



Redwood Coast Energy Authority

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COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING **MINUTES**

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

The agenda for this meeting was posted on April 10, 2020. Community Advisory Committee Chair Larry Goldberg called the meeting to order at 6:03 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 written comment.

Members present:

Norman Bell	Luna Latimer
Jerome Carman	Dennis Leonardi, Vice Chair
Colin Fiske	Kit Mann
Larry Goldberg, Chair	Craig Mitchell
Pam Halstead	Matty Tittman
Richard Johnson	Stephen Avis, Board Liaison (non-voting)

Members absent:

Tom Hofweber	Kathy Srabian
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Staff present:

Richard Engel, Power Resources Director	Nancy Stephenson, Community Strategies Mgr.
Matthew Marshall, Executive Director	Lori Taketa, Clerk of the Board

Minutes Approval

There were no Committee or public comments on this item.

Motion Halstead, Second Mann: Approve minutes of the January 14, 2020, CAC meeting.

The motion passed with the following roll call vote: Ayes: Bell, Carman, Fiske, Goldberg, Halstead, Leonardi, Mann, Tittman. Noes: None. Abstain: Johnson, Latimer, Mitchell. Absent: Hofweber, Srabian.

RCEA's Coronavirus Response

Executive Director Marshall reported that most RCEA staff are working from home with minimal staff working at RCEA's office. Agency offices are closed to the public but customer support continues by phone and email. Director Marshall requested the Committee's assistance in informing the community that customers' electricity will not be shut off due to inability to pay their bills following Executive Orders, and that a range of programs are available to customers experiencing financial hardship due to the Coronavirus pandemic. Links to bill payment assistance and discount programs can be found on RCEA's updated COVID-19 webpage, <https://redwoodenergy.org/covid-19/>. RCEA staff can provide technical assistance by phone to residential and business customers considering changing rate plans to save money and custom-tailored energy saving kits are available.

The Committee thanked RCEA staff for their efforts during the shelter-in-place period. There was no public comment on this agenda item.

RCEA Customer Programs

Executive Director Marshall reported that the Community Choice Energy program will likely be financially impacted by customers' inability to pay electricity bills and exit fee increases. Cost containment, discretionary environmental performance target adjustment, and reserve use will be explored with the goal of avoiding rate increases. A solar power purchase agreement for 100 MW from a Kern County project, and three 1 MW local solar project agreements will be considered by the Board. For scale, Blue Lake Rancheria's microgrid output is .5 MW. Energy efficiency programs have largely been suspended during the COVID crisis but Public Agency Solar projects are moving forward with physical distancing measures. Staff time is being redirected to implementing approved customer programs. RCEA anticipates having more control over local energy efficiency program design starting in July, pending CPUC approval of Program Administrator status. The CAC Programs Subcommittee will be asked for input on program design.

Staff will launch the e-bike \$500 rebate program on the 50th anniversary of Earth Day. Electric vehicle charging station upgrades and maintenance continues. RCEA continues to assist the County with the multi-jurisdiction climate action plan and is providing analysis for a potential County revenue bond measure for energy resilience and independence for the November ballot.

The committee confirmed that RCEA is proposing to enter a 15-year agreement to purchase the full 100 MW output of the Sandrini solar project in Kern County, which is 45% of RCEA's customer load and which would not impact other near-term RCEA renewable energy procurement. The increased power purchase fills the shortfall in state-required long-term renewable energy contracts caused by the Terra Gen wind project termination.

The committee discussed: e-bikes' strategic importance for Eastern Humboldt transportation; the value of putting money back into the community while encouraging energy efficiency; the renewed focus on building more local energy storage to improve local grid resilience, especially through large projects at public facilities; and that RCEA staff continues to study micro-scale projects such as residential rooftop distributed resources to provide more grid reliability during outages. Executive Director Marshall explained that Feed-In-Tariff project developers are responsible for seeing the projects through the different environmental and local jurisdictions' approval processes. Power purchase agreements are signed very early in the development process to ascertain the economic viability of project development. RCEA can only purchase power from projects that are successfully built.

Executive Director Marshall reported that Humboldt State University and RCEA's offshore wind project partner Aker Solutions both received grants for offshore-wind-related research from the California Energy Commission, and that the airport solar microgrid project which is scheduled to begin construction this summer may experience delays from pandemic-related supply chain disruptions.

Luna Latimer left the meeting at 7 p.m. There were no public comments on this agenda item.

Public Safety Power Shutoff Response Efforts

Executive Director Marshall reported that PG&E representative in-person meetings and Humboldt Bay Generating Station tour plans were derailed due to the shelter-in-place orders, but that PG&E will conduct more islanding tests to enable the majority of Humboldt County to be islanded during out-of-county fire risk events this coming fire season. The area around Humboldt Bay should remain energized with certainty of power to substations decreasing in more outlying areas farther away from the plant. PG&E is considering deploying temporary generators to substations near Hoopa and Willow Creek. It is currently uncertain whether Southern Humboldt will be powered from Humboldt Bay or Mendocino County. PG&E is considering microgrid installation at some substations for the long term.

Chair Goldberg and vice-chair Leonardi expressed interest in serving on the PSPS Subcommittee and in attending meetings with PG&E. There were no public comments submitted for this agenda item.

Non-Agenda Item Public Comment

Community Strategies Manager Nancy Stephenson read a comment submitted by member of the public Nancy Ihara requesting the CAC to contribute to a changed “clean energy” definition in the Comprehensive Action Plan for Energy that would take into consideration the harmful health impacts of biomass energy’s fine particulate and CO2 emissions. Ms. Ihara requested that the CAC review Dr. Wendy Ring’s comments for the upcoming Board meeting on fine particulates and COVID-19 and that RCEA transition away from biomass energy.

The committee discussed the need for a plan that is more satisfactory for community members who oppose biomass use, that the current biomass contracts end this year and in 2024, and the need for more local storage if the grid stability provided by local biomass plants is removed.

Member Reports

Member Norman Bell requested establishment of a subcommittee on wave energy to provide grid stability.

Member Jerome Carman inquired about the behind-the-meter storage request for proposals. Executive Director Marshall stated that the RFP had open conditions to increase response rates and that reviewing staff share Mr. Carman’s ownership and maintenance cost concerns.

Member Colin Fiske requested an update on the CAPE strategic plan’s targets since the Terra Gen project fell through.

Pam Halstead left the meeting at 7:35 p.m.

Member Richard Johnson praised the video conference process and requested that the committee hold virtual meetings more often.

Member Craig Mitchell, whose CAC term was ending, thanked RCEA and his fellow committee members, who congratulated Mr. Mitchell on his acceptance to a master’s degree wind engineering program in Norway.

Chair Goldberg stated that the COVID-19 experience would have profound environmental and other impacts and suggested RCEA investigate how to encourage telecommuting as a long-term option to achieve greenhouse gas reduction goals.

Executive Director Marshall summarized actions as follows:

- Include formation of a CAC Bond Initiative Subcommittee on July’s meeting agenda.
- Provide an update on the CAPE strategic plan’s targets after the Terra Gen project rejection at the July meeting.
- Staff to consider how RCEA can be involved in encouraging telecommuting.
- Executive Director Marshall will communicate to the Board PSPS Subcommittee Chair Goldberg and Vice Chair Leonardi’s interest in participating in meetings with PG&E and the power plant tour.

Chair Goldberg adjourned the meeting at 7:42 p.m.

Lori Taketa
Clerk of the Board