



LOW INCOME CONSUMER ADVISORY TASK FORCE MEETING MINUTES March 27, 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 10:09 a.m.

Task Force Members in Attendance: Carol Biedrzycki, Tim Arndt, Lanetta Cooper, Karen Hadden, Dan Pruett, Cyrus Reed, and Chris Strand. Members Kelly Weiss and Richard Halpin were not in attendance.

Staff in Attendance: Austin Energy staff included Debra Athearn, Sady Bartlett, Liz Jambor, Denise Kuehn, Scott Jarman, and Ronnie Mendoza.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. Approve minutes from the March 6, 2015 meeting- Tim Arndt proposed to add to the minutes under NEW BUSINESS, Sunshine Mathon's presentation, to clarify "...with production distributed to individual residents *of the multifamily rental property*". Dan Pruett motioned to approve the minutes. It was seconded by Tim Arndt. All approved the minutes as revised.

b. Approve minutes from the March 13, 2015 meeting- Tim proposed to add to NEW BUSINESS, "...that duplexes, *triplexes*, and 4-plexes were also another hard to reach sector." Tim motioned to approve the minutes. It was seconded by Chris Strand. All approved the minutes as revised.

CITIZEN COMMUNICATIONS: GENERAL

Kaiba White, Public Citizen Texas- shared information about a Foundation Communities project regarding the issue of having no mechanism for applying credits from solar system to multiple accounts. This results in having to individually wire 140 systems to 140 meters and add 15-20% to the cost of installation. They also have to get permits for each installation. She shared virtual billing as a solution to this. It has been done in other places and could benefit the low income community and other multifamily complexes. She asked that the Task Force recommend that Austin Energy (AE) modify its current billing system to incorporate virtual billing.

Rachel Stone- working with a Colorado company to do green rehabilitation in the multifamily sector. Shared that rebates were available and funding could be combined to do green rehabilitation. They could maximize private lending with public funding. She noted that non-profits working at state level could help to incentivize larger rebates and could tie it to the ECAD ordinance. She could provide more information to the Task Force.

3. OLD BUSINESS

a. Discussion and possible action on short-term and long-term recommendations- The Chair, Carol Biedrzycki, reviewed a list of preliminary recommendations that she had drafted and had been previously sent out to the members. The members discussed the report, submittal process, and the language used in the preliminary list. They wanted to include the word “considering” to some of the recommendations. Denise Kuehn, Director of Energy Efficiency Services offered staff’s input on the list of preliminary recommendations. After the discussion and taking into account the member’s input, it was agreed that Carol would create a draft of recommendations and items for consideration that would be distributed to the members for review by Monday, March 30, 2015. The members would have an opportunity to review, edit and comment on the draft report. If a member objected to an item in the draft report, the item would be removed for further consideration later in the process. Per request by several members, Carol would incorporate comments and edits and return the draft report to all the members for a final review prior to submission to Assistant City Manager, Robert Goode by April 1st. Should there be no consensus on the report, it would be brought to the next regular meeting on April 10th for further discussion and review.

4. BRIEFINGS & REPORTS

a. Austin Energy staff update on the weatherization program job status-Handouts were provided with no further discussion.

b. Status of data requests- Documents were emailed to the members. There was no discussion.

c. Committee Reports – possible reports from the Low Income Energy Efficiency Program Committee, Low-Moderate Income Energy Efficiency Program Committee, and/or Affordable Rental Property Committee— There were no reports from the sub-committee.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

8. Discussion regarding future agenda items including a schedule of topics and issues during briefings and citizen communications- Dan Pruett was interested in having more discussions regarding window units. A presentation from AE staff regarding current financing options with Velocity Credit Union was requested and would be given at the next meeting on April 10. There would also be a presentation from AE marketing staff in regards to promotion to low income customers. For the April 17 meeting, solar virtual billing would be discussed. Tim motioned for Carol to develop a consensus document based on the group’s discussion of the recommendations. Lanetta Cooper seconded and all were in favor.

ADJOURNMENT— Carol adjourned the meeting at 12:25 pm with no objection.