

City of Fort Lauderdale
Utility Advisory Committee
Tuesday, February 28 – 6:30 p.m.
100 North Andrews Ave., 8th Floor Conference Room
Ft. Lauderdale, Florida 33301

Board Member	Attendance	2006		
		Present	Absent	Total
Bunney Brenneman, Chair	P	2	0	2
Richard Barrett	P	2	0	2
Bob Caine	A	1	1	2
Christine Campbell, Vice Chair	P	2	0	2
L. Thomas Chancey	P	1	1	2
Bob Cole	A	1	1	2
Joe Holland	P	1	1	2
Magdalene Lewis	P	2	0	2
Terri Murru	P	2	0	2
Bernie Petreccia	P	2	0	2
Fred Stresau	P	2	0	2
Clare Vickery	A	0	2	2
Nathaniel Wilkerson	P	2	0	2

City Representatives

Peter Partington, City Engineer

Sandra Goldberg, Recording Secretary

Guests

Lynn Shatas, FPL External Affairs Manager

I. Call to Order

Chair Bunney Brenneman called the meeting to order at 6:35 P.M.

II. Roll Call

Ms. Gold then took roll call.

III. Self Introductions

Board members and guests introduced themselves in turn.

IV. Approval of Minutes

January 2006 meeting:

Mr. Partington asked for a change to his remarks on page 3.

Motion made by Mr. Stresau, seconded by Mr. Petreccia, to approve the minutes of the January 2006 meeting as amended. In a voice vote the motion passed unanimously.

V. Old Business

Chair Brenneman stated they would discuss the line clearing first to allow Mr. Chancey to leave early in order to attend to his mother, who was ill. Mr. Chancey wanted it noted that his responsibility to his mother came first and quoted from the bible, "A man that doesn't take care of his mother and grandparents is worse than a man without faith."

Energy Roundtable II Update

Chair Brenneman

Chair Brenneman informed the Board that she had spoken with the former head of Orlando Utilities, Mr. Perez, regarding Energy Roundtable II.

Chair Brenneman explained that the PIO would utilize the following methods for advertising the Roundtable:

- ❖ Roundtable notices would be included with April water bills
- ❖ An announcement regarding the roundtable would be included in the City's "on hold" phone message
- ❖ Packets for civic associations to include in their newsletters would include Energy Roundtable II information.

Chair Brenneman informed the Board that she had received a call from the County Commission Office. The County Facilities Manager was going to request publicity for the Roundtable through the County network, utilizing all of its available resources.

Update Item – Water Tower Type for NW 2nd Ave.

City Staff

Mr. Partington distributed copies of a press release regarding the water tower. He then explained that cost was a “significant issue” and WaterWorks 2011 was weighing the option of restoring the existing tank rather than replacing it, but noted there were questions about whether a restored tank could offer the capacity that would be required in the future. Mr. Partington promised to return to the Board with new information as it was available. Chair Brenneman reminded Mr. Partington of the residents’ preference for an elevated tank and Mr. Partington noted that if the tank were replaced, it would be an elevated tank, but there was a question of whether this was affordable.

Mr. Stresau thought that it was already determined that the existing tower could not service the projected number of residents for the tower service area. Mr. Partington thought that the cost of the new tank had forced them to reconsider their options.

Other Old Business

Mr. Stresau wanted an update on the City’s search for a utilities consultant. He reminded Mr. Partington of the UAC’s desire to have a UAC member participate in the selection process. Mr. Partington offered to provide the Board with a copy of the position’s RFP and explained that the City’s selection process was “in the hands of the City Procurement Manager and the City Manager.” He did not believe that citizens would be members of the selection committee. He offered to go to the Procurement Manager and convey the UAC’s desire for a voice in the process. Mr. Stresau had been uncomfortable with a previous City-hired consultant who was charged with reviewing information from FPL, but had signed a confidentiality agreement with them.

Ms. Murru said City Manager Gretsas had stated he was hiring a City employee, not a consultant; she felt the search for a City employee would allow for a selection committee in which a member of the UAC could participate. Mr. Partington explained that the selection process differed for different positions, but noted that they all ended up on the City Commission agenda for approval. He remarked that the City Manager might be considering a current employee to fill this role.

Mr. Barrett explained that the point of the UAC’s recommendation was to give them an opportunity to provide input during the selection process. Mr. Stresau noted that by the time it reached the City Commission agenda, the selection had already been made. He felt the situation with the prior consultant was “unfortunate” and each UAC member should express this to his or her individual Commissioner and suggest bypassing the City Manager’s selection

process. Mr. Barrett noted for the record that the 2002 consultant was Jim Baxter from R.W. Beck.

Ms. Murru repeated that City Manager Gretsas had stated at a District I Alliance meeting that they were "hiring a staff person." She wanted to "officially ask the City of Fort Lauderdale, is this position, this RFP, the same position that Mr. Gretsas has spoken about in the community." Mr. Barrett felt it would be in the best interest of the City Commission to have a staff person capable of reporting to the Commission regarding power infrastructure, generation and transmission prior to renewing FPL's franchise agreement.

Motion made by Mr. Barrett, seconded by Ms. Murru, recommending the City hire a permanent staff person with knowledge of electrical engineering, capable of advising the City Commission regarding power infrastructure, generation and transmission prior to renewing FPL's franchise agreement. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Holland said he favored hiring a permanent employee, but wanted to know why the RFP was issued for a consultant.

VI. New Business

Workshop: Comments & Suggestions, UAC Recommendations

All

Chair Brenneman stated she had added the recommendations to the report; she promised to email the report to UAC members and stated they would wait until Mr. Dunckel was present to review it.

Line Clearing

Lynn Shatas, FPL

[This item taken out of order]

Ms. Lynn Shatas, FPL External Affairs Manager, presented a map indicating which areas would be cleared next, all coming out of the Virena Substation: Lauderdale Beach, Bayview (Coral Ridge), Lake Ridge and Victoria Park.

She informed the Board that FPL had commissioned a report recently, which revealed they needed to focus on five things to improve the system:

- ❖ Increase pole standards to 150-mph wind resistance [the highest in the country]
- ❖ Harden critical infrastructure: hospitals, water plants, etc.
 - Port Everglades first
- ❖ FPL contribute 25% to municipality-sponsored utility undergrounding projects
- ❖ Aggressive line clearance
- ❖ Repair leaning poles

Ms. Shatas said these improvements would take approximately 10 years to fully implement. Ms. Shatas noted that several other things must be considered to harden the system:

undergrounding utilities, additional concrete anchors, placing poles closer together, decreasing pole weight loads. Ms. Shatas replied to Ms. Murru's question that they hoped to complete Port Everglades by the next hurricane season.

Ms. Shatas explained that trimming for the critical infrastructures would continue on the three-year cycle. FPL also wanted to promote right-tree-right-place, and ordinances that required undergrounding utilities in new development and redevelopment projects.

Mr. Petreccia asked if there was coordination between the utilities regarding pole replacements. Ms. Shatas said FPL was making sure that damaged poles would be taken care of, either by Bell South or FPL. FPL had outside crews that would stay in the area and tend specifically to pole issues. Ms. Shatas invited the Board to send her email regarding specific poles that required repair or replacement.

Mr. Chancey noted that Hurricane Wilma had prompted FPL to take these steps, not the UAC. He stated that the problem the UAC had been created to resolve had still never been properly addressed: FPL's destructive line clearing policies and practices. Mr. Chancey wondered why the UAC should continue to make suggestions when they were just ignored by FPL. He felt that the word was not getting to Asplundh's foremen or arborists. He asked if there was anything the UAC could do to encourage the City Commission to push for progress in this area. Chair Brenneman felt the Tree Subcommittee's recently-produced "Homeowners and Trees" pamphlet was a positive step. Mr. Holland felt they must make specific individuals at FPL and Asplundh accountable for sticking to guidelines. Mr. Chancey felt that education was needed for the crews. He noted that he was required to continue his education as a licensed arborist, but the municipal line clearing crews had no continuing education requirements.

Ms. Murru said she had joined the UAC to consider FPL's franchise agreement renewal in 2009. There were several issues she felt must be addressed; the line clearing problem was one of them. Ms. Shatas agreed that fundamental changes were needed at FPL and she stated that they were making changes. She acknowledged that the line clearing was a very difficult situation. She also noted that FPL intended to be even more aggressive with their line clearing to try to prevent trees' taking down power lines in a hurricane. She said she must consult with FPL's Vegetation Management Department regarding this. She suggested that someone from that department could attend a UAC meeting. Mr. Barrett remarked that Asplundh contracted the work out and the information never reached the proper parties.

Mr. Petreccia said someone from FPL must be ultimately responsible for oversight of the line clearing. He wanted that person to ensure that certain requirements were explained to the contractors. Ms. Shatas said she would bring these concerns back to her managers.

Ms. Campbell remembered a visit a couple of years ago to the UAC from Mr. McKurdy of FPL and his stance that FPL would not change their trimming methods. She felt FPL's intractability was the real problem here. Ms. Campbell believed that a paradigm shift must take place at FPL

to effect any real change in their methods; she felt the City may need to force this by threatening to take over the utilities.

In response to Mr. Holland's question, Ms. Shatas explained that FPL trimmed the trees away from the lines according to the National Electric Safety Code Standards, which decreed that vegetation must maintain a certain distance from power lines. She noted that most people did not take responsibility for properly trimming their trees, and many trees were in right-of-ways; they did not belong to homeowners. Ms. Shatas agreed to take this discussion back to FPL.

Ms. Murru asked if the UAC could look at best practices in other communities, and consider possible partnerships, such as certifying neighborhoods as right-tree-right-place. Chair Brenneman explained that the Board had discussed using some type of indicator for trees that were owner-maintained and the Council of Fort Lauderdale Civic Associations would be the logical designee to distribute the information, but they had yet to come up with a firm plan for this. Ms. Shatas asked to return to the UAC with some official information. Ms. Murru felt the arborists on the UAC could create a list of perhaps five goals to present to FPL and Asplundh and try to gain some agreement and accountability from them.

Mr. Holland felt a partnership must be created between the City, the public and FPL, and the City must also enact ordinances to gain some control and standardize processes.

Mr. Stresau felt the UAC had not made progress. He felt FPL was busier now than ever, completing clean up and repairs after the last hurricane season and preparing for the next. Mr. Stresau did not think that FPL's arborists had any control over the subcontractors at all. He was preparing a presentation depicting trees that should be removed rather than trimmed. He felt they needed a mechanism to force removal of such trees. Mr. Stresau suggested they select one neighborhood in which to control the line clearing, and designate trees that should be removed, as a pilot program.

Motion made by Ms. Murru, seconded by Mr. Stresau, to invite FPL, Asplundh, City Staff, and UAC volunteers to participate in a pilot study after selecting one of the neighborhoods already slated for the next FPL line clearing in which to develop a better system for line clearing, tree maintenance and removal. In a voice vote the motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Shatas suggested a meeting with someone from FPL's Vegetation Management Department and one of the UAC's arborists to discuss the possibilities for this pilot program to begin the process. Chair Brenneman suggested the Tree Subcommittee meet with the FPL representatives.

Mr. Holland recommended the study be conducted on a neighborhood that had "allegedly gone wrong." He was certain that the breakdown was with Asplundh and it was a matter of accountability between FPL's Vegetation Management and Asplundh's contractors. Ms. Murru clarified that she had intended to choose a neighborhood where FPL was planning to do line clearing and she stressed the cooperation she wanted to encourage between all of the parties.

Ms. Shatas agreed that Asplundh must be invited and suggested they meet at one of the next sites slated for line clearing. Ms. Murru felt that number of attendees should be kept to a minimum to improve communication.

Mr. Stresau read from a section of state statute SS163.3 regarding right-of-way powerline maintenance indicating that the local government could request that the utility "meet with the local government to discuss the utility's vegetation maintenance plan, including the utility's trimming specifications and management practices."

Other New Business

Ms. Murru said she had spoken with the Chairman of the Lake Worth Utilities Task Force, Mr. William Coakley, who offered his services to the UAC.

Mr. Partington announced there would be a public hearing of the Public Service Commission at the Broward Government Center on March 2 at 10 a.m. Chair Brenneman was representing the UAC at the meeting.

VII. Good of the Committee

Mr. Stresau said he had learned from an architect that Boca Raton required FPL to submit engineering plans for approval on any project, and the plans must comply with the City's building department requirements. Chair Brenneman asked Mr. Stresau to send copies of Boca's ordinance to UAC members.

Ms. Murru announced that the Landings Association was meeting with FPL on March 2 at 6 p.m. to discuss undergrounding.

VIII. Next meeting – March 28, 2006 Energy Roundtable II – Tuesday April 25, 2006

IX. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 8:38.