



Minutes City Council's Community Sustainability Technology Sub-Committee November 20, 2009

Minutes of the meeting of Friday, November 20, 2009, 8:00 a.m., in the 3rd Floor Conference Room, Tempe City Hall, 31 E. 5th Street, Tempe, Arizona.

Sub-Committee Members Present:

Vice Mayor Shana Ellis

City Staff Present:

Jan Hort, City Clerk
Lisa Lathrop, Dev Svcs
Nancy Woods, Dev Svcs
David McNeil, Pub Wks

Jeff Kulaga, City Mgr
Lisa Collins, Dev Svcs
Mike Williams, Dev Svcs

Guests Present:

Martha Fleming, SRP
Joel Dickinson, SRP

Guy Carpenter, HDR Engineering
Ken Bonham, Az Eg

Vice Mayor Ellis called the meeting to order at 8:10 a.m.

Agenda Item 1 – Approval of Meeting Minutes: September 11, 2009

The minutes of September 11, 2009, were approved.

Agenda Item 2 – Public Appearances/Call to the Public

None. Attendees were asked to introduce themselves.

Agenda Item 3 – Introduction of AZ Energy Guide

Ken Bonham, representative from Arizona Energy Guide, stated that there is an inherent disconnect between utility companies, government and consumers. AZ Energy Guide has created a four step, easy to understand process to educate consumers on the solar installation process, including contact information. Mr. Bonham stated that he would like to pursue an electronic marketing partnership with the City of Tempe to promote solar energy technology. AZ Energy would provide website resources that would link to Tempe's energy savings tips website. Vice Mayor Ellis stated that this proposal will be brought to the Council Sustainability Committee of the Whole meeting scheduled in January.

Mr. Bonham explained that qualified inspectors are selected by their own due diligence. Not all are selected. Commissions are paid through installers. A "Lending Tree" model is used. The information received by potential customers is given out to various vendors to bid and the vendors contact potential customers. Arizona Energy Guide receives a flat rate commission from the installers. Calculators, rebates and estimates for service inquiries are also available on the website.

Agenda Item 4 – Discussion on Solar Rebates

Mike Williams stated that staff is issuing approximately five solar installation permits per month. The current rebate programs apply to homes that are 20+ years old. There is an expedited plan review process for standardized plans. Plans that are not classified as being standard require more time to review to ensure they comply with building codes.

Because of rapidly changing technology, as well as the complexity and safety components of these systems, the following organizations do not recommend permit exemptions:

- Sandia National Labs
- United States Department of Energy
- New Mexico State Institute for Energy & Environment
- National Fire Protection Association
- Underwriters Laboratories
- International Association of Electrical Inspectors

One of the quality control techniques solar retailers are using with their installation subcontractors is to require that they take photos of their work as it progresses as a prerequisite for getting paid, to prove their installation was done properly. This ensures that the structural integrity of a roof remains in tact.

Keys to successful solar rebate programs:

1. Build predictability into permit and plan review the processes.
 - Use of guidelines to allow reasonable code enforcement, “to facilitate the installation of safe PV systems at a minimum of cost and effort for the inspector and the installer.”
 - The use of plan review and inspection checklists.
 - Flat rate fee structures.
2. The pre-approval of specific systems, methods, and materials.
3. Training of building safety plan reviewers and inspectors.
4. Adoption of the most current code standards.
5. Working closely with the industry to understand their needs.

Discussions were held on the importance of the availability of classes for installers and firefighters. Power continues to be generated as long as the sun is shining, which can be dangerous to firefighters. Homeowners need to understand how the disconnects work or they can be seriously injured. These are critical life safety issues.

Staff will meet with the Code Sustainability sub-committee to discuss possibilities surrounding rebates, inspections and financial incentives through the City.

SRP inquired as to what they could do to assist. They will return to the Technology Sustainability Sub-committee for discussion.

Agenda Item 5 – Future Agenda Items

Salt River Project solar power installation incentive program; rebates; final commissioning process
EECBG funding - Energy Efficiency Conservation Block Grant

Agenda Item 6 - Future Meeting Dates

February 19, 2010, 9 am

Agenda Item 7 – Announcements

- January 12, 2010 – MAG Maricopa Association of Government stimulus grant workshop
- Staff making presentations at these meetings was asked to submit background material to the staff liaison so that it can be attached to the agenda electronically, prior to 24 hours in advance of the public meeting agenda posting deadline

Meeting adjourned at 9:20 a.m.

Prepared by: Kay Savard
Reviewed by: Lisa Collins

Jan Hort
City Clerk