



**LOW INCOME CONSUMER ADVISORY TASK FORCE  
MEETING MINUTES  
June 19, 2015**

The Low Income Consumer Advisory Task Force convened in a regular meeting at Town Lake Center, 721 Barton Springs Road, Room 100, in Austin, Texas. Chairperson, Carol Biedrzycki called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m.

**Task Force Members in Attendance:** Carol Biedrzycki, Tim Arndt, Lanetta Cooper, Karen Hadden, Richard Halpin, Dan Pruett, Cyrus Reed, and Chris Strand. Member Kelly Weiss was not in attendance.

**Staff in Attendance:** Austin Energy (AE) staff included Sady Bartlett, Toye Goodson-Collins, Liz Jambor, Debbie Kimberly, and Denise Kuehn.

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

**a. Review, discussion and possible amendment of operating procedures-**The Chair discussed the Task Force's current operating rules and processes. She distributed the interim report that was submitted to Council on June 12, 2015. The Chair wanted input from the members regarding different procedures to reduce the current hectic process of submitting recommendations. Members discussed and offered comments.

The Chair introduced Cynthia Tom with the City of Austin Law Department. She would provide a presentation on the Public Information Act (PIA), Records Retention, and the Texas Open Meetings Act (TOMA). She informed members that as the Task Force is coming towards the end of their work, they needed to keep the following guidelines in mind:

- A report from the Task Force needs to be supported by a vote of the quorum.
- Deliberations are not to happen behind closed doors or via email.
- Recommendations need to be voted on prior to finalizing the report.
- Members could convene in working groups of 4 or less.
- The report should not be distributed to the group unless it is in an open meeting; this allows the entire group to be able vote on the final report.

Debbie Kimberly, VP of Customer Energy Solutions noted the amount of work done by both the group and staff. She supported the idea of giving more time to review the report in an open meeting and emphasized that Austin Energy (AE) staff's role is to advise the Task Force.

Member Strand asked the Chair to formally invite AE staff to sit at the discussion table. Staff joined the members at the table. Members Reed and Pruett wanted staff responses regarding the final report throughout the process. Member Cooper recommended Member Halpin to be parliamentarian to help facilitate and ensure clarity on votes.

Members discussed the process of submitting data requests to staff. Staff reiterated the process; all data requests should be submitted to Sady Bartlett, the staff liaison. Member Strand added that if the information was not to their satisfaction, they could bring it up at the meetings. Members discussed the following steps in the collaboration process:

1. Deliberations
2. Recommendations
3. AE provide informal response
4. Draft report
5. AE submit formal response
6. Final vote

The Chair recommended having future meetings at 9am but keeping the number of meetings the same. Members discussed the report timeline. September 18 is the last scheduled Task Force meeting. Member Cooper motioned to add an extra meeting on September 25<sup>th</sup> as needed. No official vote was taken regarding adding this additional date. The following dates were noted with action items:

- Aug 7-Response from Staff Regarding Cyrus Reed's Building Codes Recommendation
- Aug 21-Present Committee Reports Regarding Report Recommendations
- Sept 4- Complete Draft of Final Report
- Sept 16-AE Staff to Provide Comments
- Sept 18-Present Report for Final Vote
- Sept 25-Special-Called Meeting (Add if Needed)

A motion was made by Member Halpin to create a report working group. Member Reed seconded the motion and it was approved on an 8-0 vote. Members of the working group would include: Members Lanetta Cooper, Cyrus Reed, Carol Biedrzycki, and Chris Strand. Member Halpin motioned to nominate Member Cooper as Chair of the working group. The motion was seconded by Member Pruett and approved on an 8-0 vote.

Member Arndt noted that a standing item under Briefing & Reports is on all meeting agendas. This would allow the working group to share information and other members could offer input on the report.

#### **CITIZEN COMMUNICATIONS: GENERAL**

Kaiba White, Public Citizen Texas- recommends Task Force to focus on policies for homeowners but wants some policies geared towards renters. She would like a presentation on the Energy Conservation Audit Disclosure (ECAD). The Chair recommended that ECAD be on next agenda. Member Hadden noted an ordinance for ECAD was being drafted.

#### **2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**a. Approve minutes from June 1, 2015 meeting** – A motion was made by Member Reed to approve the June 1 meeting minutes, seconded by Member Pruett, and passed on an 8-0 vote.

**b. Approve minutes from June 5, 2015 meeting-** A motion was made by Member Arndt to approve the June 5 meeting minutes, seconded by Member Strand with amendments. Member Strand added amendments to change the language in item 4a to read "...interim budget report..." The amended minutes were passed on a 7-0 vote. Member Cooper abstained.

#### **3. OLD BUSINESS**

**a. Discussion and possible action on on-bill financing and/or repayment-** Member Hadden presented a recommendation regarding on-bill financing. Discussions and changes were made to the recommendations. Questions were posed by Members Cooper, Reed, and Pruett to be answered at the next meeting. The questions would be provided to the Sady Bartlett, staff liaison and a response would be included at the next meeting. The Chair recommended creating an ad hoc group to work on this issue. A motion was made by Member Pruett to create a working group consisting of Members Hadden, Chris Strand, and Tim Arndt. This motion was seconded by Member Halpin, and approved on an 8-0 vote.

**b. Discussion and possible action on amendments to the multifamily energy efficiency program-** Member Arndt presented information and documents regarding multifamily programs. Questions to staff regarding this issue would be sent to the liaison to gather a response from staff. This would be discussed at the next meeting.

#### **4. NEW BUSINESS**

**a. Discussion and possible action on low income energy efficiency program, goals, and cost benefit analysis-**Member Arndt distributed documents that would be discussed at the next meeting.

#### **5. BRIEFINGS & REPORTS**

**a. Briefing and discussion on Open Meetings Act, Public Information Act, and records retention-**

Cynthia Tom presented information on the Public Information Act, TOMA, and Records Retention. Per the Public Information Act, City business on personal emails could be subject to open records requests. The staff liaison would assist with records retention. The following information and guidelines were provided:

- Staff and members could provide factual information during Citizens Communications but no discussion.
- Group email discussions are not allowed. Per the Task Force's Approved Operating Rules, they cannot approve items outside of official meetings. The liaison can send to all. Members cannot.
- Liaison should no longer forward emails but instead upload information to the website and then send email notify member.

**b. Austin Energy staff update on the weatherization program job status-**Staff provided a handout and noted that contracts goes thru June 23.

**c. Status of data requests –**Member Cooper would provide ECAD data requests to staff.

**d. Committee Reports – possible reports from the Low Income Energy Efficiency Program Committee, Low-Moderate Income Energy Efficiency Program Committee, and/or Affordable Rental Property Committee –**This item was not discussed.

#### **6. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

**a. Discussion regarding future agenda items including a schedule of topics and issues and topics raised during briefings and citizen communications –**The next meeting is on July 17. Some members would attend the Austin Energy Low Income Summit on July 16 to gather public input regarding their recommendations. A motion was made to include Members Pruettt and Halpin to assist the Chair at the summit. Member Reed seconded the motion and it was approved on an 8-0 vote. Items noted to be on future agendas included:

- ECAD Report/Update
- Agenda items from June 19 to be moved to next meeting
- ECAD related recommendations
- One stop recommendations per Member Halpin
- Member Reed does not want building code recommendations discussed at next meeting but needs Green Building information from AE by August 7 meeting

Member Pruettt requested not adding too many items on the agenda in order to allow for completion of the process and avoid moving items into future meetings. The Chair agreed. Staff asked that items and related documents be sent to Sady by noon Wednesday to be included in that week's meeting.

**ADJOURNMENT-** The Chair adjourned the meeting at 12:10 without objection.