



ALACHUA COUNTY

Citizen Climate Advisory Committee

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Officers: Chair Jennison Kipp Searcy

Vice-chair Dani Cucchiara

Secretary Sage Cera

Staff Liaisons: Stephen Hofstetter (County)

Dan Zhu/Jennie Ford (City of Gainesville)

Eric Walters (GRU)

MEETING MINUTES

January 29, 2024 – 6:00 – 8:00 pm

Grace Knight Conference Room

12 SE 1st Street, Second Floor

Gainesville, Florida 32601

(ZOOM Meeting: Log in info below)

1. Call to Order – Attendance and Determination of Quorum –the meeting was called to order at 6:02PM by Chair Jennison Kipp Searcy.

Members: In person -- Kathryn Taubert, Sage Cera, Gary Kiebzak, Jackie Davis, Dani Cucchiara, Carla Brisotto, and Jennison Kipp Searcy; James Fulton (by zoom); John Nix Absent

Staff: Betsy Riley (Alachua County SEEDS Office), Eric Walters (GRU), Dan Zhu (City of Gainesville), Jennie Ford (City of Gainesville), Sofie Aviles (EPD intern), Gus Olmos (AC Waste), Mike Castine (AC GM)

Guests: Tom Cunilio, Mike Kelcourse, Chris Kelcourse, Amir Voarshovi, Tess Hutchins, David Hastings

2. Approval of Agenda—Motion to move item #5 “Energy updates from the GRU IRP (Eric Walters)” to Item #4, switching with original Item #4 “Presentations on two Ecoloop proposals (Gus).” Jackie Davis requested clarification on whether Climate Summit updates would be provided by staff (not explicitly stated on current agenda). Staff agreed to provide this update during Item #6: Discussion of public engagement and outreach opportunities and approaches (Dan & Betsy)

Motion made by Gary Kiebzak to approve the edit and the final agenda, seconded by Jackie Davis. Motion passed 7-0.

3. Review and approval of Minutes from the December 19, 2023, regular meetings—Review of minutes included request to send link to the City of Gainesville Climate Dashboard, and the City of Gainesville survey link related to Climate Action Plan development.

Motion made by Gary Kiebzak to approve the minutes, seconded by Kathryn Taubert. Motion passed 7-0.

4. Energy updates from the GRU IRP (Eric Walters)
 - a. IRP analysis
 - Set up model to reflect reality as closely as possible
 - Scenario: many changed variables at once
 - Sensitivity: single changed variable
 - Use PLEXOS as modeling system
 - PLEXOS gives output of life cycle cost, timeline, emissions

- Constraints on transmission:
 - Can currently import up to 75 MW, but due to Duke Energy upgrades, import maximum will increase up to 200 MW beginning in 2028
 - We can increase an additional 200 MW at a cost of approx. 130 million dollars
- Solar integration considerations:
 - Firm capacity required in 1:2 ratio to solar
 - Batteries or fast-start generators
 - Can only add 75 MW solar at a time
 - 4 years between solar additions
 - 1 year to optimize to new solar load
 - 3 years for building out and permitting
 - 36% of peak demand provided by solar in summer, 0% in winter
 - About 5 acres required for 1 MW solar
 - Expect battery technology to advance within 10 years
 - However, IRP only includes current technology, but is redone every 5 years to account for new technology
- Solar, natural gas, and battery were in majority of plans
- b. Have Eric send out PowerPoint
- c. Movement to add 10 minutes for public questions directed to Eric
- Questions:
 - Can a set of scenarios be done such that industry moves to human considerations instead of money considerations?
 - Eric: investments must be considered
 - What role does biomass play?
 - Most of the models generally extended biomass retirement to improve resource mix
 - What is planned for IRP?
 - Modeling is done, data analysis and planning are next steps

Motion made by Sage Cera to approve a ten-minute question and answer session (ten minutes total for all questions and responses) by public, seconded by Dani Cucchiara. Motion passed 7-0.

5. Presentations on two EcoLoop proposals (Gus)

First Presentation by Sunshine Compost entitled “Replenish the Earth for Generations to Come.” (Christina Kelcourse)

- Have a compost site in Jax
- Want 20 acres at EcoLoop
- Would take in food and organics and turn into soil and biochar
- Landfill diversion
 - Manure, food, agricultural waste, palms, yard waste, grass, pallets, wood
- Food waste contributes 58% of the methane produced by landfills
- Duval facility can divert 60,000 tons from landfills
- Alachua facility proposed to handle up to 120,000 tons
- Sunshine intends to be intentional about underserved communities, with several donation programs
- Compost holds 10 times its weight in water
- Most products would be sold within our community
- 10-12 jobs in the immediate future, 20+ in long term
- 2 possible partners that may come with Sunshine
- Potentially permitted within 18 months
 - otherwise, ready to go, besides confirming parcel of land
- Been in business since Jan 2020
- Are already doing everything they intend to do here
- What’s the radius?
 - Bulk is local

- Will take feed from all over Alachua
- Tests consistently for heavy metals
- Do not take biosolids (sewage)

Break called at 8:09PM at conclusion of presentation and question and answer.
Session resumed for second presentation at 8:17PM.

Second Presentation by Green Technologies, LLC entitled “Closing the Loop: Advancing the Circular Economy through Organic Waste Recovery.” (Tess Hutchins)

- Target waste streams:
 - Food waste (15% of Alachua waste stream)
 - Fats, oils, grease
 - Biosolids from waste treatment
- Nutrient recycling is their business
 - Prevents algal blooms
- Planning to do anaerobic digestion
 - produces biogas and digestate as a fertilizer
- Need 5-10 acres for an EcoLoop facility
- Reduce reliance on fossil fuel mining
- Local feedstocks mean less hauling
- 25-year-old company
- Plans for regional facility that process food waste for nutrient recycling
 - Compost vs nutrients
- 18-24 months to be operational

6. Discussion of public engagement and outreach opportunities and approaches (Dan & Betsy)
Motion made by Sage Cera to move item to February agenda, to receive Item #7 updates in the form of an email. Motion seconded by Dani Cucchiara. Motion passed 6-0 (Carla Brisotto not present).

7. Staff Updates: **Moved to email by prior motion**

- a. Betsy Riley – Alachua County
- b. Dan Zhu/Jennie Ford - City of Gainesville
- c. Eric Walters – GRU

8. Suggest items for next regular meeting – February 19, 2024, and future meetings.

- a. Hear update on Flooding & Natural Resources
- b. (future meeting) UF AI Department support
- c. Discussion of 2 EcoLoop proposals

9. Meeting Recap, Action Items, and member comments

Meeting recap provided by Sage Cera

Action Items:

- Staff to email Committee links to City’s Climate Dashboard and (if still available) City’s climate survey
- Staff to email updates from Item #6 to Committee
- Staff will bring back recommendations regarding additional presentations for the March meeting, including a possible presentation from the Springs Institute, and another from a Water Management District office.

10. Public Comment – several members of the public spoke. David Hastings of Sierra Club provided copies to all Committee members of a document entitled “GRU Can Reduce Customer Costs with Cleaner Grid.”

- IRP is fantastic process; however, Princeton and MIT wrote an open-source model to compete with proprietary model
- GRU can reduce costs while reducing emissions according to open-source model and independent analysis
- Utility industry is too conservative and risk averse without creativity
 - Few externalities are included in models

Nancy Deren

- IRP: concerned about over-reliance on natural gas
- Likes the sunshine organics model
 - addresses food security

Tom Cunilio: Center for Sustainable Agroforestry

- wants to keep coming to CCAC meetings and wants to know schedules
- Sceptic of UF and GRU due to UF reluctance to promote IFAS energy crop research

Kali Blount

- GRU presenter dodged questions
- Economy won't matter when the end comes

11. Adjourn –Motion to adjourn made by Dani Cucchiara, seconded by Gary Kiebzak. Meeting adjourned at 9:22PM

Here is the link to the zoom meeting:

<https://alachuacounty-us.zoom.us/j/88315056503?pwd=NWJGVUZDd3hmL01vNmdaLzlVdk80QT09>
or by calling (929)-205-6099 and enter Webinar ID: 883 1505 6503 Passcode: 172108