



# Redwood Coast Energy Authority

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## **COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**

### **DRAFT MINUTES**

**October 13, 2020 - Tuesday, 6 - 7:30 p.m.**

The agenda for this meeting was posted on October 13, 2020. Community Advisory Committee Chair Larry Goldberg called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m., stating that the meeting was being conducted by teleconference pursuant to Brown Act waivers included in Governor Newsom's COVID-19 State of Emergency Executive Orders and in response to local efforts to reduce the spread of the virus. Chair Goldberg stated that the posted agenda outlined instructions for the public on listening to the meeting and providing comment.

#### **Members present:**

Norman Bell  
Elizabeth Burks  
Jerome Carman  
Colin Fiske  
Larry Goldberg, Chair  
Catherine Gurin  
Pam Halstead  
Amin Younes

Roger Hess  
Richard Johnson  
Luna Latimer  
Dennis Leonardi, Vice Chair  
Kit Mann  
Matty Tittman

Stephen Avis, Board Liaison (non-voting)

#### **Members absent:**

Tom Hofweber

#### **Staff present:**

Richard Engel, Power Resources Director  
Matthew Marshall, Executive Director  
Nancy Stephenson, Community Strategies Manager  
Lori Taketa, Board Clerk

Chair Goldberg welcomed new members Catherine Gurin and Roger Hess to the Community Advisory Committee and thanked original CAC member Kathy Srabian for her service.

#### **Minutes Approval**

Member Norman Bell expressed disappointment that the RCEA Integrated Resource Plan, which proposes different project power portfolios through 2030, was not presented to the Community Advisory Committee for discussion and review prior to its

presentation to the Board of Directors for approval. Other committee members abstained from voting because they were not present at the July meeting.

Chair Goldberg invited comment. There were no comments from members of the public. Chair Goldberg closed the public comment period.

**Motion Carman, Second Johnson: Approve minutes of July 14, 2020, CAC meeting.**

**The motion passed with a roll call vote. Ayes: Burks, Carman, Fiske, Goldberg, Johnson, Latimer, Leonardi, Mann, Tittman, Younes. Noes: None. Abstain: Bell, Gurin, Halstead, Hess. Absent: Hofweber.**

**Alternative Biomass Use Presentation**

Power Resources Director Engel reported on the Humboldt State University student capstone presentation on alternative biomass uses. During the spring 2020 semester, the Environmental Engineering seniors assessed alternative forest industry waste uses including as a cleaner combustion fuel, as a raw material for durable or consumer goods and as a soil amendment. Staff Director Engel explained that this research assignment and presentation was arranged due to the presence of biomass in RCEA's portfolio and the energy resource's controversial history due to pollution and carbon neutrality concerns. The students' reports and a video of the presentation can be found online at <https://redwoodenergy.org/community-choice-energy/about-community-choice/power-sources/humboldt-county-biomass/>.

The group discussed possible next steps; a need for RCEA staff direction on continued involvement; a need for further research; the need for stakeholders to be made aware of this research and to be enlisted to develop suggested options; and RCEA's role in developing alternative biomass uses, including non-energy uses; the Committee agreed to form an ad hoc subcommittee to draft a proposal for RCEA's involvement in alternative biomass use options for presentation to the Board for approval. Jerome Carman, Luna Latimer and Kit Mann volunteered to join this ad hoc committee. Staff suggested working with RCEA consultant Michael Furniss, who coordinated a panel discussion and wrote a report on Forests, Energy, and the Environment during RCEA's 2019 strategic plan revision process. Mr. Furniss is currently contracted to implement some of RCEA's strategic plan's biomass initiatives, including assembling a biomass technical advisory working group that will, among other tasks, consider the HSU students' findings.

Chair Goldberg invited public comment. No member of the public made comment. Chair Goldberg closed the public comment period.

**Behind-the-Meter Storage Resource Adequacy (RA) Program**

Executive Director Marshall presented a progress report on the development of a new RCEA program to support grid reliability and meet RCEA's state-required "resource adequacy" obligations using customer ("behind the meter") battery storage systems. In contrast to utility-scale battery storage, through this program RCEA will be contracting with one or more vendors who will work with customers to install batteries which will

then be managed to provide back-up emergency power, help reduce customer energy costs, and provide power-balancing benefits to the broader electricity grid. Mr. Marshall pointed out that this year's rolling blackouts resulted not from a lack of power during peak demand hours, but from a lack of power when the sun set and solar energy was not available to help meet demand. RCEA is helping to pilot this concept of customer battery storage as a way to support the integration of more renewable energy and improve grid reliability.

A state program, the Self-Generation Incentive Program, is making funds available for purchasing battery storage to encourage energy resilience. Humboldt County customers, especially at-risk residential customers relying on medical equipment and critical facilities such as hospitals and water or wastewater treatment facilities, may be eligible for robust incentives resulting in low- or no-cost battery storage systems to pair with solar systems. RCEA has been working with local agencies to apply for this funding and held well-attended workshops educating customers about the program. To date, Humboldt County customers have qualified to receive approximately \$40 million in incentives to install around 10.5 MW of battery storage. Another \$8 million worth of Humboldt County applications are waitlisted should more funding become available or projects fall out of the rebate reservation queue. Humboldt County SGIP-funded customers will have the option to contract through RCEA's new Behind-the-Meter RA program to provide grid reliability through their newly-installed storage systems.

Committee members expressed support for these programs and praised RCEA's outreach efforts. The group discussed another RCEA statewide behind-the-meter resource adequacy provider, Leap, that responds to high energy demand periods by reducing customer electricity use of smart appliances and HVAC systems instead of drawing power from customer batteries. There was a request for more information about behind-the-meter resource adequacy as it becomes available.

Chair Goldberg invited public comment. No member of the public commented. Chair Goldberg closed the public comment period.

### **Upcoming RCEA Workshops**

Community Strategies Manager Nancy Stephenson described RCEA's upcoming public online workshops. Two upcoming workshops will address statewide grid issues and RCEA's role in Humboldt County's energy resiliency. The statewide panel will feature CEC Commissioner Karen Douglas, CalCCA Executive Director Beth Vaughan and a representative from CAISO. The Humboldt County resilience workshop will feature Blue Lake Rancheria's Jana Ganion, Swell Energy Senior Director Jon Fortune, and a representative from Schatz Energy Research Center and an RCEA staff member will facilitate. A November webinar will introduce RCEA's electric vehicle rebate.

Chair Goldberg invited public comment. No member of the public made comment. Chair Goldberg closed the public comment period.

### **CAC Ad Hoc Subcommittees**

Executive Director Marshall described the current CAC ad hoc subcommittees, including the newly-formed Biomass Alternatives Subcommittee, and the work they

have been assigned and gave new and existing members an opportunity to volunteer to serve on them.

The Bond Subcommittee will assist in the County of Humboldt's effort to develop an energy resilience revenue bond concept. The group will hold its first meeting soon to evaluate opportunities. Elizabeth Burks, Colin Fiske, Larry Goldberg, Catherine Gurin, Roger Hess, Richard Johnson and Amin Younes have volunteered to serve on this ad hoc subcommittee. This group will meet soon to begin discussing opportunities.

The Outreach Subcommittee will give input on outreach efforts and help to avoid jargon in messaging. Committee members Catherine Gurin, Kit Mann, and Amin Younes volunteered to work with staff manager Nancy Stephenson on this subcommittee.

Chair Goldberg invited public comment. No member of the public made comment. Chair Goldberg closed the public comment period.

### **Non-Agenda Item Public Comment**

Chair Goldberg invited public comment. No member of the public made comment. Chair Goldberg closed the public comment period.

### **Member Reports**

Member Bell expressed disapproval of the proposed 2030 energy portfolio presented at the July meeting, with similar carbon emissions as RCEA's current portfolio. The CAC was established to address the climate emergency by making Humboldt County a serious climate mitigator, Dr. Bell stated, and RCEA's 2030 portfolio must be much more aggressive in achieving clean, non-greenhouse gas producing, non-polluting energy. Executive Director Marshall explained that RCEA's Integrated Resource Plan will be updated every two years and is required to meet prescribed state targets. While RCEA may not alter these goals, the 2030 portfolio aims to be comprised completely of renewable resources, contains less than half the amount of biomass than is currently in the agency's portfolio and allows for cleaner biomass energy technologies. The majority of RCEA's ambitious 2030 portfolio comes from a proportionally large amount of solar for RCEA's customer size, 230 times more solar energy production than the Blue Lake Rancheria's system, as well as offshore wind and small hydropower. While the offshore wind and small run-of-the-river hydropower sources have not yet been developed, over 100 MW of new solar energy installations are already under contract and slated for construction in 2021-2022, and a target of 15 MW being sourced locally.

Member Carman requested an update at the next meeting on the County's multi-jurisdiction climate action plan efforts.

Member Fiske reported that the Humboldt County Association of Governments Board formed an ad hoc committee to set targets for reducing vehicle miles traveled and transportation greenhouse gas emissions in preparation for next year's Regional Transportation Plan.

Member Gurin stated that HSU graduate student Chih-Wei Hsu wrote his thesis on the topic of income and race disparities in electric vehicle public charging deployment and

EV ownership that included recommendations for making EV programs more equitable. Staff requested a copy of this thesis.

The following action items and agenda item requests were summarized:

- Creation of an ad hoc subcommittee to propose RCEA's role in alternative biomass use development for Board approval,
- Request to hear more about the behind-the-meter resource adequacy and SGIP programs, and
- Request for an update on the countywide climate action plan.

Chair Goldberg adjourned the meeting at 7:38 p.m.

Lori Taketa  
Board Clerk

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