



LOW INCOME CONSUMER ADVISORY TASK FORCE

MEETING MINUTES

May 15, 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 10:04 a.m.

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

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

1. CITIZEN COMMUNICATIONS

Paul Robbins, Environmental Advocate-shared records from 2014, TCAD exemptions, and recommended the Task Force to review the data to make recommendations. He urged members to statistically analyze the data and cost/benefit to target their audience. He commented on the Task Force's plan to hold community meetings and questioned if it was part of the resolution and to consider staff time. Questions and discussion followed.

Gilbert Rivera, Former Austin Energy Low Income Weatherization Program employee and Chair of the Community Development Commission (CDC)-noted that in the past they used all the money for the program. He asked for coordination with the Housing Repair Coalition (HRC). He recommended that weatherization money go to HRC. Questions and discussion followed.

Johnny Limon, Served on the CDC and Meals on Wheels- informed that he worked with contractors to increase number of homes completed each year and increased communication across contractors and organizations. He recommended spending all the weatherization money and completing all the measures in one visit and having money accessible to the organizations doing the work. Questions and discussion followed.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. Approve minutes from May 1, 2015 meeting- Dan Pruett asked for clarification regarding Cyrus Reed's motion on pending Multifamily Energy Reduction Program (MERP) contracts versus the recommendation drafted by the Chair. The Chair recommended leaving this portion of the minutes as is and they would review the topic later in the meeting and get clarification from the other members on whether to move forward with the recommendation. The chair proposed changes under BRIEFINGS & REPORTS, 5b.Status of Data Request, to include an email she sent to staff requesting Customer Assistance Program (CAP) electricity data usage. Richard Halpin motion to approve the amended minutes, Lanetta Cooper seconded, and all approved on 8-0 vote.

3. OLD BUSINESS

a. Discussion and possible action on pending multi-family contracts- A motion by Cyrus Reed was passed in previous meeting (May 1, 2015) to recommend that Council honor the pending MERP contracts. The Chair drafted a recommendation on this motion and shared it with the members. Dan Pruett requested staff to give input regarding the wording within the recommendation. Denise Kuehn, Energy Efficiency Services Director shared details regarding the contracts and commented that the recommendation was missing information that explained what led to the delayed contracts. She noted that the contracts were not suspended but delayed. The Chair noted that the recommendation was not under the Task Force's mission per the resolution. Further discussion ensued amongst the members with no consensus. Cyrus Reed withdrew his motion.

b. Discussion and possible action on the coordination of public meetings to gather citizen input regarding Task Force recommendations- The Task Force would participate in the July 16, 2015 Austin Energy Low Income Summit along with another public meeting. Four potential dates and locations were discussed. Dan Pruett motioned to select the date of June 1, 2015 from 6-8pm at the South Austin Recreation Center. Richard Halpin seconded and all approved on 8-0 vote.

The Chair informed that she would be giving a report at the Austin Energy Oversight Committee on May 28, 2015. She would present their preliminary recommendations.

c. Discussion and possible action on energy efficiency and renewable energy financing recommendations- Lanetta Cooper distributed two draft recommendations pertaining to the 0-300% (Recommendation # 1) customer group. Discussion followed with comments from Cyrus Reed to add within the program description "to purchase and/or install" air-conditioning units. Lanetta motioned that her recommendations for customers within the 0-300% of poverty guideline be approved. Cyrus Reed seconded. The amended recommendation was approved on 8-0 vote.

d. Discussion and possible action on low and low moderate income energy efficiency program recommendations- Lanetta motioned to accept her draft recommendations for the 301-300% (Recommendation # 2) customer group. Cyrus Reed seconded the motion. Discussion followed with edits made including changing the income group to 0-400%, clarifying that the loans are unsecured, and that savings will be tracked by income categories. All approved the amended recommendation on 8-0 vote.

e. Discussion and possible action regarding energy efficiency and renewable energy programs for rental properties- This item was not discussed.

4. NEW BUSINESS

a. Discussion and possible action on final task force report- This item was not discussed but put on the May 29, 2015 agenda for discussion and possible action.

5. BRIEFINGS & REPORTS

a. Austin Energy staff update on the weatherization program job status- Staff distributed a report on weatherization job status as of May 12, 2015.

b. Status of data requests- Ronnie Mendoza, Manager of AE Customer Service, distributed data request information titled "Calendar Year 2014 CAP Participant's Electricity Usage", "Calendar Year 2014 CAP Electric Usage in Tier Rates" and "Community Benefit Charge-EES Portion".

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-
This item was not discussed.

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-The Chair proposed a special called meeting on May 29, 2015 to focus solely on recommendations. All members agreed to have the meeting. Members would submit recommendations to be distributed for review by Tuesday, May 26, 2015 and staff would offer feedback regarding the feasibility of the recommendations. Karen Hadden volunteered to help with the June 1 public meeting announcement. The Sierra Club would also help to market the event along with Meals on Wheels and Neighborhood Housing.

ADJOURNMENT-Chairperson Carol Biedrzycki adjourned the meeting at 12:09 pm with no objection.