

STAFF REPORT

TO: Mayor and Council Members
FROM: Gary Jackson, City Manager
SUBJECT: Energy Innovation Task Force

DATE: March 22, 2016

Summary Statement: The consideration of a joint City/County/Utility resolution establishing the Energy Innovation Task Force.

Review: On October 23, 2013, Asheville City Council adopted the Resolution 13-228 Supporting Clean Energy Economy which includes the following six action items:

1. Support a local clean energy future for the City and the region;
2. Call on Duke Energy Progress to partner with the City to help meet its carbon reduction goals by decreasing reliance on fossil fuels including transitioning from coal to electricity provided by clean, renewable energy sources while continuing to meet the company's obligation to provide affordable and reliable electricity to all customers 24 hours a day, 7 days a week;
3. Call on Duke Energy to continue and expand its investments in and programs supporting renewable energy, energy efficiency and energy conservation;
4. Call on Duke Energy to stop the spread of coal ash pollution and remediate existing coal ash pollution;
5. Develop a Clean Energy Partnership Progress Report that documents the achievements of this new partnership with Duke Energy, and;
6. Seek input from a variety of stakeholders when identifying collaboration opportunities for this partnership, which was adopted as an amendment to the Resolution as it was presented (this was added as an amendment to the resolution by Mayor Terry Bellamy as reflected in the meeting minutes).

After the resolution was adopted, the Sustainability Advisory Committee on Energy & the Environment (SACEE) formed an Energy Task Force and invited stakeholders to participate in a community input process. Two sessions were held in August and September 2014, and a final session in July 2015. During the first input session participants were asked to brainstorm action items on what a community clean energy plan would address; including areas of focus in policy, programming, education outreach and projects. Participants were able to prioritize action items through a survey and results were vetted during the second session. The final session in July 2015, the participants were given the framework in which the prioritized action items were developed into the Community Clean Energy Policy Framework.

A resolution adopting the Community Clean Energy Policy Framework was approved by City Council on October 27, 2015 as a guide for ongoing policy decisions and City staff work plans. The Clean Energy Framework included an effort to launch a collaborative partnership with Duke Energy Progress to build a foundation for a longer term community energy efficiency, clean renewable energy sources; decreasing the City's reliance on fossil fuels.

In early December of 2015 representatives from the City of Asheville, Buncombe County, Duke Energy and interested non-governmental organizations began meeting to discuss this partnership, which has developed into the Energy Innovation Task Force.

This Energy Innovation Task Force will be made up of governmental, business (large, institutional and commercial), non-profit finance and environmental advocacy groups. A list of task force members is attached. Duke Energy supports the resolution and has served as a co-convenor of this group.

The task force will focus its work around:

- Education/training/communication through active community engagement to drive more energy-efficient behavior.
- Technology development and implementation through deliberate investment in distributed energy resources (primarily solar) and storage.
- Greater access to and promotion of energy efficiency products/programs and demand-side management offerings.

The Energy Innovation Task Force aligns with Asheville City Council's 2036 Vision, included in the focus area of a Clean and Healthy Environment.

Pros:

- Continues sustainability efforts including carbon footprint reductions and a clean energy economy through a partnership with Buncombe County, Duke Energy, and community stakeholders.
- Reducing energy consumption will make our community less dependent on fossil fuels and more reliant on renewable energy.
- Duke Energy Progress has agreed to postpone or avoid the construction of an additional turbine engine at the Lake Julian power plant if our community demonstrates less reliance on the fuel powered plant.
- Opportunity to provide the residents of Buncombe County and City of Asheville a cleaner, affordable and smarter energy future.
- The successful collaboration of public and private partnerships moving the Western North Carolinas into a clean energy future.

Cons:

- The funding to implement the recommendations has not been identified.

Fiscal Impact: None identified.

Recommendation: City staff recommends that City Council adopt the resolution establishing the joint City/County/Utility Energy Innovation Task Force.

Attachments:

- (1) Resolution
- (2) Member List