

City of Fort Lauderdale
UTILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Tuesday, June 27, 2006 – 6:30 p.m.
100 North Andrews Avenue; 8th Floor Conference Room
Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33301

2006

Cumulative Attendance

Board Members	Attendance	Present	Absent	Total
Bunney Brenneman, Chair	P			
Richard Barrett	P			
Bob Caine	P			
Christine Campbell, Vice Chair	P			
L. Thomas Chancey	P			
Bob Cole	P			
Joe Holland	P			
Dr. Magdalene Lewis	P			
Terri Murru	P			
Fred Stresau	P			
Dr. Geri Udell	A			
Clare Vickery	P			
Nathaniel Wilkerson	A			

City Representatives

Christine Teel, City Commissioner, District 1

Peter Partington, City Engineer

Bob Dunckel, Assistant City Attorney

Alexandra Grant, Recording Secretary

I. Call to Order

Chair Brenneman called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. She thanked Committee members for their concern when she fell ill at the previous meeting, and stated that she had gone to the hospital after the meeting. She was diagnosed with acute pancreatitis and also had her gall bladder removed.

II. Roll Call

The recorder, Alexandra Grant, took roll call.

Mr. Cooper arrived at 6:40 p.m. and Ms. Vickery arrived at 6:43 p.m.

III. Self Introductions

Board members and guests introduced themselves in turn.

IV. Approval of Minutes – May 30, 2006 Meeting - Unavailable

Chair Brenneman advised that the minutes of the May 30, 2006 meeting were not yet available for review.

V. Old Business

Line Clearing and Test Area Update.

**Lynn Shatas, FPL
Fred Stresau, Chair Tree Sub-Committee
Gene Dempsey, Urban Forester, and Mark Almy**

Chair Brenneman advised that Ms. Shatas was still on vacation but she was expecting Gene Dempsey to attend. Mr. Stresau advised that Commissioner Charlotte Rodstrom had recently requested that this issue be brought back before the Commission to be reconsidered.

Commissioner Teel provided the Committee with a brief update. She explained that Commissioner Rodstrom had been lobbied heavily by residents of Poinsettia Park who were concerned that there had been no meetings held for the whole association to learn about the pilot program. Commissioner Teel stated that Commissioner Rodstrom eventually decided to go forward with the program when she realized that sufficient information had been provided to those residents affected.

Chair Brenneman advised that she, Commissioner Rodstrom, and Mr. Dempsey had since gone over the information with the residents at Poinsettia Heights at

their association meeting. They had explained to residents that this was a pilot program and that the City expected to go forward with line clearing throughout Fort Lauderdale. Residents were assured they would all hear from FPL.

Dr. Lewis advised that some residents had asked if the whole county would be involved. Mr. Stresau advised that eventually the whole state would be cleared. He explained that the Utility Advisory Committee had approached FPL to ask where it wanted to initiate line clearing. FPL had indicated it would start with the Verena substation and would focus first on feeder lines in public rights-of-way that could be cleared easily. Mr. Chancy clarified that FPL was concerned primarily about palms that went underneath and into wires which were dangerous.

Update on RFP – Consulting Services

Electrical Infrastructure: Needs Assessment & Strategy.

City Staff and Fred Stresau, Selection Committee

Mr. Stresau advised that at the first meeting, the Committee had prepared a list of items they wanted each consultant to focus on. However, this information had not yet been forwarded to the City Manager and the Commission. Currently, it was in the hands of the purchasing department. City Engineer Partington advised that he had spoken with the purchasing director, who had received “best and final offers.” He added that R. W. Beck Company and Williams Consulting had responded to the RFP. The purchasing director would attempt to convene a meeting the following week. Mr. Partington added that once this meeting occurred, it was possible that by the second Commission meeting in July, there might be a recommendation to negotiate for a final contract with one of these two firms.

Other Old Business: None

VI. New Business

Solar Power, Grants and Legislative Bills:

Monica Wilson and Robert Webster

Chair Brenneman introduced Monica Wilson and Robert Webster who would inform the Committee about issues being discussed in Tallahassee with regard to alternate energy options. Mr. Partington distributed four separate sets of documents to accompany Ms. Wilson's presentation.

Ms. Wilson advised she had been closely following legislation, in particular, **State Bill 8-88** which Governor Bush signed on the 19th and which would be funded on July 1. She explained that **State Bill 8-88** was the "Renewable Energy Bill" which provided funding to homeowners of rebates up to \$20,000 per home for solar panel retrofits; for condominiums and apartment buildings, the rebate was up to \$100,000. She added that an additional \$15 million was available for municipalities to apply for technology research grants. She explained that the solar panel retrofits had to be paid for up front; the state would then reimburse the property owner after a qualification process. Ms. Wilson added that the funds would be handled by the EPA. She advised that she had spoken with Alexander Mack in Tallahassee where the Public Service Commission was outlining parameters for how this program would be run. She added that these funds were available starting July 1. Ms. Wilson advised she had also spoken with someone at the Florida Financial Services Department who informed her about **State Bill 19-80**, along with other bills offering additional monies for Florida community redevelopment in areas affected by hurricanes.

Ms. Wilson referred to an email she had received from Senator Nelson about an additional \$5.2 billion that Congress authorized for disaster relief for Florida and other states affected by hurricanes. She referred to paragraph 5, which listed Broward County as one of the counties eligible for this funding. Ms. Wilson suggested that the Committee arrange a multi-week workshop where residents could learn more about these programs in depth.

Ms. Vickery asked whether the Committee should ask city staff to look into available grants for the city. She also asked if the research grant might be applied to offset workshop costs. Chair Brenneman advised that the Committee could ask staff to investigate grants available for research. She added that a workshop could be scheduled but that a one-day workshop rather than a multi-week workshop would be better advised and more possible. .

Mr. Cooper felt it was wise to first get a determination from the City as to what alternate sources of energy residents could install in their homes. Mr. Caine asked how individual homeowners would apply for these grants. Ms. Wilson stated she would send appropriate contact information to Committee members. She advised that the application for hurricane mitigation funds was currently available online. However, the state was still working out the details for **State Bill 8-88** applications. Mr. Caine asked if the City could apply for money to put overhead utility lines underground. Ms. Wilson advised that this

was one of the goals for hurricane mitigation and felt the City could use the funds for this purpose.

Mr. Caine made a motion that the Utility Advisory Committee recommend that the City apply for hurricane mitigation grant monies available up to whatever amount was required to put City utility lines underground. Mr. Cooper seconded the motion.

Ms. Vickery did not want the motion to limit what the monies could be used for and deferred to staff for input on the motion. Mr. Partington advised that the City had professionals in charge of grants who could explore how they could be used. Mr. Cole felt the motion was premature without having staff conduct further research. Mr. Partington advised he could ask staff to investigate grant opportunities then come back before the Committee.

Mr. Chancy pointed out that this discussion had been held for three years and recalled that the Committee had conducted research in the past. He did not want poor communication to affect the process as had occurred in the past. He asked if someone on staff could take hold of the information the Committee had gathered previously and incorporate this in ongoing research.

Mr. Cooper amended the motion as follows: The Utility Advisory Committee requested that the city staff's grant department review possible funds to see what money was available and what it could be used for. Mr. Barrett seconded the motion as amended.

In a voice vote, all voted in favor. (Motion passed unanimously)

Chair Brenneman reminded the Committee about a standing offer from the Public Services Commission and from the DPEP to work with the City and the Utility Advisory Committee. In considering the possibility of a workshop, the Committee could contact PSC and EPA staff and request their help and interest in partnering and/or participating.

Vice-Chair Campbell asked if **State Bill 8-88** included net metering in terms of giving back to FPL. Ms. Wilson indicated she would look further into the terms of this legislation and get back to Ms. Campbell.

Chair Brenneman also reminded the Committee of a standing offer from Jennifer Skizlak, senior researcher with the Solar Energy Center and Colleen Kettles, who were both willing to come to Fort Lauderdale if invited. Mr. Caine asked Ms. Wilson about her background. Ms. Wilson stated she was a resident of Fort Lauderdale and spoke of her passion and interest in solar energy.

Ms. Vickery made a motion, that Ms. Brenneman pursue individuals at the state level who have offered help putting together workshops as soon as possible, in accordance with everyone's and city staff's schedules. Mr. Barrett seconded the motion. Chair Brenneman suggested that the workshop be scheduled for a Saturday.

Ms. Vickery amended the motion as follows: that Ms. Brenneman pursue individuals at the state level who have offered help putting together workshops as soon as possible, in accordance with everyone's and city staff's schedules, to include a Saturday, if possible. Mr. Barrett seconded the motion as amended.

In a voice vote, all voted in favor. (Motion passed unanimously)

Chair Brenneman introduced civic activist Bob Webster from South Middle River who gave a presentation on solar energy alternatives. He also spoke of the need for improved water conservation. He advised of programs and courses offered by the Solar Research website where individuals could learn installation and wiring of solar panels. Ms. Vickery felt the Committee would benefit from Mr. Webster's ongoing research and attendance at relevant workshops. Mr. Webster felt the City should offer incentives to residents for using solar energy alternatives.

Other New Business

Mr. Caine advised that a homeowner and other residents in his area used the same transformer to put their utility lines underground. Mr. Webster spoke of benefits he had received since placing his utility lines underground years ago.

Mr. Barrett spoke of an email he had received regarding a resident in Victoria Park who had attempted to install a wind turbine. Mr. Dunkel advised that a final order of denial was about to be signed and that there would be a 30-day appeal period. Chair Brenneman briefly explained the background of this issue. Mr. Cooper advised that a wind turbine generated much more power than solar panels and would require less maintenance during storms.

Mr. Chancy advised that he served on the Naturescape Broward Task Force and also voiced his concern about water conservation. He spoke of the Urban Forestry Council conference where post-hurricane restoration of tree canopies was discussed. He distributed a booklet entitled *Gone with the Wind Storm*, published by Naturescape Broward and the Florida Urban Forestry Council, which provided information on smart choices for planting and

replanting. Mr. Chancy voiced his concern about proposed legislation to ensure that no one on a distribution line planted a live oak within 30 feet of power lines. He felt residents could safely maintain trees on their property next to power lines if they learned how to do this correctly. He wanted the Committee to go out into the community and educate neighborhood associations about correct planting.

[Ms. Vickery left the meeting 8:05 p.m.]

VII. Good of the Committee

Chair Brenneman advised that the UAC Tree Subcommittee traveling display unit would be completed on time and would be available for festivals, neighborhood association meetings and other neighborhood conferences. She advised that there was now a second grant that has been applied for and awarded under the auspices of the Gene Dempsey and the Tree Subcommittee.

VIII. Next Meeting – Tuesday July 25, 2006, 6:30 p.m.

Chair Brenneman advised that the next meeting would be held on Tuesday, July 25, 2006 at 6:30 p.m. She stated that Trevor Underwood, a resident referred by Mayor Naugle, would give a presentation on **Municipalization of Utilities and Undergrounding**. Chair Brenneman stated this would be a critical meeting and thanked Ms. Wilson and Mr. Webster for their presentations.

IX. Adjournment.

There being no further business to come before this Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.