



Redwood Coast Energy Authority

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COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE REGULAR MEETING

DRAFT MINUTES

September 12, 2023 - Tuesday, 6 - 7:30 p.m.

Community Advisory Committee Chair Dennis Leonardi called the hybrid in-person and teleconference meeting to order on the above date at 6:12 p.m. at the Jefferson Community Center auditorium, 1000 B Street, Eureka, CA. The agenda for this meeting was posted on September 8, 2023.

Members present:

Colin Fiske

Larry Goldberg

Christopher Honar

Richard Johnson

Luna Latimer (arrived 6:14 p.m.)

Ethan Lawton

Dennis Leonardi, Chair

Emily Morris (arrived 6:17 p.m.)

Jerome Qirazi

Jeff Trirogoff

Members absent: Norman Bell, Elizabeth Burks, Kit Mann

Board Liaison, non-voting: Kris Mobley

Staff present:

Juliette Bohn, Infrastructure Programs Manager

Matthew Marshall, Executive Director

Lori Taketa, Board Clerk

Eileen Verbeck, Deputy Executive Director

Non-Agenda Item Public Comment

Members of the public Dr. Ken Miller and Jesse Noell submitted written comment in favor of distributed solar energy.

Dr. Wendy Ring submitted written comment opposing biomass energy procurement from Humboldt Sawmill Company due to public health and emissions concerns. Dr. Ring reported on requests to present HSC emissions and health impact information to the RCEA Board and CAC. At the meeting Dr. Ring expressed concerns about the appropriateness of citizen science data gathering and Chair Leonardi's potential conflict of interest in HSC discussions due to his use of biomass plant fly ash fertilizer. Committee members requested a discussion or panel discussion on biomass' health impacts and local biomass plant emissions at the next meeting. The Biomass Technical Advisory Group's role of discussing technical considerations and making Board recommendations was described. Chair Leonardi closed the comment period.

Consent Calendar

- 3.1. Approve July 11, 2023, CAC Meeting Minutes.
- 3.2. Accept Local Major Projects Subcommittee Update.

No member of the public nor of the committee requested consent calendar item removal. Chair Leonardi closed the comment period.

Motion Qiriaz, Second Johnson: Approve consent calendar items.

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

5. CAC Vice Chair Selection

Member Qiriaz volunteered to fill the remainder of the vice chair's term ending March 31, 2024, which was vacated when Catherine Gurin resigned from the committee. It was requested that former Vice Chair Gurin be recognized with a certificate of appreciation. No member of the public commented on this agenda item.

Motion Latimer, Second Goldberg: Appoint Jerome Qiriaz to be Community Advisory Committee vice chair to fill the remainder of a term ending March 31, 2024.

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

6. Critical Facilities Subcommittee Report

Infrastructure Programs Manager Juliette Bohn described previous staff work to identify countywide critical facilities and rank them to determine funding pursuit as opportunities arise. The CAC's Critical Facilities Subcommittee's input on the list was described, as well as how staff assisted 17 non-populated area Humboldt fire stations to apply for a recent post-disaster resilience funding grant. Committee members were asked to identify facilities, including informal community gathering places, from which people around the county may seek help after a disaster, and to provide feedback on how to rank the facilities' post-disaster energy resilience infrastructure needs.

CAC members discussed:

- The goal of funding infrastructure so facilities can function without grid power post-disaster and provide services within their potentially isolated communities.
- Current funding opportunities, including from the Federal Inflation Reduction Act.
- Methods for prioritizing facilities: including remoteness from neighboring communities; whether resilience needs are already being met; whether vital services facilities have resilience infrastructure in communities that will be cut off from other areas due to failed roads and bridges; whether the facility is publicly-funded or privately-owned; and other considerations.
- Ensuring that local Tribe critical facilities are receiving resilience assistance.

- Electric vehicle batteries', and diesel fuel generators and batteries', resilience roles.
- Other groups providing critical disaster services, and RCEA's focus on renewable energy resilience and economic benefits.

Committee members requested the Critical Facilities Subcommittee continue its work by helping to create a clearer methodology for prioritizing facilities for which to pursue resilience funding. The Subcommittee agreed to continue its work and to sunset upon completion of a draft prioritized matrix of critical facilities in need of resilience infrastructure funding. There was no public comment for this item and Chair Leonardi closed the comment period.

7. Strategic Plan Status Update

Executive Director Marshall updated the committee on RCEA progress on its strategic plan goals. The Rural Regional Energy Network, which will provide energy efficiency services to rural communities across California and for which RCEA will serve as administrator, is set to launch in 2024. Completion of the Sandrini solar energy project, which is slated to provide for 40% of the County's electricity needs after completion, has been further delayed due to federal trade tariffs meant to ensure that the solar panels were not manufactured using forced labor. Alternate panels are being sourced but the delay will result in significant financial impacts next year.

Infrastructure Programs Manager Bohn reported on the upcoming e-bike rebate launch, which will follow the state's e-bike rebate program design and start date. Staff researched outcomes after RCEA's first electric bike rebate program, which the CAC promoted through a previous community program idea solicitation process. Research on the previous program's results, other rebate program results and interviews with local bike shop mechanics shaped the second rebate round, which will focus on larger rebates for income-qualified community members, purchase of repairable e-bikes through local bike shops as opposed to largely-unregulated direct-to-customer e-bike purchases, and emphasis on rider safety training and certified safe e-bike components. The program will provide a free 6-month or 100-mile tune up for rebate recipients. There were no public comments on this agenda item.

8. CAC Annual Report Subcommittee

Chair Leonardi and Vice Chair Qiriazzi will serve as Annual Report Subcommittee members. There were no public comments on this agenda item.

9. Member and Board Liaison Reports

Board Liaison Mobley praised Executive Director Marshall's update and did not have a separate report for the committee. Member Lawton expressed appreciation for the committee members' and staff's work. There was no public comment on this item.

Chair Leonardi adjourned the meeting at 7:46 p.m.

Lori Taketa, Clerk of the Board