

City of Arcata Energy Committee
Annual Report to the City Council
July 2008

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	Andrew Kulchin	Karen Diemer, Staff Liaison
River Hume	Steve Salzman	Beckie Menten, Staff Liaison
Jennifer Fuller	Jim Zoellick, Chair	
Morgan King		

I. ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Energy Committee has been involved in the following activities since the last Annual Report was submitted to the Council in February of 2007:

Energy Program Specialist – The Committee would like to thank the Council for adding a part time Energy Program Specialist position in 2007. Ms. Beckie Menten was hired for the position in February 2007 and has been doing an excellent job. The Committee enjoys working with Beckie and is thrilled to have her on board. There have been a lot of accomplishments related to energy and greenhouse gas emissions over the last year and a half, and this is largely due to the efforts of Ms. Menten.

Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan – Staff developed a GHG Inventory update that was reviewed and critiqued by the Committee. The Committee continues to assist staff with the implementation of Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan near term measures. These include: development of a green building program, development of a pilot time-of-sale program, preparation of an annual energy report that details energy use in City facilities and operations, promotion of alternative fuel vehicles, promotion of sustainable transportation measures, coordination with local energy groups, and education and outreach activities.

Collaboration with RCEA – The Committee continues to work with RCEA on activities such as a green building program, a time-of-sale program, and education and outreach.

Energy Efficiency Guidelines – General Plan Policy RC-8b specifies energy efficiency requirements for City construction projects. The wording of Policy RC-8b had become obsolete and confusing, so the Committee recommended a simple amendment to the General Plan to update and clarify the policy.

Green Building Program – Committee member Steve Salzman, in concert with City staff, RCEA staff and others continues to work diligently on the development of a green building program. Mr. Salzman has been presenting green building presentations to many of our local municipalities. Mr. Salzman and RCEA are working to secure funding to develop region-wide program.

Time-of-Sale Program – City staff continue to work with RCEA on the development of a time-of-sale program. The program has been delayed due to issues with a subcontractor and RCEA is working to move the program forward.

Electric Vehicle Charging Station – The Committee worked with City staff and members of the Humboldt Electric Vehicle Association to open an electric vehicle charging station in downtown Arcata. The station allows free four hour charging for electric vehicles. The committee worked with staff to develop a use policy for the station.

Alternative Fuel Vehicles for the City Fleet – Staff developed a Green Fleets Policy with input from the Committee. The Committee continues to work with staff in an effort to obtain alternative fueled vehicles for the City fleet. Chair Zoellick visited Davis Electric Cars in Davis, CA and test drove a Zenn electric vehicle. Staff is trying to get a Zenn vehicle for a trial period. The Committee has also helped coordinate collaboration between the City and Humboldt State University to secure electric vehicles for testing and trial. HSU obtained some Miles Electric vehicles for testing and City staff were able to try the vehicles.

Education and Outreach – The Committee has participated in numerous community events to promote energy efficiency and greenhouse gas reduction, including: HSU's SLAM Festival, sponsorship and participation in Climate Action Project workshops, Plan It Green energy conference, Plan It Green green building conference, Organic Planet Festival, and Focus the Nation (including a City sponsored Town Hall Meeting). In addition, the Committee has worked with staff to update the City's outreach display and to update the City's energy program website. The Committee is currently planning outreach and education activities for Energy Awareness Month in October.

Community Choice Aggregation – The Committee continued to investigate the viability of Community Choice Aggregation (CCA). Committee members participated in a local working group that included staff from RCEA. The working group hosted a visit from Don Dame of the Northern California Power Agency to discuss and examine community energy opportunities, including CCA.

Sustainable Transportation – A sustainable transportation subcommittee was formed. They conducted a survey of City staff to find out which transportation modes are most often used and what sort of alternatives staff would consider. Based on the survey results the Committee will make recommendations to promote sustainable transportation alternatives. Some of the measures being considered include: employee outreach and education, employee recognition programs, a "Jack-Pass" system for City employees, working with RTA to provide a compatible schedule, a carpool matching system, a bike fleet at City Hall available for running errands during the day, increasing the number of high efficiency vehicles in each department's pool, and working out a City-sponsored vanpool system, potentially with the use of City hybrids. The Energy Committee also examined the proposed Highway 101 corridor project and made recommendations to Council regarding this project.

Annual Energy Use Report – The Committee worked with staff to develop an Annual Energy Use Report that can help the City track its energy use, identify opportunities for energy savings, and assess the results of energy related projects.

II. GOALS FOR COMING YEAR

In the coming year the Energy Committee hopes to:

- Assist with the implementation of near-term measures in the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan,
- Work with RCEA to develop a time-of-sale draft ordinance/program for council consideration,
- Develop an informational packet on building energy efficiency to provide to builders,
- Help develop a regional green building program,
- Work with the Design Review Commission to establish a Green Building / Energy Efficient Building Awards Program,
- Collaborate with the Economic Development Committee on mutually beneficial projects,
- Continue to collaborate with RCEA and promote their services,
- Promote sustainable transportation options for City staff,
- Conduct an educational outreach campaign for October Energy Awareness Month, and
- Help the City obtain more alternative fuel vehicles for the City fleet.