

City of Arcata Energy Committee Annual Report to the City Council

July 2013

The Energy Committee meets on the third Monday of each month and serves in an advisory capacity to the City Council, City Manager and City staff in energy matters related to policies, management and projects.

Committee members include:

Ruthanne Cecil	Nate McKeever, Chair	Jim Zoellick
Melanie Faust	Gwelen Paliaga, Vice-Chair	Julie Neander, Staff Liaison
Mike Kowalski	James Robinson	Karen Diemer, Staff Liaison

I. ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Energy Committee has been involved in the following activities since the last annual report was submitted to the Council in July of 2012:

Education and Outreach – The Committee has worked with the Energy Program Specialist to conduct community outreach activities. These include: Tabling at the North Country Fair and the Plan It Green conference and promoting events for Energy Awareness Month in October.

Recommendation to Council on High Electricity User Utility Tax (High Energy Tax)

The Committee continued to devote many hours to the Excessive Energy Use Tax and on November 6, 2012 Arcata's citizens voted to implement the tax by a 68% to 32% vote (5,314 votes to 2,501 votes).

The Committee will track the implementation of this tax and make recommendations to the City Council on projects and programs that these General Fund revenues could fund to have a positive effect on reducing our greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) and meeting our greenhouse gas reduction goals.

Collaboration with the City of Eureka Energy Committee – The Committee has initiated collaboration on issues of mutual interest with the City of Eureka Energy Committee. Committee Chair Robinson served as the liaison.

Energy Policy Positions – Quality of Life Indicators. The Committee submitted the following Indicators for consideration.

Indicator 1: Greenhouse Gas Emissions / Carbon Sequestration

- Total emissions inventory every 5 years to include a list of total acres of City owned lands that are sequestering carbon (wetland / forest).
- Total community energy use annually, including natural gas, electricity and other readily available data.

Indicator 2: Energy Efficiency Encouragement

- Do residents and businesses in Arcata have the option to purchase renewable energy (other than by installing their own generation technology)?

- Annual per capita energy expenditure – per each sector (Large Agriculture, Commercial, Residential and Industrial). Kilowatt hours or therms/ person or kilowatt hours or therms / square foot of manufacturing;
- Number of solar permits and total kilowatt hours installed as a cumulative total, a percentage change from the previous year and a per capita estimate.
- Number of solar permits issued for solar hot water heaters and the total therm capacity installed.
- Energy savings from incentive/rebate programs and total number of rebates issued from PG&E, RCEA, RCAA or other Independently Operated Utilities, the California Energy Commission or from the Public Goods Charge.

Indicator 3: Sustainable / Alternative transportation (Reference to Transportation Safety Committee Recommendation)

- Total ridership each year
- Number of electric vehicles / alternative fuel vehicles and E-9 meters installed
- Percentage of non-motorized modeshare
- Total miles of non-motorized transport corridors / bike lanes and trails

Indicator 4: Solid Waste and Recycling

- Annual Percentage of solid waste diverted from the landfill
- Total per capita solid waste tons disposed of in the landfill

Collaboration with Redwood Coast Energy Authority (RCEA) – The Committee continues to consult and work collaboratively with RCEA on numerous energy and climate-related issues.

II. GOALS FOR COMING YEAR

Priority Projects

1. Review potential of Community Choice Aggregation and alternatives to moving Arcata's electrical supply to a more sustainable and lower/zero emission source;
2. Track legislation concerning energy and make recommendations to the Council;
3. Review Cap and Trade program development and encourage protocols that could fund energy efficiency and renewable generation projects.
4. Develop an Annual Incentive Award for Energy Efficiency/Climate Change Work;
5. Track the progress of the Excessive Energy Use Tax passed by the voters and develop recommendations for use of the revenue;
6. Provide guidance to Balance Efficiency and Indoor Air Quality;
7. Assist the City in re-establishing a greenhouse gas reduction goal.

On-Going Goals

- Explore and recommend energy efficiency measures for City-owned facilities;
- Collaborate with RCEA, HSU and the Eureka Energy Committee;
- Find ways to better engage the community in our GHG reduction efforts;
- Help the City obtain more alternative fuel vehicles for the City fleet and assist with Plug-in electric vehicle infrastructure development.