

SWFRPC ENERGY & CLIMATE COMMITTEE MEETING JANUARY 7, 2014

The SWFRPC's Energy & Climate Committee held a meeting/conference call on January 7, 2014, at the offices of the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council. The following members and staff were in attendance:

Committee Members

Ms. Melissa Dickens, SWFWMD
Mr. Phil Flood, SWFWMD
Mr. Don McCormick, Charlotte County Governor Appointee
Mr. Alan Reynolds, Collier County Governor Appointee

Staff

Ms. Margaret Wuerstle, Executive Director
Ms. Jennifer Pellechio, Planner III
Ms. Rebekah Harp, Planner II
Ms. Nichole Gwinnett, Administrative Specialist II

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 10:02 AM by Ms. Pellechio.

Item #1 – Brief Project Overview

Ms. Pellechio gave the project overview.

Ms. Wuerstle requested that Ms. Pellechio state who the partners are. Ms. Pellechio explained that the following partners are on the Solar Ready II Team:

- National Association of Regional Councils (NARC)
- Meister Consultants Group
- Kansas Corporation Commission
- Missouri Department of Natural Resources
- Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board
- Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
- Maricopa Association of Governments
- Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
- North Central Texas Council of Governments
- Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission
- Ohio Regional Council of Governments
- Kentucky Regional Council of Governments
- Indiana Regional Council of Governments

- Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council
- Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council

Ms. Wuerstle gave an overview of the meeting held in Kansas City.

Mr. Reynolds asked if there was any consideration in joining the Broward County effort since their project seemed to be more relevant to what is going on in Florida. Ms. Pellechio explained that it is very complicated with the titles of all of the various projects and funding sources. She noted that the Broward County project was a separately funded project and it is not the same as what MARC has proposed in this project.

Mr. McCormick noted that the City of Punta Gorda doesn't use the term "solar" in their land zoning regulations. He said that he felt that it should be included so the residents would know that it is an option.

Ms. Pellechio noted that the Meister Consultants Group will be providing a training session and it would be up to the committee on the magnitude of the training.

Mr. McCormick said that he felt that it starts with enabling the LDRs because it includes everyone, then helping residents implement is important. Stage 2 would be once the program was in-place will there be some type of incentives or financial aid provided.

Mr. Reynolds asked how the process was going to unfold. Are we supposed to bring in a broader group of individuals, including people from the industry, etc. or does this committee make the decisions. Ms. Pellechio explained that there is a requirement to establish a stakeholder group.

Mr. Reynolds asked what the expected outcome of the process was as it relates to our region. Are there going to be recommended changes that local governments could make to improve the ability for solar to be installed. Ms. Pellechio stated that was part of it, but it also involves having the jurisdictions participate because there are certain metrics which need to be targeted. There needs to be between 10-30 jurisdictions per region joining the effort.

Mr. Reynolds asked if any of the jurisdictional representatives have been contacted. Ms. Pellechio stated that would be addressed under Agenda Item #4.

Item #2 – Establish Stakeholder Group for the Solar Ready II Project

Ms. Pellechio presented the item.

Ms. Dickens asked Ms. Pellechio if there is already an existing list which staff would be working with and supplementing or are we going to start fresh and coming up with a new list. Ms. Pellechio explained that there was an existing list and Ms. Harp was in the process of updating the list. She said that the issue is to be able to verify that the contact information was correct. Ms. Pellechio noted that the updated list will probably be ready to send out within the week.

Item #3 – What solar issues are most important to address in region?

Ms. Pellechio presented the item.

Mr. McCormick noted that it is a very broad topic. There are photo voltaic cells and the whole electric issue. A separate issue would be that we could encourage residents to put solar plumbing on their roofs for solar hot water.

Ms. Dickens asked if staff had conducted the research to determine which jurisdictions have LDRs or the zoning codes which permit solar because that seems to be where we should start in order to know what we are working with and who permits solar energy. She knows that there are a lot of issues with building height where some of the codes may be prohibitive. She suggested having either a summary or spreadsheet which explains what the conditions are.

Mr. McCormick stated that the list of partners which was introduced earlier had Maricopa County in Arizona who probably has LDRs and then suggested that through the contacts to obtain their LDRs for comparison.

Ms. Dickens stated that the American Planning Association has a whole list of comprehensive plans and LDRs which would have the appropriate language. There is an advisory report which lists out the various resources, along with counties and cities throughout the nation who have that language in their codes and regulations.

Ms. Pellechio noted that staff did have to conduct some market data analysis, but it was limited to certain counties.

Mr. Reynolds suggested contacting the industry providers who install the systems and ask them what their experience has been in terms of what local jurisdictions they are having issues with or don't. Ms. Pellechio explained that was one of the items that had to be done in order to receive the grant.

Ms. Dickens asked Ms. Pellechio if she had contacted the Florida Solar Energy Association. Ms. Pellechio said that she did not.

Mr. Reynolds stated that he felt that Florida Power and Light would be able to provide valuable insight. He then said that there was a Florida Solar Energy Center at the University of Central Florida (UCF) which would be another source of information.

Ms. Pellechio noted that Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) program was something that through the energy resiliency and energy strategies documents it. She said that it may be something to ensure was unified throughout the region.

Mr. Flood asked if there were many installers that could come into the market place or are we limited to just one or two vendors. Ms. Pellechio said that she believed that there was a handful, but the problem is that it is very hard for them to get through some of the regulations. She said another issue is training.

Item #4 – Collection of Solar Market Data for New Jurisdictions

Ms. Pellechio presented the item.

Ms. Dickens suggested contacting Sarasota County's Sustainability Department, Lee Byron. She also suggested the University of South Florida (USF).

Mr. McCormick suggested contacting Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) and the 20th Circuit Court. Ms. Pellechio stated that she already has FGCU on board.

Mr. Reynolds asked Ms. Pellechio what kind of data is needed from the jurisdictions. Ms. Harp explained that there are numerous questions and categories, such as the permitting process, interconnection processes, finance options, planning and zoning. Mr. Reynolds noted that what was actually needed is the correct contact person in each jurisdiction in order to complete the data.

Item #5 – Next Steps

Ms. Pellechio presented the item.

Ms. Wuerstle asked Ms. Pellechio how often does this committee need to meet? Ms. Pellechio suggested a monthly basis. Ms. Wuerstle suggested holding the meeting immediately following the SWFRPC board meetings. The committee agreed.

Ms. Pellechio noted that she would like to have a Chair for the committee.

Mr. Reynolds asked what would be involved as Chair. Ms. Pellechio explained that the Chair would be the main point of contact for the committee and also to give the committee's report to the full Council.

Mr. McCormick stated that he would be willing to be Chair and give the committee report to the full Council.

Mr. McCormick noted that there is a lot of information on what is currently being done and what buildings within the region have solar, but we don't have information on what the existing market is and at some point someone is going to ask the questions of "What is the potential market?"; "Where are we going with all of it?" and "How many installations are expected in 20 to 40 years?"

Item #6 - Adjournment

The meeting concluded at 10:48 AM.