

# Draft SWFRPC Energy and Climate Committee Meeting Minutes May 14, 2009

## Members

Commissioner Jon Thaxton, Sarasota County BOCC (Chairman)  
Mr. Jon Iglehart, FDEP  
Mayor Mick Denham, City of Sanibel  
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  
Councilman Chuck Kiester, City of Marco Island

## Guests

Mr. Dell Jones, Regenes Power  
Mr. John Pinholster, Regenes Power  
Ms. Carol Newcomb-Jones, Green Energy Consultant  
Ms. Cloe Waterfield, Twentyfifty  
Ms. Suzanne Lex, DCA

## 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  
Mr. Jim Beever, Regional Planner

## **CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Heatherington called the meeting to order at 10:05 am and introductions were made.

1. Approval of the April 13, 2009 Minutes

**Councilwoman Heitmann moved and Commissioner Turner seconded to approve the April 13, 2009 minutes as presented. The motion carried unanimously.**

## 2. Approval of the Committee's Mission, Goal and Objectives

### Mission Statement

Commissioner Thaxton stated that he thought that the Mission Statement started with the term being the action part of the sentence "To bring about" and to him that wasn't really clear. He wasn't really confident on what it really means "To bring about" and of course we all know what it means but you write mission statements so that someone picking up a document for the very first time gets a clear direction what the committee is all about. He then suggested adding to the beginning that would read "To assist communities within the region to bring about sustainable growth. . ." He believes that statement would help the committee and others that it is the committee's role to assist the communities within the region to bring about the mission as stated.

Mayor Denham agreed with Commissioner Thaxton's suggestion on revising the mission statement.

Commissioner Thaxton asked if there was any opposition to amending the Mission Statement to include the language "To assist communities within the region."

**There was no opposition to the amendment, so by general consensus the Mission Statement was amended to read "To assist communities within the region to bring about sustainable growth, to develop an innovative economy and create a healthy lasting prosperity, grounded in the natural beauty and resources of Southwest Florida."**

Mr. Hutchinson noted that on the distributed handouts the committee was being called the Climate Prosperity and Energy Committee and Energy and Climate Committee. He asked what is going to be the correct title for the committee.

Commissioner Thaxton stated that he suggested to go with what was on the agenda page and that was the Energy and Climate Committee.

Councilman McCormick suggested going with the Energy and Climate Committee.

**By general consensus the committee approved the name Energy and Climate Committee.**

### Goal Statement

Mayor Denham stated that he was concerned by the word "stabilize." Commissioner Thaxton stated that "stabilize" or "reduce" is the action part of the sentence and it is telling us what we are going to do and the remainder of the sentence tells what we are going to do it to. Mayor Denham stated that he was wondering on whether it should just be "reduce" and not have the word "stabilize." Commissioner Thaxton stated that in reference to that then "stabilizing" is not good enough and that we are probably over consuming today. Mayor Denham agreed.

Commissioner Thaxton stated that if our populations increase then our energy consumption and reduction goals maybe difficult because while each person could cut their consumption by 20% that means it takes ten of us doing that to make up for one new person coming into the area.

Discussion ensued.

**Mayor Denham moved and Councilman Kiester seconded to amend the goal to read: “Reduce the Region’s per capita energy consumption over the next five years by using energy efficiencies, conservation, alternative and renewable energy sources.”**

Mr. Heatherington asked how we know what our footprint is today. Commissioner Thaxton replied that a goal should be measurable and he does not know what the footprint is currently.

Mr. Jones stated that what he has been seeing around the country is that a lot of agencies have been crafting these goals and it is always hard to see where you are going unless you know what you are starting from.

Commissioner Thaxton asked Mr. Jones if he thought that there should be a change made in the goal statement or should the change be made in the objectives. Mr. Jones replied that he feels that the change should be made in the objectives.

Commissioner Thaxton asked Mr. Heatherington if staff has any recommendations on how the committee could go about estimating the existing per capita consumption rate of either the region or individual communities. Mr. Heatherington explained that the reason that he raised the question is because it is an ongoing discussion whether it is transportation by Wilbur Smith Associates who is looking at the carbon footprint of a corridor or the City of Naples. Mr. Mike Bower is trying to measure the green footprint of the City of Naples, and he believes that this issue would be a good issue to place on the Council’s June agenda to review what EPA is suggesting in terms of how you go about measuring the carbon footprint, greenhouse gas, etc.

Ms. Donley stated that the CHNEP had this conversation with EPA because they were actively seeking assistance from EPA headquarters to do greenhouse gas inventory and carbon footprint for the region. They were told by EPA headquarters that at this moment in time, this is a hot political issue, and that they could not give the NEP technical assistance because in the current congressional subcommittees there are ongoing discussions about cap and trade and there was concern that if EPA were to connect with making a determination about greenhouse gases or carbon inventory, that it could be construed as endorsing offsets or set-asides. However, she does believe that there are models available where we can give you a general estimate of what the energy usage is within our region.

Commissioner Thaxton asked to have a presentation given to the committee at the next meeting as to what information is available to accomplish that baseline, establishing that baseline, use or footprint and he also asked all of the committee members to read the June 2007 Report entitled

“Potential for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy to Meet Florida’s Growing Energy Demands” which was included in the agenda packet.

Mr. Beever of staff explained that there are technical problems to consider when making these types of estimates and currently there are competing methodologies for measuring even as something as simple as carbon dioxide production. There is a significant difference in per capita utilization based on socio-economic geographic positioning.

Commissioner Thaxton stated that he suspected that would be case, but the exercise of having this discussion and having the committee knowledgeable as to the different methodologies and the professional disagreements in this area can only be healthy because it will only make the committee better informed.

Ms. Waterfield stated that she had worked with Mr. Mike Bower and completed a greenhouse gas inventory for the City of Naples. She explained that the greenhouse measurement is the most crucial thing that you can do because you can manage something that you can’t measure. Getting it on a regional basis is as important as we see this whole area moving and changing. She also explained that there is a model and there are inconsistencies and this a new topic area so there is nothing that is across the board at this time, but there is a model that has been used by various municipalities in our region and over 500 across the nation, which is the ICLIE model. Where the municipalities are focusing on is addressing climate change, inventory narrations and determining on how to bring those down. She believes that it is a good model for this region, the City of Naples, City of Sarasota, Sarasota County has been completed and she is currently working on Collier County.

Ms. Waterfield explained that in terms of obtaining the work completed, one of the things that have happened with the Stimulus funding is the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Element. It requires recipient municipalities to conduct an inventory of greenhouse gas emissions so there is a way to capitalize on that information as long as those inputs are the same. She then suggested that in the goal statement instead of using the words energy consumption switch to the concept of greenhouse gas emissions, because as Mr. Jones pointed out there are different sources and the one key element is waste that is not included. She also noted that is also how the ICLIE model is written; it is an assessment of greenhouse gas emissions and not just energy consumption.

Commissioner Thaxton asked Ms. Waterfield if it should read “greenhouse gas emissions and energy consumption” or just “greenhouse gas emissions” and leave out “energy consumption.”

Ms. Waterfield explained when you say greenhouse gas emissions you are including energy consumption. Commissioner Thaxton asked how it would affect the other lists relative to energy efficiency conservations, and alternative renewable sources. Ms. Waterfield explained that it makes absolute sense but change energy consumption to greenhouse gas emissions.

Mr. Jones stated that he agrees with Ms. Waterfield, the final result is greenhouse gas emissions, but for expediency and ease it is easier to just measure energy. The result isn’t climate change reduction, it is probably easier to monitor and measure for the short term and energy as a goal.

Commissioner Thaxton asked Ms. Waterfield what she meant by the term “waste?” Ms. Waterfield explained that within the ICLIE methodology that the City of Naples, Sarasota and other municipalities had followed you measure the counts for emissions from landfills because as the waste decomposes it emits methane and carbon dioxide.

Mayor Denham stated that he agrees with Ms. Waterfield but his concern is the committee is relatively a small group trying to focus on a significant problem and he feels that the committee can’t broaden the scope too much. He feels if the committee tries to narrow its scope rather than broaden it then the committee would be more successful. He believes that greenhouse gases do exist and we need to curbe the use of greenhouse gases, but it makes the project so much more wider and complicated for the committee to focus on because it brings on many other issues, as well as energy consumption.

Commissioner Thaxton stated that maybe the committee should change its name to be the “Energy Committee.”

Commissioner Turner stated that he was also thinking about the committee’s name and he also agrees with Ms. Waterfield in regards to waste and the emissions released. He was reviewing the measuring tool of putting the use against the region because he could see how Hendry County is skewed greatly, especially if you look at how it costs or how much energy it is used to dispose of Hendry County’s waste as opposed to a high volume county. However, we need to keep our direction the same and on task.

Commissioner Thaxton asked Commissioner Turner if he felt that the name of the committee should remain as the Energy and Climate Committee. Commissioner Turner replied yes.

Mr. Iglehart stated that on the goal statement may be able to capture what we need if we insert “carbon based” before energy. It would read “Reduce the Region’s per capita carbon based energy consumption over the next five years by using energy efficiencies, conservation, alternative and renewable energy sources.”

**By general consensus the Committee adopted the following Goal Statement:  
“Reduce the Region’s per capita carbon based energy consumption over the next five years by using energy efficiencies, conservation, alternative and renewable energy sources.”**

### Objectives

Commissioner Thaxton turned the committee to the list of Objectives. He addressed the first item listed under Objectives “Solar Thermal Heating” and stated that he felt that it wasn’t really an objective but just a noun as with the remainder of the list because they are not really written as objectives. He asked why the objectives were written in a list form rather than writing the objectives out in sync as objects that the committee was going to achieve.

Mr. Heatherington explained that the list was a reflection of how the committee brought up each one of the issues during the last meeting. Commissioner Thaxton asked how to convert Solar Thermal Heating into an objective statement.

Councilman McCormick stated that after reviewing the list of objectives, the committee had decided that they were areas that they wanted to concentrate on besides staying on track and accomplishing their goal. The objective came to be that the committee would first want to see some progress on solar hot water heating.

Commissioner Thaxton explained then the objective should be to promote and support the use of solar hot water heating.

Commissioner Turner stated that he believes that it is more of “brainstorming” list for this meeting and now is the time to actually create the objectives.

Commissioner Thaxton stated that for the solar hot water issue, Sarasota County is currently in the process of exploring the issue and he has been looking at various models across the nation and he believes that it is a good implementing action.

Mayor Denham explained that the thought process at the last meeting with the committee was that the mission was extremely wide and the goal itself was also very broad and covering many activities, which some are listed as the objectives. It was important for us not to get too greedy and not to try to get too ambitious and for us in our thought process to focus on one or maybe two energy consumption activities.

Commissioner Thaxton stated that he feels that the first priority is conservation. We need to be looking at ways of reducing our energy and water consumption through conservation. If we look at the ways we are using energy and the priorities for our energy use in an objective, he feels that there are savings in energy conservation that equates into the need not to use any energy forms. One of the things that we want to accomplish today was to construct the mission, goals and objectives in a way that the committee and others could refer back to them as a structural guideline.

Councilman McCormick stated that focusing on conservation as being the first objective, conservation is an educational process which he believes is something that you buy in on and the people buy in on solar hot water then they are buying in on conservation. But he feels that Mayor Denham’s idea of promoting solar hot water is key to keeping the scope of the project inline and allowing us to succeed in having a measurable result in conservation.

Mr. Jones stated that he feels that solar thermal should be considered more of a program than a project, task or a goal.

Commissioner Thaxton asked the committee what they want to do with the list of objectives.

Mayor Denham suggested having a “hopper” of all of the things which will certainly help the mission and goals. Then take from the “hopper” all of the good things that the committee wants to work on and one or two things that the committee should work on. The things in the “hopper” are there not because they are not good things, but things that we don’t have the resources or the intellect at this point to work on and we keep these in the hopper and then we pull those things out which we think that we can work on make them our key objectives and he would recommend that there only be one or two. Commissioner Thaxton suggested calling them key objectives and then another section.

Mayor Denham agreed and he suggested having solar hot water heating and conservation as the two key objectives.

Commissioner Turner agreed with Mayor Denham’s suggestion.

Councilman Kiester asked Commissioner Thaxton if his view of conservation practices was by people. Commissioner Thaxton replied yes. Councilman Kiester explained that conservation can be achieved by several things and also include traffic flow efficiencies, affordable housing energy audit, etc.

Mr. Heatherington stated that he feels that conservation is a laudable objective and one that staff can work on and bring it back a best management practices and measures in a subsequent meeting to discuss on how it can be implemented.

Commissioner Thaxton stated that Councilman Kiester had brought up a very good point and that the objectives need to be very clear.

Commissioner Thaxton stated that he liked Mr. Heatherington’s suggestion about the best management practices and measures.

Councilman McCormick referred to the objective list and items one through eight and stated that successful implementation of those items in our society won’t necessarily lead to a measurable conservation of carbon resources. He then said that item nine is outside of the scope of what the committee is doing, but they all work towards conservation. Commissioner Thaxton stated that he agrees and that item nine seems to be an anomaly in the list.

Mr. Jones stated that some of these programs that have a net result in reducing the sale of electricity to either a public or private utility have a negative impact on their balance sheets. So we all have to be mindful to the fact that we are promoting is good from a climate, energy, wealth staying within the community, etc. He doesn’t know that we are going to receive a whole lot of support from public or private utilities.

Mr. Heatherington clarified that the committee’s two key objectives were conservation and solar water heating. He also asked Commissioner Thaxton what to call the other points of discussion.

Commissioner Thaxton replied that the conservation and efficiencies would include both the BMPs which are what the people can do for conservation and also other items such as weather-stripping.

Both Commissioner Thaxton and Mayor Denham agreed to call the other points of discussion “additional projects.”

Commissioner Thaxton stated that there is an agreement and principal and the committee will make a formal decision on the objectives after staff reworks them based upon the comments heard today.

### **Regenesis Presentation**

Mr. Dell Jones of Regenesis Power gave a PowerPoint presentation on solar water heating.

Mr. Hutchinson asked Mr. Jones to cover some of the questions that were asked from the last meeting regarding corrosion in the systems, insulation and warranties.

Mr. Jones explained that the solar thermal industry in Florida was thriving in the early 1980s because of the government’s support. From that time there has been quite a bit standard that has been established and although the technology is very old there are new codes, new training standards and new installations. Again, this program conveyed is a managed solution so somebody other than the homeowner is operating and maintaining the system, so the systems that weren’t built correctly or maintained correctly are not issues any longer. In terms of protecting the roof, back in the mid-1980s there were some test cases where roofing manufacturers wanted to void warranties because solar collectors were placed on roofs and the State Attorney General stepped in at that point and stated that as long as the systems were installed per code that it wasn’t a legitimate claim and that roofing manufacturers could not alleviate themselves from any warranties.

Mr. Heatherington stated that the idea of the committee was to create a model that allows implementation and he asked Commissioner Thaxton if Sarasota County had found a model for a regional utility or a municipal utility. Commissioner Thaxton stated that he did not find a model that plugged in well with Sarasota County and he now has to get the rest of the board back on track with the idea and that a utility does not necessarily mean additional bureaucracy, staff and taxes.

Mayor Denham stated that he had Regenesis come to Sanibel and they do have a model that is very practical and doable and they are still working with them and hope to begin to sell the idea of the model to the citizens of Sanibel.

Mayor Denham stated that he would like to see a model from Regenesis of what it actually means to the committee. He would like to turn it into an RFQ fairly soon, so he feels that there should be a model that we all can consider as being this practical for our particular community or is this something we as a committee want to push as being something which we think is practical and doable.

Mr. Jones explained that Regenesis has a contract with SEPA, basically a solar thermal energy purchase agreement. He needs a billing entity that has a relationship with end user customers whether it is residential or commercial. The way the structure works is Regenesis's agreement is with the utility and the utility has an agreement and customer base, so what Regenesis does is own and maintain the equipment and then works with the public entity.

Mayor Denham asked how you bill the customers. Mr. Jones explained that it can be either a flat fee or a metered program.

Mayor Denham stated that he would like to have Mr. Jones give his presentation to the Council at the June 18<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Councilman McCormick asked that the next committee meeting be held the week of June 8<sup>th</sup>.

The meeting adjourned at 11:40 am.