



CITY OF TACOMA SUSTAINABLE TACOMA COMMISSION MEETING NOTES

DATE: November 8, 2011

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: Jane Moore, Phil Coughlan, Jim Gawel, Steve Garrett, Elaine Ott, Dale Anderson, Bill Anderson, Bliss Moore

COMMISSION MEMBERS EXCUSED: Ellen Moore, Dan Dzyacky, Carol Shiflett

OTHERS PRESENT: Brad Burkhartzmeyer, Alex Cozine, Kristi Lynett, Frank Terrill, Catherine Taylor

▪ **Approval of the October 11, 2011 Meeting Notes**

The October 11, 2011, meeting notes were approved and adopted.

▪ **Review of the November Agenda**

The November agenda was approved.

▪ **Community Solar Projects for Tacoma – Brad Burkhartzmeyer**

City staff contracted with Sun's Eye Solar Power (Brad) in outlining opportunities and challenges for solar energy in Tacoma; and have developed a feasibility report for solar on selected City properties. The community solar project report will be presented to EPW on December 14.

- The community solar act allows citizens to place solar on government property, with those citizens receiving the incentives and federal tax credits. The government entity serves as the host, allowing them to receive lower operating costs and other benefits.
- On a typical community solar system, the maximum size (75kW) is roughly 375 solar panels
- Annual benefits of 75kW
 - 75,000 kW hours of clean, renewable energy
 - 1,000 hours of labor to install
 - 28 tons of avoided CO₂ into the atmosphere
- Big picture benefits
 - Powers five houses for 25 years
 - Reduces operating costs \$3K to \$5K
 - Nissan Leaf – 220,000 miles/per year (\$.03/per mile)
 - Solar panels and inverters are made in WA; increasing local manufacturing jobs
- Qualifying solar program participants are any Tacoma Power ratepayer and local government entity (state or federal entities do not qualify).
- Benefits to the City
 - Increases tax revenue
 - Reduces carbon footprint
 - No capital outlay by government
 - Utility tax monies returned from the state to invest in local energy systems

- Benefits to citizens
 - State's solar cost recovery incentives (pay up to \$1.08/kW hours, \$5K/per year)
 - 30% federal tax credit
 - Local job growth
 - Personal investment in clean energy
- Benefits to Tacoma Power
 - More clean power generation
 - Sustainable utility image
 - Long-term way to produce power for very little capital outlay; solar panels carry a 25-30 year warranty
 - Lower carbon footprint
- Citizen participant ownership structure (incentive program divided into three types of community solar)
 - 5% - company owned (non ratepayer entities)
 - 25% - could be used for a utility-owned solar system ratepayer funded
 - 70% - set aside for ratepayers (individual, church, non-profit, business)
- Available funds - \$1.6M/year tax credit for Tacoma Power; which would allow install of 20, 75kW systems
- Sun's Eye Solar Power performed site evaluations on several locations (police fleet facility, Tacoma landfill, Norpoint police station, Centre at Norpoint, Metro Parks headquarters, Greater Tacoma Convention Center, Portland Avenue and Peoples Community Centers) ranking each facility on kW potential, estimated/additional costs, advantages and overall project concerns.

The state's solar incentive program runs through June 2020. With investment recovery in seven years, timing is critical for Tacoma; staff will want to move forward within the next 12 months.

- City staff –
 - Complete reviews of land use issues, lease template and power purchase agreement
 - Issue RFP to solicit citizen leadership for project development
 - Identify specific sites to host
 - Promote community solar
- Citizen investors –
 - Prepare legal framework for ownership
 - Start participant sign-up
 - Prepare legal, engineering, administration and installation teams
 - Promote community solar

- **Discussion on 2011 Work Plan and 2012 Priorities**

Members engaged in roundtable discussion on the 2011 work plan and 2012 priorities; some of the items discussed:

- Increase the amount of presentations from outside groups and/or major businesses (EB Alliance, Multicare, school board members, etc.) to keep current on what others are doing in sustainability and if they might benefit from any assistance by the STC.
- Find a source of individuals that would do energy audits in homes for a reasonable cost (\$100). Contact was made with outside inspectors (banks/credit unions) to determine if there was interest in linking an energy audit program with final home appraisals; banks showed no interest; credit unions were very interested and would also assist in financing.
- Forward a letter to the city manager search committee requesting they use cognizance of sustainability in their hiring criteria for Tacoma's new city manager.
- Green Building Advocacy plan - previously, City staff asked for assistance in locating an educational program to assist them in understanding the different aspects of sustainability/design construction. The SBA of Seattle is open to offering the program but require a commitment of at least 20 people to make the program cost effective. Seattle Central Community College offers the sustainable building advisor course for \$2,400 per student. Suggested taking advantage of any available free training/seminars/conferences. The USCBG local chapter has (free) LEED meetings every month and branch programs every other month.

- Grants and Funding Subcommittee – suggested the formation of an additional STC subcommittee devoted to exploring funding opportunities, grant applications, etc
- Promote block foam recycling, with completion of the landfill's extruder
- The City is taking positive action in a variety of areas to improve their waste reduction/recycling system. There may be a few areas for the STC to keep oversight: encourage staff to roll out the current pilot program universally, organics, construction/demolition
- Plastics are under recovered and overused, there needs to be more emphasis on commercial- and industrial-generated plastic film. Possible campaigns for the public to not buy plastic-wrapped goods and for retailers to not sell goods packaged in plastic.
- STC is committed to playing a strong advocacy role to ensure the City continues to put resources towards the sustainability team; while members work to acquire additional project monies from outside sources.

▪ **Public Comments**

There were no public comments

The next meeting of the Sustainable Tacoma Commission will be Tuesday, December 13, 2011, 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., Tacoma Municipal Building North, 733 Market Street, Room 16.