

**CITY OF NEWARK
DELAWARE**

**CONSERVATION ADVISORY COMMISSION
MINUTES**

May 12, 2015

MEETING CONVENED: 7:05 p.m. Council Chambers

MEMBERS PRESENT: Kass Sheedy (acting chair), George Irvine, John Hornor,
Bob McDowell, Ajay Prasad, Kass Sheedy

ABSENT: Carol Riggs, John Wessells

GUESTS: Eric Van Orden, Owner, Solair LLC
Allen Hazzard, Owner, Solair LLC
Scott Lynch, Energy Services Manager, DEMEC
Councilman, Stu Markham
Tom Fruehstorfer, Planning & Development Department
Lou Vitola, Finance Director

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM MEETING HELD ON FEBRUARY 9, 2015

MOTION THAT THE MINUTES FROM THE FEBRUARY 9, 2015 MEETING BE APPROVED AS RECEIVED.

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

2. Solair, LLC

Eric Van Orden and Allen Hazzard, owners from Solair LLC, were present to give an update on McKees Solar Park. (the presentation was entered into the record) Mr. Hazzard stated production was down 8% during the winter as of December 31; however, statewide systems were down 14%. The lower rate at McKees is a good indicator of promising future results. Weather has improved this year with numbers over 5 MWh. Mr. Hazzard reported that as of 3 days prior they are over 100% and year to date is at 117%. (Closer to 120% by end of day). The number indicate the loss from last year has been recouped and there has been a significant overproduction. Since the inception of the project, 151 MWh have been produced. This is the equivalent to powering 9 stadiums for one day or the equivalent of a 151 2,000 square foot homes. The carbon offset is 105 tons, which is equivalent to planting 9 acres of forest. Mr. Hazzard stated they are very happy with the production and anticipate 10-15% over production every year. They anticipate the system to be in use for 35-40 years.

Mr. Irvine asked how many people have bought "into" the solar park? Mr. Vitola stated 29 people have donated and 90 people made investments for a total of \$9,270. Mr. Irvine asked if there were efforts to increase participation. Mr. Vitola stated current investors are getting a thank you letter with a magnet. Other initiatives will be included

with bills in mid-June early July. Mr. Irvine asked if there was outreach included to schools. Mr. Vitola stated there were none currently scheduled. Mr. Irvine asked if there were any additional technical issues that they encountered. Mr. Hazzard stated there were 900 panels and 900 inverters and there had been no failures. Typical failure rate is 1.5%. It was his opinion that the design and the high quality of product contributed the success. He reported there were many gray days in January which affected production; however, April was maxed out and above production almost every day. According to Solair, McKees Solar Park was installed on the one of the toughest sites in the country. There were issues with soil settling issues that had to be resolved which extended the completion date.

Mr. Prasad asked the cost of the SREC's. Mr. Vitola stated they were \$50 per MWh. Mr. Lynch added that DEMEC is purchasing the SREC's and then applying them on behalf to the RPS obligation for all of Newark; in addition to the other eight municipalities that make up DEMEC.

Ms. Sheedy asked what percentage of the City's usage the Solar Park represents. Mr. Vitola approximated it was .700 one hundredths of a percent. (total retail sales including UDEL).

Mr. Markham asked what is the peak (maximum) at any point in time? Mr. Hazzard stated the maximum the system is able to produce is 209 KWh and it appeared the maximum the system has currently produced to date is 203 KWh. Mr. Prasad asked if the system was rated for 245 KWh. Mr. Lynch confirmed it was rated 229.5 KWdc.

The address of the Solar Park for public viewing is: www.DEMECINC.net. Click conservation. Under the heading is a link for DEMEC solar garden where all solar projects are listed. There is also a Go Fund Me site available.

Mr. Irvine what it would take to get an award for McKees. Mr. Lynch stated the Newark Community Solar Program has been honored by the Solar Energy Power Association. (National Industry Trade Group for the Solar Industry - SEPA). They have also been honored as second round for the National Award. The first place winner was Palo Alta, CA and the City's project barely lost. DEMEC has been asked to apply next year. The program was also honored as a finalist in the PB American East Coast Program as well. Public Power magazine is doing an article on McKees Solar Park and it should appear in the June/July issue. The American Public Power Association has asked DEMEC to attend the National Conference in June. Mr. Lynch will attend and detail the design of this project.

Mr. Fruehstorfer asked what percent of energy is supposed to cover renewables and what will the percentage be in the future? Mr. Lynch stated last year was 10% which encompasses June 2013-June 2014; of which 9.4% was non solar renewables and .6% was solar. This year it was 11.5% non-solar renewables and .8% was solar. By June 2015, non-solar renewables will increase to 13%.

Mr. Markham wanted to mention that McKees Solar Park was mentioned twice in the Smart Cities presentation that came before Council and that was part of reason the City of Newark had been chosen as part of their pilot program.

Mr. Fruehstorfer suggested getting a link to McKees Solar Park on the City website.

Mr. Vitola stated he will contact Mr. Nietubicz to have the link included on the City's website.

Mr. Hazzard reported that there is room available for 60 additional solar panels on the site. Approximate cost would be \$50,000.

Mr. Markham suggested periodically perusing the City to look for additional solar park opportunities. It is his opinion there are many other potential sites available.

Mr. Lynch added McKees Solar Park was the last large project built in Delaware that used Delaware made panels (Motech). The company has since moved to Georgia but that is only a shipping facility. The panels are no longer made the United States.

3. STU MARKHAM, COUNCILMAN (GUEST)

- **Green Energy Blocks**

Mr. Markham reported the Green Energy blocks available through the City are not sold out. Some City residents have expressed interest in purchasing additional blocks. Mr. Markham would like to propose to Council to make a recommendation to permit the purchase of two energy blocks per customer, if requested. Mr. Markham wanted to present this idea to CAC initially, to keep them involved in the process.

Ms. Sheedy said she thought Council had already made the recommendation. Mr. Markham replied Mr. Vitola and he were having a difference of opinion on this issue. Mr. Vitola replied he didn't see it in the Council minutes and will return and listen to the audio and respond back to Mr. Markham.

MOTION MADE BY MR. MCDOWELL THAT THE CONSERVATION ADVISORY COMMISSION MAKE A RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL THAT WE PERMIT RESIDENTS TO PURCHASE A MAXIMUM OF TWO 100KWh GREEN ENERGY BLOCKS FROM MCKEES. SECONDED BY MR. IRVINE.

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 6-0
Absent: Carol Riggs, John Wessells

Mr. Markham stated with regard to 05-H (Green Energy Funds). The CAC had voted to put \$100,000 and \$50,000 from two years towards McKees. He reported that did occur. Mr. Markham asked if the CAC were expecting the money to be paid back to the City or if that amount would go towards Green Energy and McKees.

Mr. Markham was of the opinion that he and Mr. Vitola had agreed to open up the Green Energy funding when the City's capital funds have been reimbursed and then keep a record of when the CAC funds would be paid back.

Ms. Sheedy stated it was her belief and all concurred that the CAC intended the monies to be paid with the Green Energy Fund. Mr. Markham stated there should be clarification on the issue and a recommendation should come from the CAC on this matter.

Mr. Vitola stated that \$216,000 of Electric Fund Reserves were used to pay for

McKees and the CAC's \$250,000 (2012/2103 allocation from 05-H) were used to pay for McKees as well. The Green Energy Fund is consumed. The additional \$216,000 equals \$466,000 which is left to be paid back with Green Energy. The first \$216,000 was going to pay back the Electric Reserves and the \$250,000 was going to repay the CAC allocation. However, it was going to sit aside as new funding to be made available. It was going to be referred to as the Newark Green Energy Reserves. Mr. Vitola stated the CAC can make a recommendation to City to do a Green Energy project at any time.

Mr. Markham was under the understanding that Green Energy would be on hold and consumed completely by McKees until it was completely paid off. Mr. Markham wanted clarification from the CAC. Mr. McDowell stated it was his belief the CAC had suggested taking the money (that was never spent) and spend it all in one lump sum. Mr. Prasad concurred.

Mr. Vitola responded, "Once the electric reserves are paid off, then we stop taking the stream Green Energy Funds, rather than take the next \$250,000 of Green Funds and put it aside for community projects it will be in available for whatever configuration the CAC decides to allocate it for."

Mr. Prasad stated this was the first time the CAC was aware the 05-H allocations had gone beyond 2013. Mr. Vitola stated it was in the budget. Mr. Prasad suggested using the Green Energy Fund to pay for additional panels. Mr. Irvine suggested looking at other options before making a recommendation (LED lights, solar trash cans, etc.) Ms. Sheedy reminded it was only half of the funds. Mr. Irvine asked what the maintenance costs are for McKees. Mr. Vitola stated he believed it was a ten year guarantee (no maintenance to the first ten years).

Mr. Fruehstorfer asked if the 05-H money was still in the 2015 budget. Mr. Vitola confirmed it was. Additionally, he stated it was his opinion that Mr. Coleman may have ideas of what to spend the Green Energy Funds on as well. He suggested using \$50,000 for the solar panels and the remaining \$50,000 for Public Works.

Ms. Sheedy suggested the CAC focus on finalizing the Green Energy Funding at the next meeting and come up with a list of recommendations at the next meeting to forward to Council. Mr. Markham encouraged the CAC to make a decision as soon as possible of the formula (breakdown of funds). Also, once McKees is paid off, where do the SREC's go? Mr. Vitola stated the funds would go to continue the Newark Green Energy Reserves.

The CAC decided to proceed with the recommendation after discussion.

MOTION MADE BY MR. PRASAD, SECONDED BY MR. IRVINE: THAT THE CONSERVATION ADVISORY COMMISSION MAKE A RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL THAT COUNCIL ALLOCATE \$50,000 FROM THE 2015 CAC GREEN ENERGY FUNDS TO ADD ANOTHER 60 PANELS TO MCKEES.

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 6-0
Absent: Carol Riggs, John Wessells

Mr. Fruehstorfer suggested the CAC review the draft memo he provided (re: report

and recommendation on green energy fund reimbursement program recipients and levels) and discuss at the next meeting. Mr. Hornor will work with Mr. Fruehstorfer to finalize the recommendation and Mr. Prasad will provide the needed information on solar hot water.

Mr. Markham suggested if any of the CAC members were available Wednesday, May 13th to attend the call in DEMEC meeting from 2-4. The call in number is 877-366-0711. The participant code is 96520857. (Energy Efficiency Advisory Council).

Mr. Markham suggested the CAC enforce the recommendation to Council about LED lights. He also reiterated the CAC is an advisory group for Council. If at any time the CAC wants to before Council on any project or any recommendation they are more than welcome to be put on the agenda.

4. SOLAR REFUSE & RECYCLING CONTAINERS

The installation on Main Street has been complete

5. FUTURE GOALS 2015

It will be revisited at a future meeting.

6. PLASTIC BAGS

There was nothing to report.

7. A BETTER NEWARK AWARD

Mr. Hornor will go to Dow Chemical in the Delaware Industrial Site to take a picture of the site.

8. REVIEW OF PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT REPORTS

Mr. Hornor reported the developer of the Lofts on Center Street changed the plans so the removal of large trees would not occur.

9. NEW/OLD BUSINESS

- Election of a new chair

MOTION BY MS. SHEEDY SECONDED BY MR. HORNOR THAT GEORGE IRVINE BE ELECTED TO THE POSITION OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE CONSERVATION ADVISORY COMMISSION.

**MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 6-0
Absent: Carol Riggs, John Wessells**

- Bike share – Mr. Irvine asked about bike sharing in the City. Mr. Prasad stated it had been discussed several years ago and the CAC felt it was not feasible at this point in time.
- Annual Report – Mr. Fruehstorfer reported the only item lacking in the 2014 report is the backyard habitat. Mr. McDowell will complete this section.

10. COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

There was nothing to report.

11. ANTI-IDLING

Mr. Fruehstorfer stated the principal at Downes Elementary school would like an additional anti-idling sign. He stated he would contact the principal and suggest a sandwich board type sign. It was his opinion this would work best in that particular lot. In addition, Mr. Lang has given the permission for the CAC to install signs on his rental properties.

12. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, June 9, 2015 at 7:00 pm in **Council Chambers**.

13. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:07 p.m.

Tara A. Schiano
Secretary

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