



**LOW INCOME CONSUMER ADVISORY TASK FORCE
MEETING MINUTES
July 17, 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, Cyrus Reed, and Chris Strand. Members Dan Pruett and Kelly Weiss were not in attendance.

Staff in Attendance: Austin Energy (AE) staff included Debra Athearn, Sady Bartlett, Debbie Kimberly, Brian Kennedy and Denise Kuehn.

1. CITIZEN COMMUNICATIONS

Alan Graham, President of Mobile Loaves and Fishes-Provided information on what his non-profit was doing to serve the homeless population. They are developing a homeless housing development in far East Austin. He shared challenges and issues with development such as paying for property taxes and energy costs. He encourages the Task Force to look at the Gridmates model. The mission of Gridmates is to end energy poverty by enabling crowd funding of energy and energy sharing. People can give a small amount of energy to others in need.

Al D' Andrea, Owner McCullough Heating and Air Conditioning and a Free Weatherization contractor-He asked the Task Force to give consideration to LED light bulbs for energy efficiency measures as purchasing prices are now low. They can purchase them in bulk. The Task Force could also think of a 2-step program for Free Weatherization by doing a neighborhood-wide canvassing to install water-saving devices, smoke alarms, and LED's.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Member Chris Strand to approve the June 19, 2015 meeting minutes and seconded by Member Cyrus Reed. The Chair proposed amending item 5 b. to add "*staff provided a handout of current weatherization project contracts expire June 23, 2015 and new contracts are being negotiated*". Member Richard Halpin motioned to approve amended minutes. Member Strand seconded. All approved 7-0.

3. OLD BUSINESS

a. Discussion and possible action on on-bill financing and/or repayment-This item was tabled and would be reposted for the August 7, 2015 meeting. Member Halpin asked staff to give exact numbers of defaulted loans.

b. Discussion and possible action on amendments to the multifamily energy efficiency program-Member Tim Arndt presented document, "Comprehensive Multifamily Program Recommendation" (Back-up-Item 3b, June 19, 2015 Meeting). Discussion followed. Member Reed questioned staff on the cost-effectiveness of the ARRA Grant-Funded Multifamily Energy Returns Program. Member Strand wanted staff to provide the number of Appliance Equipment Program (AEP) rebates going to multifamily properties. Richard Halpin motioned to table Member Arndt's recommendation for the sub-committee to further review. Member Karen Hadden seconded. All were in favor 7-0.

c. Discussion and possible action on low income energy efficiency program design including one-stop weatherization goals, and cost benefit analysis- Member Halpin motioned to approve Member Arndt's recommendation, "Triple Bottom Line Cost Test for Energy Efficiency Renewable Energy"(Back-up Item 4a, June 19, 2015 meeting). Member Lanetta Cooper seconded. Discussion followed. Member Strand offered a friendly amendment to merge his recommendation, "Proposal for Economic Evaluation of Task Force" (Back-up Item 3c-, July 17, 2015 Meeting) with Member Arndt's recommendation. Member Hadden seconded the motion. Discussion followed. No vote was made to accept the amendment. Member Halpin retracted his first motion and presented a revised motion to table the recommendation until the next meeting and in the meantime a working group will take the discussion comments and amend the proposal for action at the August 7 meeting. Member Cooper seconded. Members Cooper, Reed, and Halpin voted Yes. Member Arndt voted No. Members Biedrzycki and Strand's votes were unclear.

Member Reed motioned to approve Member Arndt's recommendation. Member Arndt seconded. Member Reed offered a friendly amendment to "*put after current calculation to put such as to further refine*". Member Arndt accepted his amendment. Member Cooper also proposed a friendly amendment to add "*the effect of bad debt and economic cost to the economic prosperity*". Member Arndt accepted. Member Strand proposed a friendly amendment "*that a cost test be applied to each recommendation*". Member Arndt rejected Member's Strand's amendment. Members Arndt, Biedrzycki, Cooper, Halpin, and Hadden approved the amended recommendation. Member Strand abstained.

Member Halpin presented his One-Stop Weatherization recommendation. Member Halpin asked if members had reviewed his recommendation and if they were prepared to discuss the recommendation. There were some questions but no motion was made to further the discussion. This recommendation would be brought back to the next meeting for discussion and possible action.

4. NEW BUSINESS

a. Discussion and possible action on ECAD (Energy Conservation Audit Disclosure)- Member Cooper presented a recommendation to, "Amend the ECAD rules to Provide Recognition for Efficient Rental Units". Member Cooper wanted staff to provide a response at the meeting before the members voted. The Staff Liaison reiterated the agreed upon collaboration process between staff and the Task Force from the June 19 meeting. Staff response would be provided in the following steps:

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

Member Reed clarified that the Task Force needed to come to consensus on proposed recommendations before staff could provide feedback. Member Halpin motioned to approve discussion of Member Cooper's recommendation. Member Hadden seconded. All approved 7-0. Discussion followed. Member Strand offered a friendly amendment to change, "*top 5-10% ranked by EUI to the top 20%*". Member Cooper accepted the amendment. All approved the amended recommendation, 7-0.

b. Discussion and possible action on priorities for Low and Moderate income customers who are at risk of utility service interruption that are on a payment plan- Member Strand questioned whether the item was within the Task Force's resolution and purview to address. Member Arndt explained that he put the item on the agenda for discussion in an effort to assist CAP or low-moderate income customer that are at risk of utility service disconnection. The Task Force could make recommendations to set priorities to include these customers into the Free Weatherization program and help lower their utility bill.

c. Discussion and possible action on Building Codes-This item was tabled and reposted for the August 7, 2015 meeting to include staff comments.

d. Discussion of public comments and possible action in response to comments- The Chair provided feedback from service providers who attended Austin Energy's Low Income Summit on July 16, 2015. Approximately 140-150 CAP Plus service providers attended the summit. The Chair noted there were public concerns regarding the Task Force's loan recommendations. Providers responded with interests in Energy Conservation Audit Disclosure (ECAD), Section 8 housing, and low income rental units. The Chair will provide a more extensive report to the Task Force at the next meeting.

5. BRIEFINGS & REPORTS

a. Austin Energy staff update on the weatherization program job status- Denise Kuehn, Director of Energy Efficiency Services, provided a handout of the weatherization job status update as of June 18, 2015. Members Strand, Reed, and Arndt posed questions for staff regarding the update. Members asked, of the 531 homes finished and in the queue for this year's free weatherization program,

- How many are presently cooled by central systems?
- If central systems, how many were not functional?
- How many are presently cooled by window A/C units?
- How many window A/C units were distributed?

b. Status of data requests-Staff responded to member questions that were requested at the June 19, 2015 meeting. Staff responses were posted to the website.

c. 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- No committee reports were presented.

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- Per the Chair, a standing item to discuss and take possible action regarding the final report will be on all future agendas. All Old Business items from the July 17 meeting will be reposted for the August 7 meeting. New items to be considered on future agendas would include:

- One- stop weatherization
- Resources for renters to get energy audit
- Building Codes
- LED's Bulbs

ADJOURNMENT-Member Halpin motioned to adjourn the meeting at 12:00pm. Member Hadden seconded. All were in favor.