

# **SWFRPC Energy and Climate Committee**

## **Meeting Minutes**

### **April 23, 2009**

#### **Members**

Mr. Jon Iglehart, FDEP  
Commissioner Paul Beck, Glades County BOCC  
Mayor Mick Denham, City of Sanibel  
Mr. Phil Flood, SFWMD  
Councilman Don McCormick, City of Punta Gorda  
Commissioner Karson Turner, Hendry County BOCC  
Councilwoman Teresa Heitmann, City of Naples  
Mr. Mel Karau, Hendry County Governor Appointee  
Mr. Alan LeBeau, Charlotte County Governor Appointee

#### **Staff**

Mr. Ken Heatherington, Executive Director  
Mr. Dave Hutchinson, Planning Director  
Ms. Liz Donley, General Counsel/CHNEP  
Mr. Jason Utley, Regional Planner  
Ms. Nichole Gwinnett, Sr. Administrative Assistant  
Ms. Jennifer Pellechio, IT Coordinator  
Mr. Tim Walker, GIS Coordinator

#### **CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Heatherington called the meeting to order at 9:02 am and introductions were made.

**BY GENERAL CONSENSUS THE COMMITTEE ELECTED MR. PHIL FLOOD AS CHAIRMAN FOR THE APRIL 23, 2009 MEETING.**

#### **Committee Mission and Objectives**

Mr. Heatherington gave an overview of how the committee was formed and what grants both the Council and CHNEP are working on.

Mayor Denham stated that he believes that if the committee is going to do something, which he believes that they should, then there should be a plan. He would like to see the committee pick a subject that is meaningful, doable, and something which the general public at large will recognize as being something which has a relevance to them. He feels that the committee needs to pick a subject that would challenge the committee and also something that can be achieved.

He suggested solar heating for residential homes which is a technology that is available and also because the citizens understand the subject and realize the potential economic benefits.

Commissioner Beck stated that he agrees with Mayor Denham on having solar heating being the first subject for the committee; however, one of the potential problems that might occur is when you attach one of the solar collectors, whether it is water or electrical, along the roof because of the extra heat that is generated on the roof the warranty becomes null and void. He then suggested another subject is to be landscape smart in keeping your house cool with trees and shrubs.

Commissioner Beck suggested that some type of insulation needs to be developed or engineered that would go underneath the solar collector units that would prevent damage to the roofing materials.

Mayor Denham stated that is one of the obstacles that need to be overcome.

Mr. Iglehart stated that on the legislative report this morning he observed that there was bill up before the legislature that will address energy and needs in affordable housing and rental units. So maybe there is an opportunity to tag whatever legislation that comes through this year with the solar hot water, etc. with the audit requirements or at least gather that information and help focus this committee's activities towards a dual purpose that might also involve affordable housing. Mr. Heatherington agreed and stated that it would be good way to join affordable housing and energy efficiency. He indicated that he will provide an updated legislative report.

Mr. Heatherington stated that Sarasota County has taken the lead on solar thermal. On April 14<sup>th</sup> the final report for their committee was presented to the Sarasota County BOCC.

Mayor Denham stated that both the City of Sanibel and the City of Fort Myers are engaging in discussions with Mr. Dell Jones and also a second energy company, along with the local power company. The City of Sanibel are moving ahead and are probably going to pick two or three condominium complexes which we would do it together with their below market rate housing and building a new 18 year special market rate housing activity this year. The problem is not with the technology itself but how do you bill the customer.

Mr. Karau stated that he agrees with Mayor Denham in selecting one goal and then see what is needed to meet that objective, but cost will be a factor if special building materials are required.

Commissioner Turner stated that he would like to see the committee set a goal of having "x" number of solar facilities that are producing a particular megawatt outage for the region. As FPL or any other providers that are out there to help develop this solar watt facilities.

Mr. Heatherington noted that the Governor's Committee has a goal for 20% carbon emission reduction by 2020.

Commissioner Turner stated that FPL is having discussions with Martin, DeSoto and Sarasota Counties to develop a 10 megawatt facility in DeSoto County, but they are looking at other sites

throughout the Southwest Florida Region and he believes that if the committee could come up with an objective which covers that area with the solar panels on top of homes because it is something that people can see and it also affects us on an individual basis. With the amount of tension that the FGCU solar facility has generated, he feels it is something that people can see in a regional effort. Now if the committee can get an agreement out there stating that we are going to develop a 10 megawatt facility and it is going to connect into the transmission lines and is going to move forward and provide power and meet the State's goals as well.

Mr. Hutchinson stated that it sounds like that there is some near term and long term aspects to setting some objectives and goals or mission statement. He then suggested that the mission of the committee might be to identify regionally significant energy and climate issues and recommend regional planning council conditions to accomplish, attain, promote, and facilitate energy efficiencies and renewable energy.

Councilman McCormick stated that in a way we have to deal with solar in Southwest Florida because he is sitting in the middle of all of the World War II airfields that were established because of Florida's sunshine. The second issue is solar hot water is still developmental and it needs a lot work before the committee starts legislating because he lived with solar hot water for three years before the electrolysis ate his system and he was totally off the grid. So he agrees with Mayor Denham's statement about finding cost effective and low maintenance ways of providing solar hot water. Another concern is that houses can not spring up both solar electrical and hot water collectors on their roofs.

Mr. Flood stated that he believes that we can have some lofty statements that can support the Governor's initiative but the committee needs to focus on what we can make a difference in and perhaps rather than single out solar water heaters maybe go for whole homes and businesses and put together something that we can work together with communities and guidance and funding mechanisms on the whole package on making homes and businesses conservation wise (i.e., solar heating, lights, water saving facilities, landscaping, etc.)

Mr. Karau agreed with Mr. Flood's suggestion.

Mayor Denham stated that a mission statement would be how we provide for homeowners a stable source of energy to heat water in their homes which has a warranty on their roof for 20 years and the maintenance of the system is also for 20 years. The cost of the energy used to produce that to the homeowner will be consistent for 20 years and have a system for the billing of use of that energy is in a similar way that as utility bills is today.

Mr. Iglehart asked how long you think this committee should last, because he sees this committee lasting much longer than the Lower West Coast Watersheds Committee which has lasted already over three years.

Mr. Heatherington noted that as Mr. Hutchinson had noted earlier there is ongoing because conservation is an ongoing issue and it has been happening before our time and it will continue to happen after our time. There is something that we will always need to be focused on and that is energy efficiency and he believes that is something of an ongoing goal and we need to look at

the total units and everything that we can do to conserve water and energy. The short term objective is if we have some success; if we are successful in addressing solar thermal and we only spent six months then move onto the second issue.

Councilman McCormick stated that the technology requires a lot of attention before we try to install it in anybody's homes or there will be consumer backlash. Solar hot water is a big problem and it should be solved before any legislature is proposed and he believes that the committee can make a real contribution in the Southwest Florida Region.

Mayor Denham stated that he agrees with Councilman McCormick in that there are a lot of problems that need to be overcome, but he feels that is what this committee needs to try and do. It seems to him that the results from the committee's efforts within a year might be a model which this can work with the problems either resolved or being resolved and possibly some type of model being developed in a community somewhere which attempts to demonstrate the viability.

Mr. LeBeau stated that over 30 years the same solar water initiative was pushed on Southwest Florida and it was pushed very well because there was a big tax rebate and the government was paying for it, but as soon as the government quit paying for it, it dropped. What is different this time?

Councilwoman Heitmann asked what is the success rate of Sarasota County's program and if the committee would be able to tag on their "coat-tails." Mr. LeBeau stated that the problem that he is seeing, which he heard on the radio this morning, is that the university is only going to be able to do two buildings for \$16 million. The public is going to get really turned off with spending \$16 million of tax payers money for two buildings, so the way he took the report this morning is that project is already going to be a failure. From his discussions with staff from Sarasota County, it is going to take 53 years to pay for the system and doesn't include the maintenance, so he feels that the committee needs to "start shopping outside the box."

Ms. Donley suggested a goal for the committee: A goal would be to stabilize or reduce the region's energy consumption over the next 5 years and that would take into consideration using either efficiencies or alternate energy sources.

Mr. Heatherington stated that the committee now has a mission, goal and its first objective would be solar thermal.

Mr. Iglehart suggested picking an easier objective as the committee's first objective such as traffic flow patterns.

Mr. Hutchinson stated that it has been estimated that there would be a 20% gasoline savings if traffic signals were synchronized.

Councilman McCormick suggested 20% reduction in energy consumption as the committee's goal. Mr. LeBeau agreed.

The committee agreed to make the 20% reduction in energy consumption as their goal. Mr. LeBeau asked how it could be measured. Ms. Donley explained that one of the CHNEP's technical assistance grants that have been applied for is to determine the carbon footprint of our region and she is hoping that with her discussions with EPA that they will give her some idea of how to do this measurement.

Mr. Flood asked if the Governor's initiative have a mission statement.

### **Climate Prosperity Project Update**

Mr. Hutchinson explained that there were two consultants (Mr. John Cleveland, Innovation Network from New Hampshire and Mr. John Nixon, Sustainable Systems, Inc. from Oakland, CA) at the Council's offices for the last two days and their objective was to get a better idea of what the climate prosperity implementation strategy was for our region so it can be presented in conjunction with the national effort. Both do work all over the country in energy efficiency issues and developing economic development implementation strategies and capital development strategies. They met with Economic Development Directors, private sector individuals, Chambers of Commerce, and Council of Chambers from around the region and they discussed how we can leverage on what is going on in the Southwest Florida Region for economic development purposes that benefit the whole region. They identified eight areas that they thought we could leverage as regional assets in conjunction with the climate prosperity project:

1. Eco-smart or smart growth "green field" development coupled with large-scale preservation efforts that they saw as having linkages to the Everglades Restoration;
2. Energy retro-fits coupled with hurricane home hardening;
3. Potential for solar thermal in combination with energy efficiency retrofits;
4. Potential in bio-fuels and **cellulosic** energy development;
5. Incubator network that is currently underway through the Economic Development Administration (EDA);
6. Sustainable shipping and logistical efficiencies that might be achieved in conjunction with the development of an inland port if it was done in a "green" way;
7. Efforts in the coastal climate vulnerability and adaptation studies would be applicable and exportable in areas outside; and
8. Two branches of the concept of network and collaboration that could be built upon, the first one was participation in national groups of sustainability coordinators and the other was collaboration among governments.

### **2009 Legislative Activity**

Mr. Heatherington reviewed the recent legislative activity:

- Renewable Energy Dividends (REDs)
- Cap and Trade Accord – TIGER
- SB 1154

Mr. Karau stated that New Zealand had tried such a project and abandoned the practice because the geysers were no longer functioning because everyone was drawing the water for heating.

Ms. Donley explained that in Washington DC they are starting to discuss Cap & Trade. The stumbling block in Washington is what they are going to use the money for that is generated by Cap and Trade. One of the original proposals was that it was going to be used for offsetting the health care initiatives.

Commissioner Beck explained that he started researching the Cap and Trade issue by the Internet and came across a study done by the University of California. He said that what surprises him is that everyone was saying that the release of carbon dioxide is creating global warming when everything that he read within the study is the opposite that global warming rises the level of carbon dioxide because as the earth warms it releases carbon dioxide from the oceans, rocks, etc. and the warming is more related to solar radiation that is given off by the solar flares on the sun. Global warming and ice ages is all part of cycles.

Mr. Flood asked about the grants from the economic stimulus.

Ms. Donley explained that the Council was not eligible for the block grants from DOE that were announced. The local municipalities need to have their applications in by the end of May and the State's deadline is the end of June. Ms. Pellechio and she were discussing about getting together with the local municipalities to see about having some sort of coordinated effort with the use of the block grants that can be used throughout the whole region, but also in July DOE will be releasing an RFP for competitive grants which the Council will be eligible for.

Mayor Denham suggested sending the committee's mission, objective, and goal to Commissioner Thaxton for his review and comment.

The meeting adjourned at 10:20 am.