



LOW INCOME CONSUMER ADVISORY TASK FORCE

MEETING MINUTES

May 29, 2015

The Low Income Consumer Advisory Task Force convened in a special-called 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, and Chris Strand. Member Kelly Weiss was not in attendance.

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

1. CITIZEN COMMUNICATIONS: GENERAL

Kathleen Hopkins, Any Baby Can and Discount Steering Committee-She informed that the committee has made recommendations since 2012 and she would like to share them with the Task Force. She wanted to reiterate reinstating air conditioning repair and replacement with parameters to guide the installation. Questions and discussion followed.

Al D'Andrea, Owner of McCullough Heating & Air and current contractor program contractor since 2004- He would like analysis on money spent and savings gained. He is not seeing that coming from the Task Force. Questioned why spend the money if there are no energy savings? He is concerned with moving the budget to the Housing Repair Coalition (HRC). Questions and discussion followed.

Sara Loar, Citizen-She shared concerns about what she heard during the Chair's presentation at the Utility Oversight Committee on May 28, 2015 regarding improvements to the collection of demographic data. She wanted reassurance that they would respect customer's privacy when collecting information. She shared her personal experiences in regards to this issue noting instances where it was demanded that she give personal information in order to receive City services. The Chair and staff offered clarification. Questions and discussion followed.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. Approve minutes from May 15, 2015 meeting- Dan Pruett motioned to approve the minutes. Richard Halpin seconded the minutes. Amendments were made to item 3d to include 0-400% not 301-300% with tracking of savings by income categories and loans would be unsecured. All approved the amended minutes on an 8-0 vote.

3. NEWBUSINESS

a. Discussion and possible action on final task force report - The Chair asked for volunteers for a report writing committee. She provided an overview of a presentation she gave to the Utility Oversight Committee on May 28, 2015 that included recommendations in the pipeline. She passed out a demographics chart that she had been working on and asked for comments and feedback. She reiterated that she spoke with the City

Assistant Manager again regarding the June 12 report and clarified that they only needed to contain items that are to affect the budget in the coming year. She shared questions that were asked by the Utility Oversight committee members. Member Chris Strand also shared what he presented to the committee. Task Force members Karen Hadden, Cyrus Reed, and Chris Stand volunteered to help write the final report. The Chair would send out a draft of the report to review for the June 5, 2015 meeting. Tim Arndt suggested using tactical (1 year) and strategic (over 5 years) recommendations in the report language instead of interim. Dan Pruett asked for more details regarding items that would impact the budget.

4. OLD BUSINESS

a. Discussion and possible action on the June 1 meeting to gather citizen input –Members discussed details of the June 1, 2015 meeting to be held at the South Austin Recreation Center. Toye Goodson Collins, Austin Energy staff liaison would attend to support the meeting and staff would provide educational materials and brochures. An official agenda would be posted on the Task Force website on May 29, 2015 along with the Chair’s presentation of recommendations that was given to the Utility Oversight Committee. Announcement of the meeting had been created and distributed by members and various non-profits.

b. Discussion and possible action on energy efficiency and renewable energy financing recommendations

c. Discussion and possible action on low income energy efficiency program recommendations

d. Discussion and possible action on moderate income energy efficiency program recommendations

e. Discussion and possible action regarding energy efficiency and renewable energy programs for rental properties

Items b, c, d and e regarding recommendations was taken up and discussed as a whole. The Chair listed two recommendations that had already been adopted and noted the following recommendations submitted by members to be discussed:

- Window Unit Recommendation (Weatherization Rebates)-Lanetta Cooper
- Recommendation targeting low income homeowners and renters-Carol Biedrzycki
 - The Chair provided her written recommendations at a previous meeting. No action was taken. It was withdrawn indefinitely.
- Recommendation on Building Codes-Cyrus Reed
 - Discussion was made. Cyrus moved to table his recommendation to take action at a future meeting. Richard Halpin seconded, and all approved.
- Recommendation regarding AE Weatherization Program and Housing Repair Coalition (HRC)-Lanetta Cooper and Cyrus Reed
 - Discussion was made. No action was taken
- Structural Recommendations-Lanetta Cooper and Cyrus Reed
 - Discussion was made. Dan Pruett would like to look further into this recommendation and involve the keys players. Richard Halpin suggested a small working group of those impacted by this recommendation.
- Recommendations for Task Force Consideration on May 29-Chris Strand
 - Discussion was not made regarding these recommendations.

A motion was made by the Chair recommending that all weatherization funds be treated like CAP funding (roll over to following year). Staff informed that a vote regarding this recommendation had already been made and approved at the May 1, 2015 meeting. Discussion followed but no amendments to the motion were made.

- Virtual/ Fractional Billing of Solar Credits Recommendation-Karen Hadden
 - Karen Hadden motioned. Richard Halpin seconded. Member Tim Arndt had left the dais. Member Chris Strand was asked to stay and vote. Motion was approved 7-0 with amendment to add “Fractional” to “Virtual”.

5. BRIEFINGS& REPORTS

a. Austin Energy staff update on the weatherization program job status-This item was not discussed.

b. Status of data requests-This item was not discussed.

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-This item was not discussed.

ADJOURNMENT-The meeting was adjourned at 12:13pm with no objection.