



RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES TUESDAY, APRIL 16, 2019

The Resource Management Commission convened a special-called meeting on Tuesday, April 16, 2019 at Town Lake Center, 721 Barton Springs Road, in Austin, Texas.

Commissioners in Attendance: Leo Dielmann, Chair (District 7); Cyrus Reed, Vice Chair (District 9); Jonathan Blackburn (District 8), Rebecca Brenneman (District 10), Lisa Chavarria (Mayor), Nakyshia Fralin (District 1), Tom “Smitty” Smith (District 5) and Kaiba White (District 2). James Babyak (District 6) and Scott Kohan (District 3) were absent. The commission has one vacancy: District 4.

Staff in Attendance: Debbie Kimberly, Denise Kuehn, Kurt Stogdill, Tim Harvey, Lisa Martin and Toye Goodson of Austin Energy.

CALL TO ORDER – Chair Dielmann called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m. and welcomed three new members, Commissioners Blackburn, Chavarria and Fralin.

CITIZEN COMMUNICATION: GENERAL

There were no speakers.

Consent

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Approve minutes of the February 26, 2019 special-called meeting. **The motion approving the minutes of the February 26, 2019 meeting was approved on Vice Chair Reed’s motion, Commissioner Brenneman’s second, on a 6-0-1 vote, with Commissioner White abstaining, Commissioner Smith off the dais, Commissioners Babyak and Kohan absent and one vacancy.**

NEW BUSINESS

2. Authorize execution of an agreement with Accesso Services LLC (DBA BRI 1969 Parmer LLC), to provide performance-based incentives for the generation of solar energy at its office park at 7700 W. Parmer Ln., for an estimated \$142,790 per year, for a total amount not to exceed \$1,427,900 over a 10-year period. (District 6) **The motion to recommend approval of an agreement with Accesso Services was approved on Chair Dielmann’s motion, Commissioner White’s second, on a 7-0 vote, with Commissioner Smith off the dais, Commissioners Babyak and Kohan absent and one vacancy.**

Non-Consent

STAFF REPORTS AND BRIEFINGS

3. Update on the Austin Sustainable and Holistic Integration of Energy Storage and Solar Photovoltaics (SHINES) project by Lisa Martin, Project Manager and Kurt Stogdill, Manager, Green Building and Emerging Technologies, Austin Energy.
4. Update on the Energy Conservation Audit and Disclosure Ordinance by Denise Kuehn, Director, Energy Efficiency Services and Debbie Swank, Manager, Energy Efficiency Services.

GUEST PRESENTATION

5. Policy and Building Code Changes regarding Single-Fueled Utility Customers by Paul Robbins (Related to Item 6).

OLD BUSINESS

6. Discussion and possible action on a resolution to initiate an Energy Code amendment process to consider removal of Section R403.5.5 Water Heating with Adjacent Gas Service. (Sponsors: Commissioners White and Smith)
Chair Dielmann, Vice Chair Reed, and Commissioners White, Smith and Brenneman suggested revisions to the draft resolution. The revisions shown on the attached document were accepted by the sponsors. **The motion to recommend approval of the resolution as amended was approved on Commissioner White's motion, Commissioner Smith's second, on an 8-0 vote, with Commissioners Babyak and Kohan absent and one vacancy. (Recommendation No. 20190416-6.)**

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

7. Elect a Chair and Vice Chair to serve May 1, 2019 to April 30, 2020, in accordance with Resource Management Commission By-laws, Article 4. Officers.
The staff liaison explained that Chair Dielmann had served four consecutive one-year terms as Chair and was term limited; however, the Commission could override the term limit with a two-thirds majority vote or seven members voting for his reelection. She also stated that Vice Chair Reed had served three one-year terms as Vice Chair and was not term limited.
The motion to reelect Chair Dielmann and Vice Chair Reed was approved on Commissioner Smith's motion, Commissioner Brenneman's second, on an 8-0 vote, with Commissioners Babyak and Kohan absent and one vacancy.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

8. Discuss potential topics for future agendas.
Commissioner White said she was interested in inviting Dana Harmon of the Texas Energy Poverty Research Institute (TEPRI) to make a presentation on programs and policies designed to promote access to solar energy.

ADJOURN – Chair Dielmann adjourned the meeting at 8:52 p.m.

Item #6: Resolution On Eliminating Energy Code Requirement for Natural Gas Connection

WHEREAS, the Austin City Council adopted Resolution No. 20140410-024, which states that “City Council establishes a goal of reaching net zero community-wide greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 and prefers to achieve this goal as soon as it is feasible;” and

WHEREAS, the Austin City Council adopted Resolution No. 20150604-048, which included adopting the Austin Community Climate Plan; and

WHEREAS, action number RT-6 in the Austin Community Climate Plan calls for “electrification of carbon-fueled consumer products;” and

WHEREAS, following a discussion at the Joint Sustainability Committee in August 2017 about including points in a pilot carbon impact statement for planned unit developments (PUDs) that didn’t connect homes to natural gas infrastructure, City of Austin staff identified section R403.5.5 of the city’s Energy Code as a barrier for doing so; and

WHEREAS, the Energy Code for Austin includes section R403.5.5, which, with some exceptions, requires the use of natural gas for water heating where a residential building is constructed adjacent to natural gas service; and

WHEREAS, technology lock-in is a form of economic path dependence whereby the market selects a technological standard and because of network effects the market gets locked-in or stuck with that standard even though market participants may be better off with an alternative; and

WHEREAS, the Office of Sustainability conducted a preliminary ~~thorough~~ analysis of the effect on both greenhouse gas emissions and affordability for using natural gas versus electric hot water heaters, space heaters, cooking ranges, and clothes dryers that included both the up-front and operating costs; and

WHEREAS, the Office of Sustainability preliminary study analysis shows that a home using all electric appliances is both the most affordable option and results in lower greenhouse gas emissions over a 15-year period compared to using natural for some or all appliances, if Austin Energy continues to meet its resource goals; and that greenhouse gas emissions are lower for electric hot water heating than natural gas hot water heating even if Austin Energy’s carbon intensity held constant at its 2018 rate; and

WHEREAS, affordability is a high priority for the Austin community; and

WHEREAS, the idea of amending the Energy Code to remove or modify section R403.5.5 has been discussed at several Resource Management Commission and Joint Sustainability Committee meetings; and

WHEREAS, according to the Resource Management Commission bylaws, it is the duty of the Commission to “Advise the city council regarding appropriate City Code amendments that encourage the use of alternate energy technologies and renewable energy sources, and the conservation of energy,” NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE AUSTIN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMMISSION:

Recommends that the Austin City Council direct the City Manager to initiate a code amendment update process, with full stakeholder involvement, to consider the removal or modification of section R403.5.5 from the Energy Code for the City of Austin.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: Life cycle costs and emissions of all energy efficient water heating technology should be taken into consideration, utilizing data from all reputable sources.