

## **JUNE 11, 2014 ITEM 12**

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### **CONCEPTS FOR REACHING THE UNDERSERVED AND HAVING THEM BENEFIT FROM ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND SOLAR PROGRAMS**

On Monday June 2, 2014 Carol Biedrzycki, Kaiba White and Kristian Caballero met to discuss alternatives for improving the ability of Austin Energy's underserved residential customers to lower their utility costs through energy efficiency and renewable energy program. Note that both individuals spoke at the May 29, 2014 Task Force meeting held to receive public comment.

Austin Energy and the City need to take deliberate steps to reach its goal for net zero energy growth and achieve many energy efficiency savings that will lower the bills of households paying an above average percentage of their income for electricity.

The following are concepts the city should thoroughly explore in order to increase the amount of energy efficiency achieved in the homes of underserved residential customers:

- **Payment of incentives on an income based sliding scale.** The concept of a sliding scale of incentives can be applied to every Austin Energy residential program offering 100% to those below 200% of the Federal Poverty Guideline-(FPG) and reducing the percent of the incentive as income increases with the highest income groups being eligible for 0%.
- **Neighborhood based energy efficiency programs.** Conduct energy efficiency programs that are geographically targeted to underserved neighborhoods in the city. Preferably this should be a joint effort with Neighborhood Housing to maximize the number of homes retrofitted. It is not uncommon for homes to be disqualified for energy efficiency improvements because of a significant need for ancillary repairs. Having a remedy for the needed home repairs will help the families the most and maximize the energy saving benefits of the program.
- **Combined community and city resources to effectively deliver programs** (e.g. single point of contact), locate the underserved (e.g. door-to-door outreach) and deliver energy efficiency and renewable energy program benefits to them.
- **Creation of a consumer committee** to make recommendations to Austin Energy and City Council regarding development and design of energy efficiency and renewable energy programs for underserved residential consumers.