



Regional Renewable Energy Advisory Council (RREAC)

MEETING NOTES, JANUARY 10, 2017

Mayor

Oscar Leaser

City Council

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District 2

Jim Tolbert

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City Manager

Tommy Gonzalez

Attendance

Name	District	Position	Present
Frederic Dalbin	Mayor	Member	x
Ernest Eisenberg	1	Member	x
Crystal Arrieta	2	Member	x
Shelby Diego Ruff	3	Vice Chair	x
Blanca Gadney-Moss	4	Member	x
Jonathan Childress	5	Member	x
Fareed Issa Khlayel	6	Member	x
Xavier Miranda	7	Chair	x
Patrick Schaefer	8	Member	x
Eddie Gutierrez	N/A	El Paso Electric (EPE) Technical Advisor	x

1. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER WITH QUORUM AT 6:00 PM

- a. **Members present (as noted above)**
- b. **Approval of minutes from 12/1/2016 meeting**
 - i. Motion to approve: Blanca Gadney-Moss, Member
 - ii. Motion seconded: Xavier Miranda, Chair
 - iii. Minutes approved
- c. **Request to excuse absent members**
 - i. None
- d. **Discussion and action to amend requirements for attendance for RREAC members – Two consecutive absences and three total would result in recommended dismissal from the Council (Fareed Issa Khlayel, Member)**
 - i. Clarification: Attendance rule will take effect as of January 2017. Previous absences will not be included in the count.
 - ii. Motion to approve: Fred Dalbin, Member
 - iii. Motion seconded: Jonathan Childress, Member
 - iv. **Motion carried**

2. GOAL 8 ALIGNMENT: NURTURE AND PROMOTE A HEALTHY, SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY

- a. **Discussion and action on meeting schedule**
 - i. **Request to adjust meeting date to every second Tuesday of the month to accommodate all RREAC members (next meeting would be Feb. 14)**
 1. Motion to approve: Fred Dalbin, Member
 2. Motion seconded: Blanca Gadney-Moss, Member
 3. **Motion carried**
 - ii. **Xavier Miranda, Chair:** Proposal to meet twice a month
 1. Members not able to accommodate meeting twice a month:
 - a. Fareed Issa Khlayel, Member,



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b. Jonathan Childress, Member

c. Shelby Ruff, Vice Chair

2. RREAC meetings should be flexible as new information comes out, dictating how often we can meet (Blanca Gadney-Moss, Member)
3. We can call a special meeting of the group as long as we provide adequate notice of 72 hours. The chair would notify staff of the need for a special meeting with a specific agenda item for consideration. (Nicole Ferrini, Staff)
4. This Council is focused on more than the rate case and EPE and I hope we also focus our efforts on other priorities (Eddie Gutierrez, Technical Advisor)

b. Discussion on SolSmart application (Blanca Gadney-Moss, Member)

i. Discussion and action on approval of the final version of the letter of interest for the SolSmart program (Blanca Gadney-Moss, Member)

1. **Blanca Gadney-Moss, Member:** The letter has been drafted and shared, we just need to know who the signatory would be on the Solar Statement Letter
 - a. Can we utilize this program to streamline all the municipalities instead of just EP (since this is a regional group) (Ernest Eisenberg, Member)
 - b. After going through the application in detail, we may want to limit it to the City of El Paso first, since it's a little complicated/specific and then expand from there (Fred Dalbin, Member)
 - c. Agreed, the initial application requires a lot of information, but expanding this to the region would be the ultimate goal (Blanca Gadney-Moss, Member)
 - d. Do we have counterparts in Las Cruces, Juarez, Sunland Park, etc.? (Jonathan Childress, Member)
 - e. To our knowledge, another RREAC entity does not exist within other regional municipalities. Staff will research what if any efforts are ongoing regionally. (Nicole Ferrini, Staff)

2. Motion to approve: Shelby Ruff, Vice Chair

3. Motion seconded: Ernest Eisenberg, Member

4. **Motion carried**

ii. Report on current processes for solar installation, based on input from stakeholders (Fred Dalbin, Member)

1. **Fred Dalbin, Member:** RREAC should work with the Office of Resilience and Sustainability (ORS) to see where we can do the website accessibility aspect



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2. We will get added support for the program to put some of the application together. Just initiating the process will help us move into Gold. This is a great way to advertise our city—We're SolSmart and Open for Business. It is part of economic development and tourism (Blanca Gadney-Moss, member)
 3. I met with three installers and they think the process is pretty clear, and the fee is nominal for solar installations (in comparison the market) (Fred Dalbin, Member)
 4. Staff will reach out to stakeholders to add all that feedback into the application (Nicole Ferrini, Staff)
- iii. **Discussion on setting a date to place the SolSmart application on City Council agenda for approval (Blanca Gadney-Moss, Member)**
1. **Nicole Ferrini, Staff** – Targeting City Council Meeting scheduled for February 21, 2017
 2. Submitting the Letter of Interest/ Solar Statement will trigger assistance from the Department of Energy (Blanca Gadney-Moss, member)
 3. In order to submit the letter of interest and accompanying application, staff is required to request approval from City Council. (Nicole Ferrini, Staff)
 4. **There are no objections to the City Council date** -- staff will start the process to place it on the City Council agenda
- c. **Discussion and action on items from meeting held on December 1, 2016**
- i. **RREAC members will review the document provided by Fareed Issa Khlayel and identify three priority areas under the committee's purview for the group to focus on moving forward**
1. **Fareed Issa Khlayel, Member** - My idea was for a Solar Resilience Team that has three officers (*see document*) that are essential to help us advance our renewable energy goals for the region. El Paso has somewhere to go—it's up, and it's through solar.
 2. Individuals identified to fill these roles would serve as part of the executive committee of RREAC and would coordinate with city staff on initiatives. (Nicole Ferrini, Staff)
 3. **Motion to nominate myself to be the Energy Ambassador, Crystal as Energy Legislative Researcher and Patrick as the Solar Compliance Officer (Fareed Issa Khlayel, Member)**
 - a. Motion for Fareed Issa Khlayel to serve as the Energy Ambassador
 - b. Motion seconded: Blanca Gadney-Moss, Member
 - c. **Motion carried** (Fareed Issa Khlayel accepts)



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4. I could not provide adequate service due to other obligations, so I must decline, but the work Hunt Institute does is a service to this Council. Please connect with us as needed and we're here to help (Patrick Schaefer, Member)
 5. **Motion to nominate Blanca for the Energy Legislative Researcher (Crystal Arrieta, Member)**
 - a. Motion seconded: Fareed Issa Khlayel, Member
 - b. **Motion carried** (Blanca Gadney-Moss accepts with the recommendation that the title should be Energy Policy Researcher)
 6. **Timeline for the Solar Resilience Team:** This needs to be a calibrated effort—by March maybe we can have a strategy to start spreading community awareness
 7. **Accessibility and availability of information produced by the Solar Resilience Team:**
 - a. Hunt Institute for Global Competitiveness has reports and general databases that are free and open to the public and can add value to what is generated.
 - b. Council wants to make sure the information is accessible to all, digestible, and not siloed
 - c. The information can be shared on the City of El Paso website (ORS page) and other department pages, as well as social media
 - d. Next step would be how RREAC can ensure the K-12 school system is receiving this information and understands what is going on locally (not just federal renewable energy policy)
 8. **Motion for Shelby Ruff to serve as the Solar Compliance Officer, Xavier Miranda, Chair**
 9. Motion seconded: Blanca Gadney-Moss, Member
 10. **Motion carried** (Shelby Ruff accepts)
- ii. **Identify three priorities areas for RREAC**
1. **Education and awareness**
 - a. Especially as it relates to conservation and efficiency with the ultimate goal of reducing peak demand
 2. **Job creation**
 - a. Rate cases in Nevada killed 6,000 jobs. This can push our city forward. We need jobs (Shelby Ruff, Vice Chair)
 3. **Municipal role / policy that supports our priorities**
 - a. Solar is the low hanging fruit-- focus should be how can we promote solar and encourage the City to put forward documentation to help with ROI analysis that



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might make it easier for private industry to pull the trigger on conservation projects (Ernest Eisenberg, Member)

d. Discussion on upcoming rate case process and procedure

i. Discussion on how RREAC can become a partner in the discussions in upcoming rate case with El Paso Electric Company (Shelby Ruff, Vice Chair)

1. *See presentation*
2. **Shelby Ruff, Vice Chair:** How can we work with the utility to create a different environment that is conducive to success?
3. The process of the rate case allows for intervening (Eddie Gutierrez, EPE Technical Advisor)
4. In terms of the rate case, how much is EPE trying to generate from the Solar Fee portion? The point is, it seems like the \$0.5 million or so from solar customers is such an immaterial sum of money in the context of the greater rate case / costs (Ernest Eisenberg, Member)
5. Equity between customers, in terms of paying for the electricity infrastructure, is very important (Eddie Gutierrez, EPE Technical Advisor)
6. Is there a constituency that has come to EPE that has to you asked for you to intervene on that matter? (Ernest Eisenberg, Member)
7. No (Eddie Gutierrez, EPE Technical Advisor)
8. El Paso should be the solar leader, as you can see from the map shown in the presentation. Suggestion to the utility – How can the City power the nation? A point of reconciliation needs to be found. (Fareed Issa Khlayel, Member)
 - a. RREAC expressed an interest in sharing the facts about the Community Solar Program, setting debt levels and EPE's discretion, peak energy and excess energy (markets)
 - b. Tours can be organized within EPE to better explain power markets and other topics
 - c. Demand response programs are another very important component - Demand response provides an opportunity for consumers to play a significant role in the operation of the electric grid by reducing or shifting their electricity usage during peak periods in response to time-based rates or other forms of



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- financial incentives (Department of Energy)¹
9. Request to have Norman Gordon present at the next RREAC meeting (Xavier Miranda, Chair)
 10. Request for Victor Morrison-Vega attend the next RREAC meeting (Xavier Miranda, Chair)
 11. **Shelby Ruff, Vice Chair:** Motion to direct staff create a proposal to develop a renewable energy standard (RES) for the City. For example, a minimum of 50% of City facilities will include renewable energy
 - a. Motion seconded (Blanca Gadney-Moss, Member)
 - b. **Motion carried**
 12. As a group, do we have any ability to encourage or incentivize new construction to adopt renewable energy? (Fareed Issa Khlayel, Member)
 13. Staff will provide research related to incentives for renewable energy for new construction and municipal facilities as part of work to create a proposal for Renewable Energy Standards for the City of El Paso.
- e. Discussion on the environmental impact of the San Eli Pipeline (Xavier Miranda, Chair / Crystal Arrieta, Member)
- i. *See presentation*
 - ii. This presentation was intended to be educational as rational for shifting toward renewable energy (Crystal Arrieta, Member)
 - iii. Presentation about the energy sector in our region (Hunt Institute for Global Competitiveness)
 1. Postponed until the February 14th meeting
 - iv. Staff seeks direction from RREAC regarding requested action in reference to the San Eli pipeline
 1. RREAC should request that City Council collaborate with County Commissioners (Xavier Miranda, Chair)
 2. **Administrative Note:** Fareed Issa Khlayel, Member, excused himself from the meeting
- f. **Discussion about establishing a renewable energy goal for both the municipality and the community**
- i. **Nicole Ferrini, Staff:** This was mentioned in our last meeting—how would we like to pursue this goal?
 - ii. I would like to encourage the school districts to also match this goal (Xavier Miranda, Chair)
 - iii. Having a goal may give us more points on the SolSmart Application (Fred Dalbin, Member)

¹ Department of Energy. *Demand Response*. Accessed on January 17, 2017.
<<https://energy.gov/oe/services/technology-development/smart-grid/demand-response>>



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- iv. No action taken: Item will be discussed at February meeting
- g. Discussion and action on future agenda items
 - i. The Greater El Paso Landfill Methane Gas Capture item will be discussed at the February meeting if time allows.

3. CALL TO THE PUBLIC

- a. **Administrative Note:** Patrick Schaefer, Member, excused himself from the meeting
- b. Where can I go to find information about the RREAC? (Raymond Rapisand, Public)
 - i. Staff will share the RREAC website link.
- c. This conservation focus is great. I think we need to keep environmental justice in mind and I would love to see how we can use renewable energy as a way to address these environmental injustices. I also wanted to reach out and extend help through the Green Fund at UTEP. We'd love to help build the network and provide assistance (Dominic Chacon, Public)
- d. The main word I heard earlier is education. If we decide to go to elementary schools, I would love to volunteer to help educate students about the environment. EPE mentioned subsidizing others—why would someone not want to do that? Sun Metro runs on clean natural gas and I laugh every time I see that – I hope we can have solar powered buses (Andrew Torres, Public)

4. ADJOURNED AT 8:14 PM

- a. Next meeting will be **Tuesday, February 14, 2017 from 5 pm – 6 pm (please note the change in time from 6 pm to 5 pm and the shortened meeting time to accommodate for family activities)**

Please note: The statements made on the agenda items above are the opinions of those individuals noted and do not necessarily represent an official position of the City of El Paso.