

**MINUTES OF THE  
ENERGY TASK FORCE  
of the  
CITY OF SANTA FE / SANTA FE COUNTY  
REGIONAL PLANNING AUTHORITY**

**12 Noon, Friday, October 23, 2009  
Santa Fe, New Mexico**

The Regular Meeting of the Energy Task Force (ETF) of the City of Santa Fe / Santa Fe County Regional Planning Authority (RPA) was called to order by Chair Kathy Holian at approximately 12:08 PM on the above-cited date in the legal conference room of the Santa Fe County Administration Building.

**ROLL CALL**

Kathy Holian, Chair  
David Blackman  
Randy Grissom  
Brendan Miller

**Members Excused:**

Patti Bushee, Vice-Chair  
David Griscom  
David Van Winkle

**Santa Fe RPA Staff:**

Mary Helen Follingstad, Executive Director

**Others Present:**

Construction Industries Division  
    Fermin Aragon, Bureau Chief  
    J. T. Baca  
Ryan Helton, Energy Conservation and Management, EMD  
Mariel Nanas, New Energy Economy  
Nicholas Schiavo, City of Santa Fe  
Duncan Sill, County of Santa Fe  
Don Pearson, Environx

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**Mr. Grissom moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Mr. Blackman and approved unanimously.**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Mr. Grissom moved to table the minutes of the meeting of September 25, 2009, until the next meeting, seconded by Mr. Blackman and approved unanimously.**

**INFORMATION ITEMS**

- **Renewable Energy Financing District Act**
  - **CID involvement in inspections**

Chair Holian explained that when the Renewable Energy Financing District (REFD) is in place, there will be a number of new installations of solar energy of various kinds, as well as ground source heat pumps, and possibly wind generators as well. She asked Mr. Aragon and Mr. Baca about inspections for those kind of systems.

Mr. Aragon and Mr. Baca assured the ETF that the CID is currently reviewing the 2009 edition of the Uniform Plumbing and Mechanical codes and that they work with the State Engineer's Office and the EMD on new energy technology.

Permitting is done for licensed contractors under the CID's process, but if a lay owner applies for a variance permit, the form is supplied through the EMD for construction and code application.

The CID does inspections on photovoltaics, wind turbine, ground source, and solar thermal voltaics. They are providing training on the latest technology annually to their inspectors.

As an example of some of their work, a group of Europeans is looking for approval of new and innovative technology products for ten pilot projects in New Mexico.

When a specific code cannot be applied for a system, the CID is allowing variances. For larger installations, they generally require drawings, technical information and a stamp from a licensed PE in New Mexico. For solar thermal for residences, they are finding that the manufacturers put together acceptable packets on the engineering for homeowners.

In reply to concerns about inspections for the increase in the number of home systems as a result of the REFD, Mr. Aragon assured the task force that the CID has four trained building inspectors that cover Santa Fe County. Because of the current economic situation, they are down 50 percent on permitting and are able to gear up and handle additional inspections. They currently have a 48-hour response time that is mandated to inspectors, with 72 hours to completion.

There is a centralized dispatch system that tracks when a call comes in, and that information is put into a database for accuracy and response time. There is also GPS tracking and they know where the inspectors are 100% of the time. If more inspectors are needed, they can be brought from any city around the state.

The Solar Energy Code is being reviewed and can be amended at any time. Mr. Baca requested input for such updates and stated that additional help is needed on the review panel. He invited members to stop by his office for copies of the code.

Mr. Ryan Helton, Program Manager, Energy Conservation and Management Division, complimented CID on its inspections and response time, especially in Santa Fe County.

Chair Holian asked if ground source heat pumps will be eligible for tax credits.

Mr. Helton replied that ground source heat pumps will be eligible. His division is writing up rules for ground source and will have a working group taking place soon. He requested that he be contacted with any concerns about the rules. There is nothing in the works at this time for small wind aspects, and they continue to work with CID and other organizations on some residential wind incentives.

Mr. Aragon noted that they inspect wind installations and they have given authority to electrical inspectors to do the inspections for efficiency. They look at conduits and the foundation pad itself. The state also inspects large wind farms.

Because Santa Fe County is moving ahead with the creation of the REFD, Mr. Sill said that he would like an opportunity to speak with Mr. Aragon regarding the quality of installations and measures being put into place to be sure their procedures fit the needs of the CID. Mr. Aragon and Mr. Baca stated that Mr. Sill would be welcome.

In response to a question from Mr. Pearson, Mr. Helton said that there is a website with attachments that are necessary for the credit and rules themselves. One of the attachments to the credit is a simple diagram of the major components of the system. It will be beneficial to have a uniform understanding of the rules necessary for the application process. They continually update the rules for the solar tax credit and are interested in working with the renewable industry to continue the process.

- **Update on County implementation**

Mr. Sill explained that Santa Fe County has been working on the details to move ahead with creation of the REFD. The actual policy will be up for consideration of approval at the BCC meeting on Tuesday, October 27. The ordinance as drafted is a sound legal structure that is enabled by state legislation to permit the county to move ahead. The policy becomes effective 30 days after the adoption.

An RFP is being developed for a vendor to respond to the county to assist with program development in administrative and financial services. The RFP should be released by the legal department in a week and immediately advertised with a 14-day response time. In early December the program can be rolled out and outreach done with property owners and installers to go through the application process, inspection, entering into the agreement, and getting approved.

It was suggested at the October 20 RPA meeting that Chair Holian and bond counsel attend the next City public utilities committee with details of processes and policy on the county level to propose consideration for the City to enter into an agreement with the county or to adopt a resolution to opt into the district.

Chair Holian said she would contact Councilor Wurzburger to ask that she be added to the agenda.

With respect to timing, Mr. Schiavo explained that a City resolution would not have to go through the other subcommittees because there is no financial impact to the City. It potentially could be approved at the November City Council meeting and finalized in December.

Ms. Follingstad added that separate public hearings are not necessary because the BCC and the City Council meetings serve as a public hearing.

- **Update on financing**

Mr. Blackman reported that he did not make progress with local banks regarding financing and so could not speak to specifics of funding for installations. He still has the broader funding of the bonds to discuss with the Association of Counties. All of the fees for administration of the program will be added to the cost of the bond. What the consumer pays is a concern, and there are other costs he cannot seem to quantify.

There was discussion on the financial impacts of energy on mortgage availability and a more restrictive environment that will affect those who are least able to afford it.

Chair Holian asked if the task force members should be meeting with the financial services community and telling them what CID is doing.

Mr. Helton said he has met with assessors, financiers and bankers, and there are considerations when it comes to valuing renewable energy. This has to be worked out on a codes level and with people such as the Board of realtors, assessors and appraisers.

Discussion then centered around the fact that energy improvements do not affect the appraisal of a house and there is a gap in the perceived value in energy improvements versus the lenders value. A solution may be more education for appraisers and lenders, but changing their perception of consideration of energy costs is a long ways off.

Chair Holian suggested this be explored more deeply at the next meeting.

Mr. Blackman said that it would be good to get somebody like the Housing Trust involved in the underwriting and counseling with the consumers to help with their ability to pay their loans.

Mr. Schiavo reviewed the energy savings program through Homewise where they matched funds and said he would get information on the program to the task force members.

Chair Holian said that the RPA has bonding capacity that might be used for such programs. Ms. Follingstad agreed and suggested that Chair Holian discuss energy bond ability with County Counsel Steve Ross.

- **Discussion of Next Steps**

For the next meeting, Chair Holian said she would like to explore the topic of how to do a joint city-county energy efficiency program and where to get the funding.

Mr. Miller said he spoke to the energy efficiency policy person at UNM, which is always looking at different programs. He said he would talk to the gas company to see if they can be involved in energy efficiency programs.

- **Resolution on federal energy legislation**

Chair Holian said she sent the members a copy of the resolution that she will bring forward for approval at the BCC meeting on November 8 and asked for comments from the task force members.

### **MATTERS FROM THE ENERGY TASK FORCE**

Mr. Miller said the decision on third party rules is available on the PRC website.

Chair Holian announced that Ms. Follingstad is retiring. She thanked her for her good ideas and help.

### **DATE AND TIME FOR NEXT ETF MEETING**

Chair Holian said that she will not be able to attend the November 6 meeting and suggested the next meeting be held November 20 at 12 Noon. If Councilor Bushee is unable to attend, the meeting will be scheduled for 1 PM.

The next regular meeting of the Energy Task Force will be held at 12 Noon, Friday, November 20, 2009, in the Legal Conference room at the County Building.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the ETF, this Regular Meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:35 PM.

Approved by:

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Chair, RPA Energy Task Force  
Kathy Holian, Santa Fe County Commissioner

Minutes transcribed and drafted by: Kay Carlson