

CEAC minutes – Nov. 9, 2007

The Community Energy Advisory Council met Friday, Nov. 9, at the Asheville Chamber of Commerce. Members attending included Terry Albrecht, Vernon Daugherty, Patrick Fitzsimmons, Lee Galloway, Dave Hollister, Karl Kuchta, Jeff Loven, Rick Lutovsky, Margie Meares, John Oswald, Chuck Pickering, Nathan Ramsey, Michael Shore and Paul Szurek.

Robert Sipes, Progress Energy's Western Region vice president, opened the meeting and updated the CEAC on recent activities. He noted that Progress has surrendered the Woodfin lease. Progress has issued an RFP for renewable and alternative energy; Rob Caldwell will speak about this at the Dec. 14 meeting, and will seek the CEAC's perspectives on what will work and not work in Western North Carolina. Monthly internal meetings are now taking place with the Progress Raleigh steering committee, with Steve Cochran and Christina Nelson, Sustainability Strategies, LLC participating.

Terry Albrecht and Dave Hollister led a discussion about draft "Guiding Values" they created to serve as resource for the CEAC as it considers recommendations to Progress. They address sustainability thinking, providing reliable service, environmental impacts, fiduciary responsibility to Progress stakeholders, regional benefits in Progress investments, and maintaining a resilient local energy supply. A revised draft that incorporates the CEAC's recommendations will be presented for approval at the Dec. 14 meeting.

Rick Lutovsky presented the Extended Community Engagement Working Group report, which was followed by discussion. Members are Robin Cape, Harry Harrison, Dave Hollister, Rick Lutovsky and Nathan Ramsey. They believe CEAC is a balanced group and recommended the addition of representatives from the economically challenged community, Warren Wilson College and the Sustainable Energy Council of WNC be considered, to reach out to the wider community. It would also be desirable to have as a resource someone who understands the utility business, such as a past PUC person, staffer or law firm.

Michael Shore gave a report on Senate Bill 3, which made North Carolina the first southeastern state to enact a renewable energy portfolio standard. A robust discussion ensued around geothermal as a renewable, the role of NC Greenpower, solar rate structures, life cycle costs of projects and the economics involved.

Martha Thompson of Progress Energy led a discussion seeking recommendations for making the CEAC website more useful and interactive. It was recommended that there be a URL that is short and easy-to-use. The website will be an important CEAC communication tool to the public: "this is what your choices and their implications are". Partnering and links with other sustainability websites would provide support and education in Progress' electronic outreach.

Robert Sipes gave a snapshot of the dashboard concept which will show energy gaps, benefits and downsides of efficiencies, renewables and emerging energy technologies. Chris Edge gave a presentation comparing main heating-system fuel types, the usage of CFLs in the Western Region and DSM potential. At this time, the projected megawatt impact of load control and energy efficiency with a "quick strike" marketing plan are projected to come in at 39% of what is needed. Addressing the "gap" will be the centerpiece of the Dec. 14 meeting.