

Renewable Energy Advisory Council Meeting Notes

Wednesday, September 18, 2019

Attending from the council

Erik Anderson, Pacific Power
Josh Halley, Portland General Electric
Andria Jacob, City of Portland
Anna Kim, Oregon Public Utility
Commission
Oriana Magnera, Verde

Michael O'Brien, Renewable Northwest
Frank Vignola, University of Oregon
(Phone)
Dick Wanderscheid, Bonneville
Environmental Foundation

Attending from Energy Trust

Caryn Appler
Amber Cole
Ryan Cook
Hannah Cruz
Cheryle Easton
Sue Fletcher
Matt Getchell
Samuel Girma
Fred Gordon

Dave McClelland
Lizzie Rubado
Dave Moldal
Nancy Morales
Joshua Reed
Cameron Starr
Thaddeus Steerman
John Volkman
Peter West

Others attending

Don MacOdrum, TRC
Andrew Ragland, Archipelago Power
Partners

Rachel Dawson, Cascade Policy Institute
Shelley Beaulieu, TRC

1. Welcome, Introductions, Announcements

Dave McClelland called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. Council attendance was light due to conflicting scheduling with the Portland Clean Energy Fund meeting. The agenda, notes and presentation materials are available on Energy Trust's website at:

<https://www.energytrust.org/about/public-meetings/renewable-energy-advisory-council-meetings/>.

The meeting was recorded on GoToMeeting (a portion of the action plans presentation was missed in the recording). If you'd like to refer to the meeting recording for further detail on any of these topics, email info@energytrust.org.

Topic Summary

Staff discussed staffing changes and updates to the 2020-2024 strategic planning process, reporting out on the public comment period and themes surfaced from the feedback that will inform the final proposed strategic plan to be presented to the board in October. Staff also shared updates to the council meeting schedule and budget feedback process.

2. 2020 action plans preview

Topic Summary

Staff presented the draft action plans and concepts that will form the foundation of the draft 2020 budget for the renewable energy sector. Staff presented an overview of the Oregon Community Solar Program and Energy Trust's role as a subcontractor.

Discussion

Staff discussed the July 31 Renewable Energy Advisory Council tour at Clean Water Services—Durham and the Wallowa Lake County Service District hydropower project ribbon cutting event on August 23. There were no questions for Solar or Other Renewables programs on draft action plans and concepts.

During the Community Solar Action plan discussion, members asked about Energy Trust staffing for the Community Solar Program and the program administration team's approach to consumer protection (Dick Wanderscheid, Josh Halley). Staff responded that Energy Trust will have 1.75 FTE dedicated to its portion of the program administration role. Consumer protection is one of many topics covered in a draft Program Implementation Manual published by the Oregon Public Utility Commission.

Next Steps

Council members encouraged attend the October 16 budget workshop for more information about Energy Trust's draft 2020 budget and action plans.

3. Incentives for small community solar projects

Topic Summary

Staff summarized feedback from the May discussion about incentives for small community solar projects (<360 kW-AC) and discussed budget considerations and next steps for developing appropriate community solar incentives.

Discussion

Approach: During the discussion, staff presented a proposal to provide early development assistance to some community solar projects, deploying as close to the launch of the Community Solar Program in December 2019 as possible, and delaying a determination on project incentives (rates and eligibility) until Q2 2020. Members were generally supportive of the approach but requested clarification on the amount of 2020 funding allocated to development assistance versus project incentives (Erik Anderson). The proposed incentives will be limited to projects less than <360 kW-AC to be compatible with Energy Trust's policy on Renewable Energy Certificates.

Funding Amounts: Members encouraged staff to consider providing incentives that are larger than the standard solar development assistance offering (\$1,800) to support the more complicated development process of community solar projects (Oriana Magnera). Staff indicated that a larger development assistance incentive may be feasible depending on project demand and prioritization.

Project and Participant Prioritization: Members (Oriana Magnera, Dick Wanderscheid, Josh Halley, Erik Anderson, Andria Jacob) provided feedback on how to allocate development assistance funding and project incentive funding, considering the diversity of project manager expertise and project size. Public entities and community-based organizations are interested in developing projects larger than the proposed 360 kW-AC cap for incentive eligibility. Such projects may take additional funds and time to develop. Members were supportive of providing incentives for select larger projects but expressed reservations about how to determine whether projects are truly community driven.

Timing: Staff requested feedback on when development assistance funding needs to be available to be useful for the new program. Members strongly encouraged Energy Trust to provide development assistance as soon as possible (Oriana Magnera), ideally well before the expected December 2019 launch date for the pre-certification process to build a pipeline of projects (Dick Wanderscheid).

Next Steps

Staff will finalize 2020 allocations set aside for development assistance funding and Community Solar project incentives funding, to be presented at the October Budget Workshop. Staff will evaluate Q4 2019 priorities to determine a possible launch date for a development assistance offering, in conjunction with a proposal for prioritizing projects (including sizes and participants), to be reflected on later in 2020 when evaluating key learnings.

4. New diversity, equity and inclusion OPUC performance measure for Energy Trust

Topic Summary

Staff presented on the new Energy Trust diversity, equity and inclusion metric adopted by the OPUC.

Discussion

Members requested clarification on the number of projects completed by minority-owned trade allies (Erik Anderson). Staff responded that it is a moderate stretch goal but realistic to hit this year. OPUC staff (Anna Kim) indicated that there will be future workshops for stakeholders to weigh in on the diversity, equity and inclusion performance measure.

5. Board of directors recruitment

Topic Summary

Debbie Kitchin, board member and chair of the board's nominating committee, provided an overview of board structure, composition and the process for recruiting new members. Members were asked to provide input on the recruiting process and how they might assist with outreach to potential candidates.

Discussion

Members asked for clarification of board requirements, specifically regarding conflict of interest (Anna Kim). Debbie Kitchin responded that the only firm rule is not being an employee of a utility, but if there is a perceived conflict of interest, board members can abstain from voting on issues.

6. Public comment

There was no public comment.

7. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 11:44 a.m.

Renewable Energy Advisory Council members are invited to the budget workshop on October 16, 2019 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. The last council meeting of the year will be held on November 20, 2019.