



Redwood Coast Energy Authority

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COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE REGULAR MEETING **MINUTES**

November 14, 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 p.m. at the Jefferson Community Center auditorium, 1000 B Street, Eureka, CA. The agenda for this meeting was posted on November 14, 2023.

Members present:

Norman Bell

Elizabeth Burks

Colin Fiske

Larry Goldberg

Christopher Honar

Richard Johnson

Luna Latimer

Ethan Lawton

Dennis Leonardi, Chair

Kit Mann (arrived 6:04 p.m.)

Jerome Qirazi

Jeff Trirogoff

Members absent: Emily Morris

Board Liaison present: Kris Mobley (non-voting)

Staff present:

Sally Regli, Account Services Manager

Lori Taketa, Board Clerk

Eileen Verbeck, Deputy Executive Director

Non-Agenda Item Public Comment

Chair Leonardi noted recent public meeting disruptions and stressed the importance of respectful behavior during meetings.

McKinleyville resident Stephen Paytash recommended RCEA help residents opt up to the REpower+ carbon-free and renewable portfolio through a grant-funded program and reconsider using REpower as the default portfolio due to biomass power greenhouse gas concerns.

Committee members requested a CAC-Board meeting on RCEA's HSC biomass power purchase agreement and noted the Biomass Technical Advisory Group's role to analyze data and advise the Board on biomass issues. The CAC may comment on the BTAG's recommendations and a January County Board of Supervisors' biomass panel discussion of diverse stakeholders will also inform decision-making.

Dr. Wendy Ring's written comment opposed citizen science air quality monitoring around the Humboldt Sawmill Company biomass plant and compared the HSC plant's excessive emission incidents with those of other Northern California biomass plants.

The Chair closed the public comment period.

Consent Calendar

3.1. Approve September 12, 2023, CAC Meeting Minutes.

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

Motion Goldberg, Second Latimer: Approve consent calendar item.

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

5. Arcata Gateway / McKinleyville Town Center Subcommittee Report

Deputy Executive Director Verbeck reported. Staff will provide technical assistance to developers and jurisdictions on Life Plan Humboldt, We Are Up, and accessory dwelling units policy development. Staff will develop a RePower Strategic Plan cheat sheet for developers and jurisdiction planners so they can easily understand County General Plan Energy Element goals. Staff will submit comments when the County releases the McKinleyville Town Center project Notice of Preparation. Staff will submit an Arcata Gateway Project letter of support and contact the City of Eureka to find out how RCEA can support the City's parking lot housing project. Staff will work informally with the Harbor Commission to get offshore wind port developers to use commercially available zero emission equipment. The group discussed determining County support for these actions, incentives for complying developers including streamlined permitting, and how RePower strategies align with Countywide Climate Action Plan measures. Developers who comply with CAP measures may enjoy streamlined permitting.

Committee member and Humboldt County Association of Governments Executive Director Burks described the We Are Up 50-unit multi-generation, multi-ability housing project in McKinleyville. HCAOG helped this project and a micro transit project win a \$2.7 million development grant. RCEA staff will provide energy efficiency and other technical assistance for this project.

No member of the public commented on this agenda item.

6. Annual CAC Work Goal Setting

Deputy Executive Director Verbeck reported on progress made by the CAC and RCEA staff on the previous year's work goals. Due to long timeframes and staffing limitations, staff recommend continuing existing work goals for the next year.

Due to Rural Regional Energy Network launch delays, staff will engage the CAC Customer Programs Outreach Subcommittee on program outreach in 2024 (goals 1 and 4). The McKinleyville Town Center / Arcata Gateway Major Project Subcommittee will continue working with staff on the current list of development projects during the next two years (goal 2). The Offshore Wind Outreach Subcommittee's work is paused while the County and CORE Hub determine their outreach roles and messaging (goal 3). The Critical Facilities Subcommittee will help staff develop a infrastructure resilience funding prioritization method and a matrix of critical facilities ranked according to funding need (goal 5). The Bond Subcommittee's work is nearing completion. Staff submitted CAC-shortlisted energy project letters of interest to the USDA for a 40% forgiveness, low-interest loan program. Staff will submit full loan applications after the USDA responds and may issue a request for proposals for energy resilience project bond development (goal 6). The Climate Action Plan Outreach Subcommittee will craft CAP information for RCEA to share with the community in 2024 (work goal 7).

The group discussed:

- RCEA providing input on the Climate Action Plan prior to the Environmental Impact Report.
- Upcoming PG&E rate increases: staff will ask committee members for messaging input.
- Power Resources staff will provide the CAC with general information and comparisons of airport microgrid, offshore wind, battery storage and other clean energy sources' cost effectiveness.

No member of the public commented on this agenda item. Chair Leonardi closed the comment period.

7. Net Billing Tariff (NBT): Board Decision Report

Account Services Manager Regli reported. The CPUC's proposed decision changes customer billing for imported and exported solar electricity of on-site solar arrays. RCEA's Board decided to mirror PG&E's new billing plan and asked staff to gather information and report back on how RCEA and its customers are impacted by the new plan. The Board will consider battery incentives in the spring and reconsider RCEA's NBT billing plan in a year. Manager Regli described aspects of the NBT billing plan:

- The new NBT adopts more accurate pricing and promotes customer-sited storage.
- New NBT customer accounts will be trued up each April when eligible legacy Net Energy Metering customers receive their cash out payments.
- New solar systems will take longer to pay for themselves.
- Pairing battery storage improves new solar systems' cost effectiveness.
- Larger solar customers can now sell their Renewable Energy Credits to RCEA.
- PG&E's billing system is not operational. Current RCEA NBT customers are billed under Net Energy Metering in the interim.
- Calpine's current billing system kept RCEA from creating a customized NBT. Staff will advocate for changed solar billing when PG&E and Calpine IT systems are fully operational.

Committee members discussed:

- Creating a battery co-op for community members who do not own batteries,
- How Swell's virtual power plant program supports battery ownership with or without a solar system,
- How the State's Self-Generation Incentive Program (SGIP) helps legacy solar system owners buy battery storage,
- Whether the new solar billing plan can take into account increased battery adoption's environmental impacts, and
- How mirroring PG&E's NBT Solar Billing Plan may negatively impact RCEA's ability to meet ambitious rooftop solar adoption goals.

Committee members asked whether RCEA could serve as a SGIP and federal Inflation Reduction Act information clearinghouse to help applicants successfully access these funds, and for a presentation on costs and benefits of battery installation. Staff will engage with the Programs Subcommittee for input on RCEA battery incentive recommendations before presenting them to the Board. There were no public comments on this agenda item.

8. Member and Board Liaison Reports

Board Liaison Mobley reported on RCEA's purchase of the 805 Third Street parking lot, site of RCEA's future offices, and praised Deputy Executive Director Verbeck for leading the purchase efforts.

Member Fiske asked that informational agenda items include opportunities for the CAC to make Board recommendations in the context of his request to agendaize a recommendation following the July HSC biomass alternate use report. Member Trirogoff asked that RCEA immediately stop buying HSC power to end public health impacts and address procurement impacts later. Staff explained that the CAC biomass discussion was postponed because the Board has no pending biomass-related decisions and key staff are on leave. The Executive Director sets the CAC meeting agenda which can include Board-requested items, per the Board Operating Guidelines and the CAC Charter. CAC members may submit agenda item requests to the Executive Director.

There was no public comment on this item.

Chair Leonardi adjourned the meeting at 7:31 p.m.

Lori Taketa
Clerk of the Board