



LOW INCOME CONSUMER ADVISORY TASK FORCE

MEETING MINUTES

May 1, 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 10:08 a.m. with no quorum. There was a quorum of the members present at 10:29 a.m.

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

Staff in Attendance: Austin Energy staff included Debra Athearn, Liz Jambor, Denise Kuehn, Stacy Lewis, and Ronnie Mendoza.

1. CITIZEN COMMUNICATIONS: GENERAL

Susan Lippman, Sierra Club- provided members with handouts regarding May 9, 2015 event in the Dove Springs area at the Austin Travis County Integral Care location from 12-2pm. She also shared information regarding research on number of deaths due to hot summer months as reported in Europe. She would provide the members a link to the research.

Kaiba White, Public Citizen-shared information regarding solar pricing and gave figures on monthly pricing on a solar systems including install costs, tax incentive and value of solar, and all residential costs. She quoted averages. Questions and discussion followed.

Cathy Redson, SolPowerPeople, Inc., - provided examples with pro and cons of typical costs for residential solar based on various solar financing options. Questions and discussion followed.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. Approve minutes from the April 17, 2015 meeting- Additional information was proposed to be added under BRIEFINGS & REPORTS; Item 5b, and under CITIZEN COMMUNICATIONS by the Chair and Vice- Chair. The members and staff discussed the proposed changes. Staff noted the additional information presented by the Chair to Item 5b could not be included in the minutes because the request was discussed after adjournment. However, it could be presented and added to the May 1, 2015 meeting minutes. An addition from Vice- Chair, Tim Arndt was made under CITIZEN COMMUNICATIONS to include under Dave Malone's comments, "He added that stopping multifamily rebates could lead to lay-off of multifamily contractors." Cyrus Reed motioned to approve the amended minutes. Karen Hadden seconded, and all approved on 5-0 vote.

3. OLD BUSINESS

Email communication from member Chris Strand was distributed to the Task Force on April 30, 2015. He informed that he and member Dan Pruett were unable to attend the May 1, 2015 meeting. He asked the members to "hold off on voting for any recommendations until the next meeting. Both of us have been very diligent in attending these meetings and I believe our input would be helpful." An additional email was sent from Dan Pruett stating, "I agree with Chris and would like to be present if possible when we vote on

recommendations.” The Chair responded via email to all the members, “I am sorry that Dan Pruett and Chris Strand are unable to attend the Task Force meeting tomorrow. Hopefully we will have a quorum present. If so, we will conduct as much business as possible as we have only one more meeting before work has to start on the final report. At this point I do not want to discourage anyone from coming to the meeting because he or she thinks nothing important will happen. “ Staff reminded members of Chris and Dan’s request during the meeting. The Chair reiterated to the members her email response and noted that with a quorum present they are able to precede with any action items.

a. Discussion and possible action on the coordination of public meetings to gather citizen input regarding Task Force recommendations—Ronnie Mendoza, Manager of Customer Care, confirmed the following meeting locations:

May 30, 9:30-11:30am at Gus Garcia Recreation Center
June 1, 6-8pm at South Austin Recreation Center
June 8, 6-8pm at Virginia Brown Recreation Center
June 10, 6-8pm at Doves Spring Recreation Center

The meetings would be listening sessions to hear from the public. The Chair stated that they won’t commit to any dates until they vote at the next meeting.

b. Discussion and possible action on energy efficiency and renewable energy financing recommendations—Lanetta Cooper presented two recommendations for customers in the 301 and 400% of federal poverty guideline and 0-300% of the federal poverty guideline. Denise Kuehn, Director of Energy Efficiency Services, presented information regarding approaches under consideration to expand the loan loss reserve usage. Discussion followed regarding suggested amendments to the proposed recommendations to include customers between 200-400% federal poverty guideline and adding correct terminology. Both recommendations were tabled until the recommendation language could be finalized and more rebates and details added.

c. Discussion and possible action on low and low moderate income energy efficiency program recommendations— Recommendation adopting “unspent EES weatherization funds, specifically reserved to low income customers since the Customer Benefit Charge (CBC) tariff went into effect to roll over similar to Customer Assistance Program (CAP) weatherization funds”, was approved on Cyrus Reed’s motion, Karen Hadden seconded on a 5-0 vote. Cyrus Reed and Lanetta Cooper would work on the low-moderate customer group programs and budget to be presented at the next meeting.

d. Discussion and possible action regarding energy efficiency and renewable energy program for rental properties— The members discussed a motion submitted by Lanetta Cooper requesting Council to direct Austin Energy to take action regarding not yet approved multifamily contracts. This issue was discussed during Citizen’s Communication at the April 17, 2015 meeting. Cyrus Reed moved to adopt a motion to read, “The Low Income Task Force moves that the Austin City Council be requested to direct Austin Energy to provide to contractors and owners who have entered into contracts for energy efficiency improvements prior to the abatement with the rebates proposed and Council approved for FY 2015.” Karen Hadden seconded the motion on a 5-0 vote. Karen requested staff to share the Semi Annual Rent Report pursuant to Resolution No. 20130523-069. Staff would post the report via the Task Force’s website.

4. NEW BUSINESS

a. Discussion and possible action regarding pending multifamily contracts-This item was discussed during OLD BUSINESS in item 3d.

5. BRIEFINGS & REPORTS

a. Austin Energy staff update on the weatherization program job status- Members received an updated report via email of homes weatherized as of April 28, 2015. There was no further discussion.

b. Status of data requests –The Chair followed up on information regarding CAP average electricity usage data. Staff noted that CAP usage data was provided at a previous meeting and would be resent. The Chair requested a report on additional information previously requested regarding the total revenue collected from CAP customers from the CBC for Energy Efficiency Services and how much of those funds are collected from discount participants. The information is still being processed. The Chair asked that her April 20th email reminder of the question be posted as a Task Force document. No further discussion followed.

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-Tim Arndt reported on the Affordable Rental Property Committee discussions regarding multifamily rebate levels, financing via Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE), and fully implementing the ECAD Ordinance. The Chair distributed a handout prepared for future discussion titled, “Other Low-Income Program Questions”.

6. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

a. Discussion regarding future agenda items including a schedule of topics and issues and topics raised during briefings and citizen communications-Lanetta Cooper recommended placing an item to visit the low income weatherization components in future discussions. The Chair informed that she would keep the agenda items broad in order to get recommendation proposals ready for the members to review. The Chair read the questions in her handout distributed during item 3c and noted that it would be discussed at the next meeting. An outline summary of the final report was also distributed to the members. Members began discussions regarding future agenda items and staff reminded them to hold discussions of future agenda items until the next meeting. Items for future discussion would include:

- Formal recommendations from the Affordable Rental Property Committee
- Discussion to resolve whether the Low Income Weatherization Program should include repair or replacement of HVAC in certain buildings that already have central air conditioners
- Discussion of the final report

ADJOURNMENT- Chairperson Carol Biedrzycki adjourned the meeting at 12:06 p.m. without objection.