

WORKGROUP FOR INNOVATIVE SOLAR ENERGY RESOURCES (WISER) MINUTES

November 13, 2020

Present

Kimberly Newton, Bill Young, Bill DeBusk, Nick Sanzone, John Constantinide, Bruce Lindsay and Amanda Elmore (Planning & Development)

Call to Order

Called to order 5:00 via Zoom. Nick Sanzone is stepping in as chair.

Determination of Quorum

Quorum was determined.

Approval of October 1, 2020 Minutes

Motion by John Constantinide, seconded by Bill DeBusk to approve the October 1st minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

Old Business

At the October 1, 2020 meeting, WISER determined that every Board member and their Alternate, if one is designated, would review all information and resources considered to date and submit a summary of what may apply to the three prime tasks set before them by the Board of County Commissioners.

New Business

Bill Young said energy efficiency of a building before putting solar on it is key. He would like to see zero energy sustainable building design. A zero-energy building would have a design that reduces the energy demand. He would like a Sustainability process to be an introduction to whatever documents the group produces and a working group to follow the WISER group that would work with the Commissioners on moving forward with the plan. We need to look at more than solar and make the buildings as efficient as possible, using the Florida Solar Energy Center as an education resource.

John Constantinide suggested modifying the first goal to include more energy efficient measures prior to adopting the energy reduction measures that utilize solar energy. He had attached a draft energy reduction implementation plan that was presented to other Florida municipalities. The second goal should include state established entities. We should utilize what is already funded by the state, reducing the burden on the County and with matching opportunities by the County, can multiply efforts by the state. There may be federal opportunities and resources such as with FEMP. Florida Solar Energy Center can be utilized. The County's strategy should address these actions; develop and continue efforts driven towards increased energy efficiency, establish a consistent and reliable framework for building energy audits, qualify and assess the County's energy footprint, identify and implement energy efficiency measures with County assets, and review FPL service classification to consider alternative rate programs. Follow up data from cities who have implemented these steps, can be pulled from the Department of Energy, such as benchmarking data and energy audits. The County may not have the budget to pursue these ratings themselves, having an equivalency or certifiable version would be more in line with their intent.

Bill DeBusk said the cost benefit analysis tools are pretty straight forward and would stay with the standard tools by InterRel. His vision is to have a document that says Brevard County Energy Transition Plan. A guide put out by the Department of Energy called The Guide to Implementing Solar PD to Local Governments, is a part of what this plan should look like. What's missing is captured well in John's document. The two documents merged would make a good first draft plan. He found a template for an Energy transition plan to assist in planning. An Energy Manager needs to be a recommendation. Opportunities need to be evaluated periodically, such as, looking at electric busses

or buildings that need roofs. Under goal two, he recommends sponsored events that promote public awareness and access to clean energy and weatherization programs. He agrees there should be a standard for energy efficiency. The County should recommend that people meet those standards. He read recently, it's good to reduce energy uses in homes and buildings to all electric rather than gas, then it's easier to convert to clean energy. It could be recommended that new homes not have gas. He agreed with Bill that homes should be built with infrastructure that accepts solar panels. New apartment complexes could be required to provide charging stations for electric vehicles.

Nick Sanzone was glad to have the template from Sierra Club. He thinks that creating an Energy Manager position and potentially a department in the County will be important. The individual as part of a team will be able to create the baseline, track progress and make recommendations, with multidepartment support. The idea that changes will need to be made to Code should be discussed. He will write up the report and bring it back to the next meeting. They may want to have it reviewed by an outside source. Professionals in the business can review the posted material and attend a meeting to provide comment before taking it to the Commission.

Amanda Elmore said she will send out the County organizational structure. A Department is usually larger, Planning & Development Department is 80 people. She envisions it as an office, rather than a department. It could possibly fit under the Development and Environmental Services Group.

Bruce Lindsay thinks an Energy Manager is a great idea. Brevard Public Schools employed an Energy Manager and reduced their energy bill by 25%. The key is to not have them report to Maintenance or Facilities, but to the CFO, who can provide innovative financing systems. Amanda Elmore said the County has a Budget Director who does not function like a CFO. Only the Board has control of the purse strings though Budget Director would bring forward budget changes. Looking at the structure will be critical. Bruce Lindsey agrees with energy efficiency first and renewable energy second. He would like LED lights in across all systems before spending on Solar PD. An Energy Manager is critical. We have to have a Countywide LED upgrade as did the City of Melbourne. Bipolar ionization should be looked at, it reduces the amount of outside air, cleans the air and saves money. We should sit with FPL to see if we have the right rate classification for a building and take advantage of evaporation credits for cooling towers. We should look at converting diesel trucks to compressed natural gas and which would require investing in a compressor plant. Waste Management has already installed compressed natural gas plants, we could possibly piggyback on it. Taxi services, Uber or Lift could promote EV. A program for senior citizens to get a discount for using EV with those services could be offered. He would like to expand the EVs used in school's driver's ed. EVs are mobile batteries that could power a building without power, so we should look at buying electric vehicles with two-way capability. Solar PV is expensive. Schools and governments do not get tax credits for using it. He thinks that Solar ready buildings might not make sense in Brevard. A report from FIT said that renewable energy has a 13.6-year payback. He thinks LEDs, occupancy sensors and thermal storage should come first, making more financial sense. Solar PV could be bundled with the other technologies to subsidize Solar PV. Net zero energy use is not net zero cost. More golf cart parking and paths would promote the use of electric golf carts.

Kimberly Newton agreed that the Energy Manager position is a must. Creating the WISER Board itself prompted questions about cost and redundancy, so an approach to the Board of Commissioners about a new department should start with an emphasis on the gap and need for the position to be filled and recommends a phased approach. Referencing goal two, in regards to permitting, she asked

what is the red tape in obtaining these certifications now or if there are any incentives already in place. Commissioner Tobias had been influential in updating the solar permitting for residential homes. Nick Sanzone answered that the smart program makes it pretty straight forward for permitting. There is a cheap, flat fee. If we are proposing that the County implement stricter measures or encouragement, we should couple that with an incentive and education for builders to want to upgrade their own qualifications and licensing. Kimberly Newton agrees with weatherization and energy efficiency before transitions, addressed not just at the County level, but to the homeowner and renter. Nick Sanzone said that we can make internal and external promotion recommendations. Kimberly Newton said community education lets residents know what their elected officials are doing and how we are moving forward.

Bill De Busk asked what happens with their recommendations and plan. Nick Sanzone said they will write the report and deliver it to the Board of Commissioners, who will take that information and move on it as they see fit. Amanda Elmore said other groups have presented at a County Commission meeting and recommends they do the same to allow the Commissioners to ask questions and have discussion. They may want time to digest it and come back at another meeting and may move on some recommendations right away. Bill De Busk asked if the Board of Commissioners may suggest adjustments to the proposal to be worked on and brought back before them. Amanda Elmore answered that they may reconvene the group even after sunset, they may implement some parts and ask them to bring a report back, the scenarios are endless.

Amanda Elmore said the topic of the golf carts has been brought up in years past, they may want to consider how they would address safety issues. She agrees with giving the Board small, digestible recommendations that they can readily implement, such as converting to LED. Presenting a position will be less overwhelming than suggesting an entire department.

Kimberly Newton asked about a plan for addressing which buildings to prioritize; County vs. municipalities. Satellite Beach is ahead of the game, another city may need to catch up. The school system is way ahead but has multiple purposes such as for disaster relief. Nick Sanzone answered that using the NASA software or other programs, they would recommend that the Energy Manager position would help create the list of priorities. They would make suggestions considering what building would have multiple purposes such as for emergency services and which would be the best return on investment. Bruce Lindsay said that within the school district, it depends of the specific needs of the student mix in that school. All schools have generators but most provide limited power. County buildings would be similar, they will have different requirements.

Nick Sanzone said the report to the Board of Commissioners should be a living document that includes a metric of how to employ the recommendations. Kimberly Newton said that the WISER board being a support to the Energy Manger position would be more economical. She asked if they will be requesting an extension to the WISER meetings. Amanda Elmore she was asked to quantify the cost and staff hours to date. The group is over budget, but she believes they can justify why; including COVID requiring Zoom meetings and a change of leadership on the Board. The request for up to 12 more hours will be taken to the Board of Commissioners on December 8th. The hours could be used as seen fit. Bruce Lindsey suggested quantifying how much the County is spending on energy for facilities and vehicles and make the statement that they are trying to save 15 to 20% of the energy costs, as part of justifying the 12 hours.

Bill Young said there is not a permit fee to put solar on residences; it was an incentive that began three years ago. Amanda said the permitting process has a quick turnaround and approximately \$90,000, in fees have been waived for PV permits. She does not know if the homeowner knows if the fee is waived or cushioned for the contractor.

Amanda Elmore shared that Nick Sanzone can vote for Vice Chair as the Chair and Bruce Lindsey cannot vote or be nominated as he is not a voting member. John Constantinide volunteered for Vice Chair.

Motion by Nick Sanzone, seconded by Bill DeBusk to elect John Constantinide as Vice Chair. The motion passed unanimously.

Nick Sanzone will work on the strategic report using the outline provided and come back next meeting with an outline of all inputs for review. Information from the group should be sent to Amanda by November 30th. After that date, it would be held until the public meeting. He will send a draft to Amanda on December 3rd. She will share it on the 4th, before their December 10th meeting.

Bill Young would like to add a mobility plan that could be an umbrella to the transportation topic. It would look at the use of slow speed vehicles, sidewalks, busses, electric bikes and the way people can move in areas in a friendly environmental way. Bill DeBusk asked about the plan and recommendations being two separate elements of the report. Nick Sanzone said he envisions an appendix that includes the plan, recommendations, appendix of recommendations and RLI metrics for success. You may see some mirroring between the Satellite Beach Sustainability Action Plan and this draft. Bill Young said some of the recommendations are for the County others for citizens. Nick Sanzone said that the plan will address both. Bill Young said that with the County organizational chart in mind, they will need to construct a good argument for creating the new position at a high level. John Constantinide said he would focus more on who the Energy Management position reports to. The two sides are authority and information dissemination. A reporting mechanism that provides accountability will empower the Energy Manager. Bill DeBusk said that the power comes from the Board of Commissioners through a Director. Amanda Elmore said some positions are funded by two or more departments and positioning that person correctly will be key.

Topics/Resources for Next Meeting

Nick Sanzone said there are not a lot of resources for next meeting, but there will be for the one after. He asked that the group be thinking about who should look at the report with them. Bill Young suggested that Jim Fenton come to give his presentation on renewable energy that includes the direction and technologies that their research recommends. Amanda Elmore said if the Board does not approve their extension, they have 4 more hours after this meeting. She will put Jim Fenton on agenda for the next meeting, they will know if they have the extension by then. They can then schedule out the next couple meetings to give him options for attending.

Motion by Bill Young, seconded by Nick Sanzone to invite Jim Fenton as a guest speaker provided a WISER Board extension is approved. The motion passed unanimously.

General Public Comment

No Public Comment

Final Comments

Amanda will provide Nick Sanzone a thumb drive of all resources received. The deadline for sending information to Amanda was changed to November 23rd and provided to Nick on the 24th. A draft will go out to the Board on December 3rd for consideration at the next meeting on December 10th.

Kimberly Newton said that the Cities of Cocoa, Satellite Beach and Melbourne have plans. The report should include their mention as part of movement that is already started. Wind to wire, a way of harnessing the wind, should be looked into by either the Board or the future Energy Manager. Bill Young said there are reports by FSAC and Inrail on what wind in Florida can do, he will look for both to send as they should be included.

Adjournment

Motion by John Constantinide, seconded by Bill Young to adjourn the meeting at 6:49 PM. The motion passed unanimously.