



**LOW INCOME CONSUMER ADVISORY TASK FORCE
MEETING MINUTES
January 9, 2015**

The Low Income Consumer Advisory Task Force convened in a regular meeting at Town Lake Center, 721 Barton Springs Road, Room 100, in Austin, Texas. Chairperson, Carol Biedrzycki called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

Task Force Members in Attendance: Carol Biedrzycki, Tim Arndt, Lanetta Cooper, Karen Hadden, Richard Halpin, Dan Pruett, Cyrus Reed, Chris Strand, Kelly Weiss. All members were in attendance.

Staff in Attendance: Austin Energy staff included Debra Athearn, Sady Bartlett, JJ Gutierrez, Liz Jambor, Debbie Kimberly, Denise Kuehn, Stacy Lewis, and Ronnie Mendoza.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES- Cyrus Reed motioned to approve the minutes of December 10th meeting and seconded by Dan Pruett, all unanimously approved.

CITIZEN COMMUNICATIONS: GENERAL

Charlie Ford, City Conservation/Totally Cool-reported reduced hours due to lack of contractor work. He shared that he is unable to obtain work from Austin Energy's list of potential weatherization applicants. He stated that he does not have to qualify applicants. He shared that he believes that people on the list are not viable clients. He also noted a study that Paul Robbins submitted reporting no savings with weatherization measures. Kent Ambrose, American Conservation & Air reported that he was told to gear up staff to cover work but believes he is not getting enough work.

Karen Hadden requested the study that was reference to be shared with the group. Carol will provide the report to all the members. Tim Arndt moved for time certain of 10:30 for the panel discussion. There was no second and no approval. A discussion was made amongst members regarding Citizen's Communication comments and the opportunity for members to question staff. Dan Pruett requested handling Citizen Communication like City Council where the members could get staff input and clarification based on questions from the citizens. Carol would like to hear from Austin Energy (AE) staff but was concerned that there would not be enough time for the panel discussion. Carol suggested that this matter be discussed after the panel discussion or request Citizen Communications discussion under a future agenda items. Dan disagreed and wanted the ability to question staff at the time of Citizen's Communication. Chris Strand agreed with Dan. Carol asked Sady to research if members can get clarification from staff but not have a discussion during Citizen Communication. Dan reiterated that they could get clarification from staff.

OLD BUSINESS

2. Approve 2015 Meeting schedule, location, and operating rules- Richard Halpin motioned approval of the operating rules, Tim Arndt seconded, and all approved.

3. Update and discussion regarding weatherization programs-The members requested monthly updates on weatherization status. Denise Kuehn, Energy Efficiency Services Director, shared a presentation with details of the weatherization process and commented on some of the information provided in Citizen Communications.

Weatherization contractors currently have jobs assigned to them but have not yet started the work. Liz Jambor, Data & Analytics and Business Intelligence Manager, updated members on additional information requested in the December 10th meeting in regards to HVAC data and demographics survey. Due to time limitation, Carol did not want detailed discussion of HVAC at this time and moved to discuss in future meetings.

DISCUSSION PANEL- Representatives shared information about their low income programs, their funding sources, and how they currently work with AE and other agencies. Discussion with local government departments included:

Letitia Brown, City of Austin Neighborhood Housing and Community Development Office

Cara Welch, City of Austin Neighborhood Housing and Community Development Office

Topics shared included: Serving clients at 80% and below, partnerships and grants for funding.

Questions and discussion followed.

Maria Allen, City of Austin Health and Human Services

Topics shared included: Neighborhood centers help with program promotion. Funding through grants.

Questions and discussion followed.

Nick Waken, Housing Authority of the City of Austin

Topics shared included: Funding from U.S. Department of Housing and Development (HUD).

Questions and discussion followed.

Mark Jordan, Austin Water Utility

Topics shared included: Program for 200% and below, money budgeted in AWU (\$200K).

Questions and discussion followed.

Elena Rivera, Travis County Health and Human Services

Topics shared included: U.S. Department of Energy's Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant program (EECBG), work in unincorporated areas only, no specific energy efficiency guidelines.

Questions and discussion followed.

Julie Hatfield, Texas Gas Service

Topics shared included: Details of free program and related funding sources.

Questions and discussion followed.

Several noted the good working relationship between their agency and AE. Most noted that they did not have any suggestions to improve AE's programs but rather hoped they could continue working together.

BRIEFINGS & REPORTS

4. Reports from task force committees-

Low Income Energy Efficiency Program Chair, Lanetta Cooper, shared two draft resolutions which included a GDS study on weatherization cost savings measures and a City auditor study on improving the efficiency of City programs and/or services addressing affordable housing. She wanted to post them for a vote in the next meeting agenda. She asked if sub-committee agenda information could be posted. Others in the group did not want this. Lanetta also requested AE staff to be available during sub-committee meetings to answer technical questions. The group agreed that staff would not be supporting sub-committees. Low-Moderate Income Energy Efficiency Program Chair, Chris Strand, reported on questions for AE staff to look into financing through on-bill financing. Carol recommended this be a future agenda item. Affordable Rental Property Chair, Tim Arndt, had not met with his committee.

5. Austin Energy staff briefing on affordability study tables-Liz Jambor, Data Analytics and Business Intelligence Manager, presented on the updated residential electricity burden study. There was a brief discussion on this subject. Due to time limitation, Carol asked to review only the updated table with more

recent data to demonstrate any changes in utility burden and poverty levels in Austin. The group agreed that the issue was more than a brief update but no further discussion was planned.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

6. Discussion regarding future agenda items including a schedule of topics and issues presented during briefings and citizen communications- The next meeting agenda will include a non-profit panel discussion.

ADJOURNMENT-Tim moved to adjourn. Lanetta seconded at 12:31 p.m. without objection.