

City of Gainesville

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



Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, December 10, 2008

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

Agenda was adopted as distributed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

080659. Regional Utilities Committee Meeting Minutes for October 20, 2008 (B)

RECOMMENDATION *The Regional Utilities Committee approve the minutes for October 20, 2008 as circulated.*

This matter was Approved as Recommended. The motion carried.

RUC Meeting Minutes Oct 20 08.pdf

CURRENT RUC ACTION ITEMS

070181. Forest Stewardship Incentive Program (NB)

The Regional Utilities Committee heard a presentation on the information staff had gathered in response to concerns raised at a previous meeting regarding the protection of endangered species contained in the Forest Stewardship Incentive Plan for Biomass Fuel Procurement.

Joe Wolf, GRU Forester reported to the RUC the results of the contacts he made with Dr. Kenneth Dodd, UF Department of Wildlife, Ecology and Conservation and Tony Acurie a wildlife ecologist regarding concerns raised relative to endangered and threatened species. Mr. Wolf further explained that there will be signed contracts with the people supplying the biomass to the plant which will be legally binding and negotiated by professional foresters. GRU will have audit rights on all the requirements and there will be penalties such as de-listing a supplier. The contracts will bind the landowners to our minimum sustainability standards and will require compliance with the Division of Forestry Best Management Practices.

Commissioner Donovan asked what is the significance of the state exemptions in the state's endangered species act. Is that more than compensated for by the federal law or are there things that may fall through the gaps?

Joe Wolf responded that he felt it more than compensated. There may be a few species that are specific to the state of Florida.

Commissioner Donovan asked if there was a way we could write in some guarantee of

protection of those animals that we know need protection but since the foresters are exempt from state level code they could not be concerned about protecting those animals? Commissioner Lowe further asked if it would possible to give state listed species the same protection as federally listed species.

Ed Regan and Tony Wallace stated that it could be very expensive to do that and could make it difficult to procure the biomass needed due to landowners being hesitant to become involved in the program.

Commissioner Donovan asked how do we ensure compliance. Ed Regan responded that we would have the option to perform audits.

Commissioner Poe commented that if we want to add some assurance that we're going to be good stewards of our environment we need to extend the federal endangered species list. Commissioner Poe further commented that he is sensitive to the idea that we don't want to place ourselves outside of a market that we're trying to create. Commissioner Poe stated that he is comfortable with the program that has been put forth and negotiated and vetted through some pretty reliable independent sources. The oversight ability that we seem to have seems quite significant.

Commissioner Lowe stated that he would be comfortable referring this back to the City Commission now but between now and then perhaps we could think a little bit more on how to deal with the state listed species and the possibility of treating them similarly to federal species.

Commissioner Lowe asked if the Committee was recommending removal of this item from the referral list. Commissioner Poe and Commissioner Donovan agreed.

MOTION:

The RUC agreed to take this item back to the City Commission and recommend removal of the item from the list.

RECOMMENDATION

The RUC receive information from staff on how endangered species rules and regulations apply to forestry operations.

This matter was Approved, as shown above - See Motion(s). The motion carried.

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

080184.**Water Conservation Policy Referral (B)**

The Regional Utilities Committee heard a presentation by Rick Hutton, Senior Water/Wastewater Engineer, on water conservation in our area and statewide.

Commissioner Donovan brought up the concern about rising sea levels where the water tables are dropping around Jacksonville and other areas.

Rick Hutton responded that one of the goals of the water management district is they projected these are the potential impacts that if we do nothing to conserve or curb our demand the intent of the water supply assessment is then they go into what they call the water supply plan. That is a plan of what we are going to do to avoid these impacts. They plan to start development of the plan this coming summer and we will be participating in that.

Bill Shepherd presented an overview of our water conservation programs.

Commissioner Poe asked what the typical residential use is per month. Rich Hutton responded it was around 7 to 8 kgal per month.

Bill Shepherd advised the Committee that GRU had recently won an award from the American Water Works Association.

Commissioner Donovan asked if we knew the total number of customers with irrigation systems. Staff responded that it was hard to tell because not everyone with an irrigation system had an irrigation meter.

Commissioner Poe asked if it would be feasible to have the meter readers leave a leaflet at a residence when they notice an irrigation system.

Ron Herget replied that we've already been doing some of that. Bill Shepherd pointed out that we also use consumption data too to identify residential customers that use a lot of water.

Skip Manasco pointed out another reason to identify every irrigation system is because a backflow preventer is required for every residence connected to GRU with an irrigation system. The backflow preventer has to be inspected once a year and we need to know who to send reminder letters to.

Commissioner Poe asked if we had anything going on with our school system in relation to water conservation and offered to help with it.

Kathy Viehe replied that we include it with all of our programs which include a variety of programs with different age groups.

There was discussion about the use of reclaimed water usage and the recent change in how it is charged for.

Commissioner Lowe asked about distributing low flow shower heads and what type of cost benefit ratio did it have. Bill Shepherd advised that we did have a distribution program some time ago but the market became saturated so we stopped. Recently we began offering coupons distributed through the Community Weatherization Committee. We do not have an exact answer on the cost ratio benefit but there may be some industry standards that might help.

Staff will invite Dr. Heaney from the University of Florida to attend a future RUC meeting to speak about the Conserve Florida Water program he's coordinating. Staff will also come back to the RUC to discuss reclaimed water rates and some possible changes to the reclaimed water extension policy.

RECOMMENDATION *The Regional Utilities Committee (RUC) hear a brief overview of water supply and water conservation programs and issues, and discuss the committee's policy interests for analysis and discussion at a future RUC meeting.*

Discussed

Backup to RUC Item #080184 Water Conservation 12 10 08.pdf

080132.

Cooking Grease Collection and Recycling (B)

The RUC received a brief overview of the referral from David Richardson and GRU's interest in preventing Fats Oils and Grease from being discharged into the wastewater system and outlined on-going efforts. David Richardson described how the cooking grease collection and recycling project being organized by a student from Oak Hall School further keeps used cooking oil out of GRU's wastewater collection system.

Mr. Larry Christian was recognized and spoke to the RUC about the project his son was organizing who could not attend the RUC meeting due to duties at school. Mr. Christian explained to the RUC what the project was and what had been completed to date.

David Richardson advised that GRU had written a letter of support for the grant Mr. Christian's son had applied for and provided them with can tops that could be distributed and used in the collection of cooking grease.

MOTION:

The RUC approved the recommendation submitted by staff.

RECOMMENDATION *The Regional Utilities Committee: 1) approve the attached report from staff regarding this referral; and 2) recommend to the City Commission that this item be removed from the referral list.*

This matter was Approved as Recommended. The motion carried.

Backup for Referral Item #080132 Cooking Grease 12 10 08.pdf

070487.**Florida's Electrical Reserve Margins (NB)**

Time did not allow for discussion of this item. It will be continued to the next meeting.

RECOMMENDATION

The Regional Utilities Committee hear a brief report from staff and recommend the City Commission remove this item from the referral list.

Deferred

080520.**Utility Tier for the Elderly in Gainesville (NB)**

Time did not allow for discussion of this item. It will be continued at the next meeting.

RECOMMENDATION

The Regional Utilities Committee: 1) receive a presentation from staff; and 2) recommend to the City Commission to remove this item from the referral list.

Deferred

MEMBER COMMENT**CITIZEN COMMENT**

OUTSTANDING REFERRALS

080662. Regional Utilities Committee Outstanding Referral Status Report (B)

This item was briefly discussed. Commissioner Donovan requested a wording change on item #7 page 2 of the backup. The word upstart should be changed to start-up.

RECOMMENDATION *The Regional Utilities Committee review the Outstanding Referral Status Report dated December 10, 2008.*

Discussed

RUC Outstanding Referrals Status Report December 10 2008.pdf

NEXT MEETING DATE

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:50 p.m.