 8, 2009 for discussion and action by the Regional Utilities Committee.

Bob Hunzinger, General Manager, gave an update on the status of the biomass project and advised that staff hopes to bring a recommendation to the Commission on the biomass project in May of this year. The discussion at the April 8, 2009 meeting would be to address Commissioner Lowe's concerns regarding endangered species and his proposed language to be included in the Incentive Plan for Biomass Fuel

Procurement.

Staff, members of the RUC and representatives from American Renewables agreed with the language proposed by Commissioner Lowe to address endangered species.

Ed Regan, Assistant General Manager for Strategic Planning, addressed and accepted the list of questions and proposed language submitted to staff by Commission Donovan referring to the Incentive Plan. Mr. Regan advised the RUC that staff would be issuing an errata sheet with all of the changes to be incorporated into the Incentive Plan document.

Mr. Hunzinger advised that the Forest Stewardship Item is on the agenda for the April 16, 2009 City Commission meeting.

Commissioner Lowe moved that we go forward with the recommendation the RUC approves the Forest Stewardship Plan as modified. Commissioner Donovan and Commissioner Poe agreed.

Commissioner Lowe recognized Mr. Rob Brinkman, citizen, who complimented everyone for their effort on the Forest Stewardship Incentive Plan.

RECOMMENDATION

Receive a presentation from staff and: 1) adopt the forest steward plan as described in the attached document entitled Stewardship Incentive Plan for Biomass Fuel Procurement; 2) adopt the policy of supporting regulatory changes that would improve the protection of endangered and threatened species; and 3) remove item #070181 from the RUC referral list.

Discussed

RUC Forestry Presentation October 9 2007.pdf
Backup for Forest Stewardship Item #070181 Oct 9.pdf
Memo to RUC re Backup for Item #070181 Feb 12 2008.pdf
Forest Product Procurement Standards Item #070181 Attachment Feb 12 2008.pdf
Backup for 070181 Draft Forest Certification Standards May 13 08.pdf
Backup for Aug 13 2008 RUC Meeting Item #070181.pdf
Backup for item #070181 Markup Incentive Plan Oct 20 08.pdf
Backup for item #070181 Final Stewardship Incentive Plan Oct 20.pdf
070181_referral_20090402.pdf
070181_MOD_ERRATA SHEET_20090416.PDF

080696.

Broadband in Older Neighborhoods (NB)

RECOMMENDATION

The Regional Utilities Committee: 1) Receive an update on broadband availability in older neighborhoods, opportunities from federal stimulus packages from staff; and 2) remove this item from the referral list.

Deferred

070528. Nuclear Energy Option and Recommendation (NB)

Mr. Rob Brinkman, citizen, was recognized. He asked if Mr. Hunzinger had any information on the issue of the Florida Municipal Power Agency's (FMPA) vote on the Levy Nuclear Project which had been discussed at the April 2, 2009 City Commission meeting. Mr. Hunzinger advised that GRU is not on the FMPA's Executive Committee which will be voting on this project. Therefore, GRU does not have a vote on that project. There is an item advising the City Commission of this on the April 16, 2009 meeting agenda.

RECOMMENDATION *The Regional Utilities Committee recommend that the City Commission remove this item from the referral list.*

Deferred

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

RECOMMENDATION *The Regional Utilities Committee recommend that the City Commission remove this item from the referral list.*

Deferred

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

070352. Status Report on Maximum Energy Efficiency (NB)

RECOMMENDATION *The Regional Utilities Committee recommend that the City Commission remove this item from the referral list.*

Deferred

070352_20070827.pdf

MEMBER COMMENT**CITIZEN COMMENT****080943. Regional Utilities Committee Outstanding Referral Status Report (B)**

RECOMMENDATION *The Regional Utilities Committee review the Outstanding Referral Status Report dated April 8, 2009.*

No Action Taken

RUC Outstanding Referrals status report April 8 09.pdf

NEXT MEETING DATE

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:35 p.m.