



Redwood Coast Energy Authority

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January 14, 2020
Tuesday, 6 - 7:30 p.m.

COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING **MINUTES**

The agenda for this meeting was posted on January 11, 2020. Community Advisory Committee Vice Chair Larry Goldberg called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

Members present:

Norman Bell

Jerome Carman

Colin Fiske

Larry Goldberg, Vice Chair

Pam Halstead

Tom Hofweber

Dennis Leonardi

Kit Mann

Kathy Srabian

Robin Smith, Board Liaison

Members absent:

Richard Johnson

Craig Mitchell

Luna Latimer

Matty Tittman, Chair

Staff present:

Mike Avcollie, Demand-Side Projects Manager

Nancy Stephenson, Community Strategies Manager

Lori Taketa, Clerk of the Board

Minutes Approval

Member Pam Halstead corrected an error in the December 10, 2019, special meeting draft minutes where Margaret Tauzer's name was misspelled.

Vice Chair Goldberg invited public comment. No one came forward to speak. Vice chair Goldberg closed public comment.

Motion Halstead, Second Bell. Minutes of the November 12, and December 10, 2019 special meetings were approved as corrected by consensus.

Oral Communications

Vice Chair Goldberg invited public comment.

Member of the public Jesse Noell stated that RCEA is not fulfilling its mission statement because the agency buys high-impact, utility-scale wind and biomass power, and that rooftop solar, hot water storage and vehicle-to-grid energy are better ways to fulfil the mission statement. Mr. Noell added that providing jobs in Humboldt County should be part of the agency's mission statement and that by helping 50,000 homes install solar power storage systems, RCEA would enable a large reduction in fossil fuel use.

Member of the public Rick Pelren stated that microgrid and vehicle-to-grid advances and the ability to balance the grid with solar and storage make this an exciting time to solarize Humboldt and suggested policy makers attend solar conventions or host one on distributed solar arrays.

He stated that only one microgrid has been built since RCEA's inception, that the County needs as much solar as possible but that Humboldt County has a "closed for solar" sign due to RCEA's solar opposition.

Vice Chair Goldberg closed the oral communications period.

The committee members discussed how solar is one important part of a sustainable energy solution in Humboldt County but not the sole solution due to the scale of energy generation required, the high cost of providing energy when the sun is not shining, and the time required to build storage infrastructure at the required scale. The committee members expressed the need for education explaining the science behind different energy options and stated that the RePower Humboldt plan explains cost-effective, practical and available options in depth. Members requested efforts to correct misperceptions that RCEA discourages solar energy development, and the need to emphasize the agency's work with international energy experts at the Schatz Energy Research Center on the airport microgrid and other projects. Community Strategies Manager Nancy Stephenson stated that RCEA is launching a series of workshops beginning in February on solar battery backup systems and microgrids. The workshops will be videotaped for on-demand viewing and workshop information will be shared in regular newspaper columns.

Annual Meeting Calendar

Staff Clerk Taketa outlined the proposed calendar of regular Community Advisory Committee meetings for the next year based on the Board of Directors' Operating Guidelines and the CAC's Charter.

Vice Chair Goldberg invited public comment. No one came forward to speak. Vice chair Goldberg closed public comment.

Motion Mann, Second Halstead. By consensus, the Committee unanimously approved the 2020 Community Advisory Committee annual meeting calendar.

Selection of Chair/Vice Chair

Staff Clerk Taketa recounted the committee leadership selection process from the CAC Charter. The committee members discussed whether a member could serve as chair or vice chair for two consecutive years then serve in the other role the following year and determined this was acceptable in the interest of providing continuity of leadership. Vice Chair Goldberg was nominated to serve as chair and member Leonardi was nominated to serve as vice chair. Both stated a willingness to serve.

Vice Chair Goldberg invited public comment. Member of the public Dave Carter thanked vice chair Goldberg for his service. Vice Chair Goldberg closed public comment.

Motion Carman, Second Hofweber. By consensus, the Committee unanimously appointed Larry Goldberg and Dennis Leonardi to serve as Community Advisory Committee chair and vice chair, respectively, for terms beginning April 14, 2020, and ending April 13, 2021.

RCEA Resiliency Initiatives (Information only)

- Board Public Safety Power Shutoff Subcommittee (on islanding Humboldt County)

Demand Side Project Manager Mike Avcollie presented a staff report on the RCEA Board Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) Ad Hoc Subcommittee's first meeting on January 9, 2020. The subcommittee's goal is to work with PG&E to island and maintain electrical service to Humboldt County during power shutoffs and to have a plan in place before the next fire season. Staff

Manager Avcollie reported that PG&E was granted an Air Quality Management District load variance permit allowing Humboldt Bay Generating Station (HBGS) to perform black start testing in mid-December. The subcommittee and staff compiled a list of questions for PG&E Senior Manager, Humboldt & North Valley Divisions Carl Schoenhofer in the wake of the test and will request a tour of HBGS to better understand islanding challenges.

Schatz Energy Research Center Managing Engineer Dave Carter provided information on power shutdowns, the grid, and how HBGS engines would need to operate at low levels in different modes when islanding to respond to constantly fluctuating load demands, which is difficult in smaller grids.

The committee discussed:

- how Southern Humboldt might not benefit from islanding as much as Northern Humboldt due to transmission line configuration and the lack of resources to energize the southern grid section
- the importance of powering metropolitan areas, hospitals, Open Door facilities and other emergency first responders
- the uncertainty about whether biomass power plants would need to go offline during islanding
- the 15% rule of thumb grid limit on solar energy due to solar energy fluctuations
- why the solar energy limit cannot be increased if PG&E has a 100% solar option, and if the 15% rule of thumb limit can be increased through new technology

CAC members requested:

- participating in the HBGS tour
- a CAC member to participate in a non-voting capacity at future PSPS Subcommittee meetings
- a substation map
- that the subcommittee find out which substations will be powered first when islanding
- finding out whether the islanding Humboldt County will have customer bill impacts
- finding out whether HBGS protection settings need to be changed when islanding.

Member of the public Jesse Noell expressed the need to keep hospital and fire department substations energized.

Member of the public Rick Pelren stated that PG&E has the ability to choose which substations to power and that it would be good to know of any PG&E emergency plans.

- Airport Solar Microgrid Project (islanding critical facilities)

Schatz Energy Research Center Managing Research Engineer Dave Carter reported on the Airport Solar Microgrid Project and explained how the low-inertia, inverter-based microgrid can support grid frequency without the spinning online resource that was previously required. When built at substations, microgrids can allow for greater than 15% rooftop solar penetration along grid feeder lines.

The airport's electricity account will be credited in compensation for energy produced in one part of the solar array and the rest of the array will be direct coupled to a Tesla DC battery pack which can manage the large energy fluctuations caused by clouds and makes the system 100% dispatchable. RCEA invested \$6 million and the CEC contributed \$5 million to this community-scale project which must be economically viable in order to be replicable.

A completed study confirmed the project will have no glare impacts, project partners are close to signing a PG&E interconnection agreement and the goal is to begin construction this summer. Upon inquiry by a committee member, Mr. Carter stated that the CAC could help by asking County Supervisors to make the project a high priority and to impress upon the FAA its importance to the community. Mr. Carter commended RCEA staff for their work and willingness to take a risk on the project and stated that PG&E has been a large project partner.

- CPUC Self-Generation Incentive Program (for customer battery storage rebates)

Staff Manager Avcollie reported on the CPUC's changes to its Self-Generation Incentive Program (SGIP) tax credits for battery purchases, expanding the definition of critical facilities that may qualify. To qualify for the resiliency adder, customers must have experienced two PSPS events. Those most likely to benefit from this program are critical and local agency facilities with solar, and low-income residents. With resiliency adders, the program may potentially pay for battery storage. Twelve schools and local agencies have contacted RCEA about battery installation after the PSPS events. Residential applications will be accepted beginning March 1, and the commercial and public agency program begins April 1. A public workshop on the program will be held on Tuesday, February 4 from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. at the Humboldt Bay Aquatic Center.

Colin Fiske left at 7:41 p.m. Robin Smith and Pam Halstead left at 7:43 p.m.

Chair Goldberg noted that an inverter that can operate on battery power is required for grid-tied solar systems to add battery backup.

Kathy Srabian left at 7:55 p.m.

Member Reports

Member Carmen noted that a sidebar recommendation in the RePower Humboldt document was mistakenly attributed to the CAC and requested a more formal process when publishing committee recommendations. Mr. Carman also requested an update on Citizen Sourced Programs that were initiated in 2018 for the next CAC meeting.

Chair Goldberg adjourned the meeting at 7:58 p.m.

Lori Taketa
Clerk of the Board