

Ann Arbor Energy Commission – Meeting Minutes
June 9, 2009
Washtenaw County Administration Building
220 N. Main St. 5:30-7:30 PM

Attendees: Bill Verge – Interim Chair, Dina Kurz, David Wright, Jason Bing, Fulter Hong, Mike Delaney, and Charles Hookham.

Staff: Andrew Brix, Merry Tondro

Approval of Minutes

Minutes were approved with no comments.

Public Input – None.

Energy News

Energy Report:

- *Events Coming Up:* Friday, June 12th at 6pm is the Mayor’s Green Fair in downtown Ann Arbor on Main street. There will be four bands and two stages this year June 26th – 28th is the Michigan Energy Fair in Onkama, Michigan. An excellent weekend-long opportunity to learn about energy.
- *Rate Case Update:* Last week the Michigan Public Services Commission approved most of DTE’s RPS and Energy Optimization plans. For the most part, these plans are moving ahead.
- The 1st Annual WARM Awards banquet in Detroit will be held Wednesday June 10, 2009. Robert Black and Wayne Appleyard will be in attendance at tomorrow’s event. David Orr from Oberlin College will be speaking as well.

Other News from Commissioners:

- *Commissioner Delaney:* Commissioner Delaney brought an experimental hybrid electric vehicle to tonight’s meeting and it will be available to be looked at after adjourning. Also, he reiterated that the plug-in electric vehicle conference “The Business of Plugging-In” will be held this October in Detroit.

Ann Arbor Community Updates

- Huron River and Impoundment Management Plan (HRIMP): Matt Naud from the City of Ann Arbor presented information on HRIMP (the full report can be found at www.a2gov.org/green). Mr. Naud’s presentation primarily focused on the two dams that the City of Ann Arbor owns that are not currently producing electricity, Argo and Geddes. The background is that the City bought our four dams (Barton, Superior, Argo, and Geddes) from DTE in the 1960s and installed hydroelectric infrastructure at Barton and Superior in the 1980s. The Barton facility has 900 kW installed capacity with an annual generation of about 4,220,000 kWh per year. The Superior facility has about 570 kW installed capacity with an annual generation of about 2,294,000 kWh per year. None of these facilities are flood-control facilities.

- *Commissioner Wright:* His understanding is that the environmental commission said no final decision should be made until a number of studies and reports have been prepared. What kinds of reports need to be prepared? Mr. Naud responded that the reports needed include a detailed engineering feasibility study, a sedimentation study, revegetation plans (if needed), and identifying other monies that may be available to assist with the costs of dam removal. Of course, the City will need to choose where to focus our limited resources by identifying which of these studies is most relevant.
- *Commissioner Wright:* Is there a source identified for Geddes dam that would be used to cover the cost of maintenance? After all, there are significant maintenance costs even with non-hydroelectric dams. Mr. Naud responded that Argo dam maintenance averages about \$57,000 and Geddes is probably about the same. Generally, it's about \$20,000 a year for 20 years for basic maintenance. Every 4-5 years, there's about a \$40,000 - \$50,000 general infrastructure upgrade. Every 15-20 years or so, there's a \$250,000 major upgrade including gate-painting and so forth. On top of this, we pay at about \$17,500 for insurance costs. All together, this brings the average annual maintenance costs for each of the dams to about \$57,000. And this does not include the costs of managing weeds or sedimentation. It's important to note that currently we don't regularly monitor the impoundments for sedimentation or bathymetry.
- Mr. Naud stated that HRIMP began as a general visioning process for the future of the Huron River. It included a discussion of possible future scenarios for all the dams. Mr. Naud said that although all the dams were looked at and reviewed, subsequently a lot of the discussion has come to focus on the future of Argo dam specifically. A brief recap:
 - Barton creates a one billion gallon impoundment and there is no plan in the foreseeable future to ever remove this.
 - A number of reasons have been raised for the removal of Argo dam. It would be a simpler option with Argo dam than with Superior dam, since we own the water rights surrounding Argo.
 - In the 1970s, we raised city bond money to rebuild Geddes dam to create a park and we didn't put hydro back in. The sense is that the citizens spoke about what they wanted there, at least back in the 1970s, and the plan is pretty silent on what to do with Geddes should the dam fail again.

HRIMP recommends the operation of a Stewardship Committee to oversee the regular operation and maintenance and future strategies for the area.

- *Commissioner Hookham:* Will FERC re-licensing be necessary? Mr. Naud replied that yes, licensing would be needed, which is certainly not an insignificant hurdle. Mr. Naud responded that the City believes the re-licensing of Argo would cost about \$300,000. Mr. Naud also reminded the Commission that we currently do not have FERC licensing on Barton and

Superior dams – they are exempt. It was a special opportunity that we were able to take advantage of at the time that those dams were built.

- *Commissioner Hookham:* I haven't read the full report, but it appears that the Stantec report focused on putting in conventional hydro turbines. No one has looked at installing an advanced hydro turbine. These newer technologies may be more appropriate to put in at dams like Argo. They may not generate as much electricity, but their payback may be better, especially in low-flow scenarios such as the conditions we have at Argo. They may be environmentally-friendly as well. It's worth a quick look.
- Mr. Naud pointed out that the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has been asking the City if there are plans to repair the toe drains. If the City plans on re-installing generation equipment, then it is assumed that the toe drains will be repaired as part of this process. If the City is not planning on re-installing generation equipment, then a plan needs to be created to repair the toe drains since DEQ is concerned about the long-term effects of not repairing the drains. The DEQ wants a decision by July 31st, 2009. That being said, it's not imperative that a formal resolution be made right away by the Energy Commission. There is still time for discussion.
- *Commissioner Delaney:* What's the cost of repairing the toe drains? Mr. Naud said that the budget included \$300,000, but it could cost more. It's a difficult area to work in, being so close to the river, and there is an endangered species in the area that we need to work around.
- *Commissioner Hookham:* I suggest we post-pone making a resolution now. Some of the absent Commissioners would like a special meeting to discuss this issue again before July.
- *Commissioner Verge:* If there are no further comments, then we will not pass a resolution this evening. We will discuss the matter further at the special meeting and choose a course of action then.

- Energy Futures Film Project Update: No update.

- State Legislative Update: Andrew Brix provided a list of all the energy-related legislation that is pending during this legislative session. The list included a variety of bills although no specific bills were discussed. Commissioner Delaney provided a brief update on currently proposed federal legislation, House resolution 2454 (also known as the Waxman bill), which is moving through the U.S. Congress. The bill proposes a cap-and-trade system and the establishment of energy efficiency standards.

Ann Arbor Area - Energy Conservation and Environmental Sustainability Issues and Activities

Residential/Commercial Audits: Commissioner Bing said that he saw a draft of the rebates coming out of the local utility RPS and Energy Optimization plans and he was excited to see a series of improvements that will now qualify for rebates.

Building Codes/Guidelines/Recommendations: The A2D2 downtown rezoning project is coming to a close and will probably be passed sometime this fall.

Ann Arbor Area - Renewable Energy Issues and Activities

Solar America Cities: Andrew Brix shared news that he recently received. The Department of Energy has announced that they will provide additional funding, \$10 million in competitive grants, for the Solar America Cities programs. There are 25 Solar America Cities, so the chances are pretty good for preparing a competitive grant. Mr. Brix suggested that we begin brainstorming ideas about what kinds of projects we would like to see. There are also opportunities to partner with other cities to work regionally. Applications for these competitive grants are due by the end of July.

5000 Solar Roofs Project Update: Andrew Brix pointed out that this project may be a good focus area for the new DOE Solar America Cities competitive grants. However, other than this, there are no further updates for this project.

Solar Access Zoning: No update.

AAEC Subcommittee Updates

Energy Plan: Commissioner Hookham noted that there have been some changes due to the stimulus funding. The plan currently consists of seven sections, which we were hoping to discuss these in more detail at a retreat. It's hard to schedule during the summer, but we need to move forward with this as soon as possible.

Outreach Plan: Commissioner Kurz said that there are no large pieces of news regarding the outreach plan.

Funding for Energy Conservation and Renewable Energy: EECBG Stimulus Update: Andrew Brix noted that we're approaching the submission deadline and it is anticipated that we will be submitting before the actual due date.

Public Input – Pete Washabaugh (2777 Danbury Lane) shared with the Commission that he was impressed with the dam discussion. He felt that the Energy Commission is asking the appropriate questions regarding this issue.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 6:58 pm