



Redwood Coast Energy Authority

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COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

November 8, 2022 - Tuesday, 6 - 7:30 p.m.

The agenda for this meeting was posted on November 4, 2022. Community Advisory Committee Chair Dennis Leonardi called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m., stating that the meeting was being conducted by teleconference pursuant to revised Brown Act provisions signed into law on September 16, 2021. Chair Leonardi stated that the posted agenda outlined instructions for public participation in this meeting.

Members present:

Norman Bell

Colin Fiske

Larry Goldberg

Catherine Gurin, Vice Chair

Roger Hess

Christopher Honar

Richard Johnson

Luna Latimer

Ethan Lawton

Dennis Leonardi, Chair

Kit Mann

Jeff Trirogoff (arrived 6:09 p.m.)

Scott Bauer, Alt. Board Liaison (non-voting)

Members absent: Elizabeth Burks, Emily Morris, Jerome Qiriaz

Staff present:

Richard Engel, Power Resources Director

Matthew Marshall, Executive Director

Nancy Stephenson, Community Strategies Manager

Lori Taketa, Board Clerk

Eileen Verbeck, Deputy Executive Director

Minutes Approval

No member of the public or committee commented on the draft minutes. Chair Leonardi closed the public comment period.

Motion Johnson, Second Goldberg: Approve minutes of September 13, 2022, CAC meeting.

The motion passed with a roll call vote. Ayes: Fiske, Goldberg, Gurin, Hess, Johnson, Latimer, Lawton, Leonardi, Mann. Noes: None. Abstain: Bell, Honar. Absent: Burks, Morris, Qiriaz, Trirogoff.

Non-Agenda Item Public Comment

No member of the public submitted comment or requested to speak. Chair Leonardi closed the non-agenda public comment period.

Biomass Discussion

Power Resources Director Engel reported on the CAC Alternative Biomass Uses Subcommittee's input on potential Biomass Technical Advisory Group (BTAG) membership makeup and on the Humboldt Sawmill Company (HSC) and RCEA annual

alternative biomass uses discussion process. The CAC members were asked whether they wanted to recommend that the Board commit to a biomass energy procurement sunset date to facilitate meeting RCEA's strategic plan goal 4.1.11.6 – Plan for a Long-Term Transition Away from Direct Combustion of Forest-Derived Biomass and Toward Lower-Impact Uses of this Material.

The committee members supported the potential BTAG member list's emphasis on public health but expressed concern about relying on the Humboldt Area Foundation-affiliated CORE Hub to organize BTAG membership due to the process' perceived lack of public transparency. Members both supported and expressed reservations about setting a biomass combustion energy procurement sunset date.

Members expressing specific end date concerns cited RCEA's need to meet California resource adequacy mandates which may change and are beyond RCEA's control. Biomass energy currently helps RCEA fulfil SB 100 renewable resource and SB 350 long-term renewable energy contract requirements as well as resource adequacy mandates to provide capacity during evening and other critical need periods. It has become increasingly difficult for California power providers to fulfil these resource adequacy requirements. There was discussion on other energy offtakers for HSC's electricity should RCEA not renew its contract, the high cost of building replacement renewable energy resources of similar scale, and the logic of forming the BTAG before setting a sunset date.

Members supporting ending direct combustion biomass procurement at the end of the HSC contract in 2031 pointed to newly-developed alternate biomass uses, how a sunset date could catalyze lower-emission biomass use and alternate RA source planning, and how RCEA should prioritize public health rather than HSC's economic well-being. Staff expressed preference for setting and working toward a goal and revisiting the goal should it become impossible to meet.

Member of the public Dan Chandler supported setting a biomass combustion energy procurement end date, pointing out available lower carbon intensity biomass waste uses and the cost of emissions impacts.

Member of the public Wendy Ring referred to a letter the Humboldt Del Norte Medical Society submitted to the RCEA Board of Directors opposing new, extended or expanded biomass contracts due to public health concerns. Dr. Ring asked that the CAC advise the Board to stop prioritizing local renewable energy development and instead to prioritize public health and welfare of local communities. Dr. Ring expressed concern that load growth from Nordic Aquafarms and electrification would result in increased biomass energy procurement.

Member of the public Martha Walden supported a biomass sunset deadline, opposed classifying biomass as a clean energy source, and supported the CAC recommending a biomass end date to the Board. Chair Leonardi closed the public comment period.

Written public comments were submitted by members of the public:

- Wendy Ring, requesting the CAC ask the board to honor the RePower Strategic Plan's commitment to end biomass combustion.
- John Schaefer, supporting Wendy Ring's recommendation, adding that RCEA should only contract for biomass energy if it is from gasification and pyrolysis.
- Sue Parsons, asking for a resolution against pursuing further biomass

- combustion contracts.
- Emily Siegel, requesting the CAC call on RCEA to make no further biomass combustion contracts.
- Walt Paniak, opposing extension of HSC's biomass contract.

Motion Fiske, Second Johnson: Approve proposed Biomass Technical Advisory Group formation methods and Humboldt Sawmill Company-RCEA Memorandum of Understanding implementation improvements, and request the Biomass Technical Advisory Group, within one year of that group's formation, make a recommendation for a combustion-based biomass procurement sunset date no later than the end of the current contract in 2031, and preferably sooner.

The motion passed with a roll call vote. Ayes: Bell, Fiske, Goldberg, Gurin, Honar, Johnson, Latimer, Lawton, Leonardi, Mann, Tirogoff. Noes: None. Abstain: Hess. Absent: Burks, Morris, Qiriaz.

PG&E Southern Humboldt Grid Issues

Executive Director Marshall described recently reported electricity transmission constriction issues that limit load growth in areas including Southern Humboldt County, parts of Eureka and Arcata including Sunnybrae and Cal Poly Humboldt, and regions served by the Hoopa substation such as Soames Bar and Yurok Tribe areas. Potential ways RCEA could assist were described: working with PG&E on deploying distributed resources such as battery storage in the Eel River Valley area to lessen constriction issues while PG&E upgrades infrastructure; investigating whether microgrids could feasibly address Garberville 1102 circuit constriction issues; and advocating for transmission upgrades to export offshore wind energy through parts of southern Humboldt County to potentially improve transmission-level issues.

The Committee members discussed starting an ad hoc transmission committee to assist in developing options, the transmission infrastructure limits' potential effects on countywide Climate Action Plan implementation, and the importance of publicizing RCEA's actions to address the issue. A request was made for grid issue updates and to discuss ad hoc transmission committee formation at that time.

Written public comment was submitted by Siskiyou Land Conservancy Director Ken Miller, asking RCEA to support development of widespread distributed solar and nested community microgrids on available rooftops and parking lots to sustainably electrify without degrading habitat. Chair Leonardi closed the public comment period.

CAC Work Goals & Annual Report

Members expressed support for expanding the CAC's goal setting process timeframe from one to two years, adjusting goals annually as necessary. The group will determine if their existing annual goals need to be adjusted at the January meeting.

The above-mentioned written public comment by the Siskiyou Land Conservancy was submitted for this agenda item.

RCEA Policy Platform

Executive Director Marshall requested member input on the Draft 2023 RCEA Policy Platform prior to presentation to the Board in December. Members commented that the platform did not mention supporting climate action outside of energy procurement, whereas this is part of RCEA's mission. There were concerns that prioritizing local control could lead to the agency opposing state-level actions which align with RCEA's objectives.

Staff stated they would add a climate action section to the coming year's policy platform and bring the question of local control and local renewable energy development back for future discussion.

The above-mentioned written public comment by the Siskiyou Land Conservancy was submitted for this agenda item.

Local Major Projects

Due to lack of time, discussion of this item was postponed to the January 2023 CAC meeting.

The above-mentioned written public comment by the Siskiyou Land Conservancy was submitted for this agenda item.

Member Reports

Member Goldberg requested the CAC form an ad hoc subcommittee to pursue RCEA and Cal Poly Humboldt research on the off-grid cannabis industry's greenhouse gas (GHG) impacts to provide a scientific basis for pursuing more funding than what is currently provided by the County's Water Storage and Renewable Energy System Grants program. The County program's \$2.5 million is inadequate to address existing GHG impacts.

Vice Chair Gurin requested continuing to list committee member objectives prominently in staff reports and providing a standing agenda item or more opportunities for Board liaison input to increase dialog between the CAC and the Board.

Chair Leonardi adjourned the meeting at 7:43 p.m.

Lori Taketa
Clerk of the Board