

**Capitol Hill Neighborhood Council**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**Marmalade Library, Multipurpose Room, 6:30 PM**  
**Wednesday, June 21, 2017**

**TOPICS IN SUMMARY**

Approval of May 2017 Regular meeting minutes.

Panel discussion of rooftop solar power and discussion of SLC Climate Initiative, Clean Energy Supplementation Plan, and UCARE (Utah Citizens Advocating Renewable Energy) proposal. Panel comprised of Gary Hooegeven , Senior Vice President & Chief Commercial Officer of Rocky Mountain Power, Stan Holmes, Outreach Coordinator, Utah Citizens Advocating Renewable Energy (UCARE), and Vicki Bennett, Director of Sustainability, Salt Lake City.

**MINUTES**

**Welcome & Announcements: Laura Arellano**

We made some corrections to email system – you should be getting emails!  
Recognition of board, all volunteers. Today's agenda is different – usual agenda suspended, today we focus on rooftop solar panel issues. Stan (Holmes) brought to our board meeting a proposal, we discussed, decided to bring it to whole council.

**Review of May 2017 Regular Meeting Minutes**

Draft of May 2017 minutes posted on website  
Corrections: (some tendered on paper after meeting, updated)

*Motion to Approve: Yes*

*Second: Yes*

*In Favor: All*

*Opposed: None*

**APPROVED**

**Ensign Peak Park Update – Dean Larsen**

Last year the neighborhood council approved measured to improve safety, etc. at Ensign Peak Trail. One modification to the prior approval, hopefully City is ready to move: One Security modification to proposal: Glen Saxton: original plan did not include security structure at the plaza. Problems have increased so council has moved to extend fence inside plaza and add gates so people cannot get on the peak during the night. City now agrees this is what should be done, board agrees, does entire Council agree so we can proceed with the fence?

**Q:** Also include signs

**A:** Two of the gates will have signs (stating that) park will be closed and locked at 10:00 PM

*Motion to support resolution to make these improvements (Dean Larsen)*

*Second: Yes*

*Favor: Many*

*Opposed: Yes, one person*

*Agreement to discuss further*

Thanks to Safi Safiullah with the Library.

**Introduction of topic and panelists by David Scheer:**

Tonight, we have a panel discussion of 2 resolutions: UCARE Resolution and Joint Resolution of Salt Lake City Mayor's Office and Salt Lake City Council. Write any questions on index cards. You may vote tonight, put ballot in box, or vote later, until July 5<sup>th</sup>.

Panelists:

- Gary Hoogeveen, Senior Vice President and Chief Commercial Officer, Rocky Mountain Power
- Vicky Bennett, Sustainability Director of Salt Lake City
- Stan Holmes, Community Member, founder of Utah Citizens Advocating Renewable Energy (UCARE) in 2014, UCARE Outreach Coordinator.

Format: Each panelist 10 minutes to make statement.

Please put questions on card, after 10 minutes, 2 minutes to reply, then open to questions. David Scheer will pose the questions to the panelists.

**Opening Comments:**

**Gary Hoogeveen, Senior Vice President and Chief Commercial Officer, Rocky Mountain Power:**

Presentation of activities to build renewable power. 2<sup>nd</sup> largest utility owner of wind in the country. Very much in partnership with the City. Topic of Day: Rooftop Solar – Rocky Mountain wants to provide choices for renewable power, lowest cost electricity. Explanation of net metering and its history, why it is a concern. Explanation of the cost shift solar creates. (Rocky Mountain Power) System is designed to deliver power at peak demand. Those of you with rooftop solar, we do not propose to change your rates. This is prospective – for those installing solar after commission approves. Average monthly bill under current rate, \$55. Monthly under new rate, \$74, avg. Monthly bill without net metering \$114. There would be a \$60 one time application fee, no other profits for Rocky Mountain Power. This change just prevents cost shift.

**Stan Holmes, UCARE:**

Has been tracking solar issues since 2014. Happy summer solstice. Thanks Salt Lake City Mayor and Council for stepping up for clean air and clean energy and the Climate Positive Initiative. Climate change is real, we can and should do something

about it. City took responsibility to make change and recognizes solar as a way to achieve goals. SLC Joint Resolution/Climate Positive 2014 encourages solar. Rocky Mountain Power's proposed increase threatens commitment to solar – would double customer charge, etc. Would dis-incentivize solar industry. Some cases where rates went up and industry in solar went down. Lost jobs. If approved, Rocky Mountain Power would undermine Salt Lake City's 2040 plan - would make return on investment essentially nil. Would also hammer Utah's solar industry. On June 2<sup>nd</sup>, Summit County filed testimony. UCARE says rooftop solar owners' investments save non-solar customers from having to pay for more coal and gas plants. Also, rooftop solar reduces the peak load on grid, reduces amount needing to be burned. Solar customers should be compensated at full retail rate. Rocky Mountain Power benefits by taking year-end excess solar credits. Rooftop solar owners are small percentage of Rocky Mountain Power customers. Rocky Mountain Power ignores environment, economic, health, etc. (benefits of) switching to solar from fossil fuels. Currently, proceedings before Utah Public Service Commission – make public comment at public hearing or through the (CHNC Neighborhood Council). Support solar tonight and/or send comment to public service commission – [psc@utah.gov](mailto:psc@utah.gov)  
There is a handout with more info.

**Vicky Bennett, Director of Sustainability, Salt Lake City:**

Very proud of Climate Positive Program, can find online at the City's website. Most important part of the plan is the (SLC Joint) Resolution. Not a single dissenting vote. We need to approach climate change. Our public utilities dept. is working on water issues now – the City sees it. The City is the entity that has to clean up the mess when disasters happen. SLC is a leading City with what they are doing. Working closely with Rocky Mountain Power to reach initiative – have an agreement with them, will in next few months go out to bid for solar farm to get all City power from renewables. Second goal for 2032 – all energy in the City could come from renewables. The net metering is confusing. As a City, we want jobs here, we want people to have solar. Looking for a really good middle ground. Some studies say one thing, others say other things. Disappointment that Public Service Commission looked at year over year instead of ten-year. The regulatory structure is very confusing. (The Utah) State Legislature puts some things out of consideration. If the legislature understood climate change better, they could help us. Right now coal is, unfortunately, cheap. Need to look at total cost of coal. Coal dividend – would put monetary value on burning carbon. Ongoing process to find really good middle ground.

**2 min response:**

**Gary Hoogeveen:**

Stan's comments about supporting SLC – agree with that. What is most cost effective way? Cheapest way is these large solar farms – working with Vicky's team on that. Agree with Vicky – wants to allow rooftop solar – as long as you don't require other customers to pay for that. Reflects true economics of what solar is. Want to allow rooftop solar, but make sure it pays for itself.

**Stan Holmes:**

The actual docket has been going since 2014. If this rate increase goes through, Rocky Mountain Power solar customers will see a rate hike – demand charge is the killer. PacifiCorp includes very environmentally-friendly states. In Oregon, part of the resolution is to make Oregon coal free. Very different in Utah. It is important for citizens to step up, and when the City makes an initiative, back them up.

**Vicky Bennett:**

What Stan says is right – it is interesting to see the difference between 2 states. Legislative requirements are very different. In Oregon and California, they look at the issue differently. We need to get to our Legislators. They did pass one bill last year, which helps Rocky Mountain Power close coal-powered plants down faster. (We need) a way to put a price on carbon, or get the Legislature to understand climate. In Nevada, after solar companies left, they passed a law through legislature to change.

**Audience Q&A**

**Q:** How does the City accomplish renewable energy by (2040)

**Vicky:** Details to come. As coal power closes, replace with renewable. Numbers are looking good.

**Q:** Does the City require any action from residents?

**Vicky:** Too early to go there. Hoping it will not be more expensive, but if so, would look for opt out. Does not appear that it will be a big difference.

**Q:** How much does having solar add value to your home? What is typical ROI?

**Stan:** There was recently some pushback because of aesthetic. Doesn't know anyone who has sold home because of solar panels.

**Vicky:** SLC has grants to show benefits of solar. Teaching appraisers to understand benefits of solar. There has not been enough resale to show that but is an education point.

**Q:** Seems that by changing to net metering, someone with solar would never recuperate investment.

**Gary:** The average would go from 55 – 74 dollars. Implication is that you need 60 dollars to get pay back – depends on the cost of the panels. For some customers, rate change would mean lower costs. Some may have net savings – can save more with change in rates. Smaller installations, rates could turn out lower. There will be savings too.

**Q:** What about nuclear? It is clean and safe.

**A:** PacifiCorp looked at nuclear. There are federal permitting requirements (involved), takes 10 years to get something built. Doesn't make sense economically.

**Stan:** There are municipal utilities already participating in Uamps program. Not cost effective.

**Q:** If we deny Rocky Mountain Power plan, how (do we) reconcile \$400 subsidy?

**Vicky:** Although the City and Rocky Mountain Power do work together, sometimes we have different data. Looking at it from longer term, in 10 year time frame, don't

see direct subsidy as much. How do we compromise? Governor Herbert working with us. There must be middle ground. Really happy to sit down and get to that point.

**Stan:** Synapse energy presented # people who died from Rocky Mountain Power energy generation. Then they found that there was no subsidy. Sometimes the subsidy goes the other way. Cheap electricity is not cheap if costs get shifted to general public. (Stan shares some statistics) Rocky Mountain Power is looking at a 20-year plan, different scenarios. It is not clear that there is a subsidy.

**Gary:** Rocky Mountain Power disagrees with almost everything Synapse said. Statistics regarding net metering: Most people installing solar are more affluent, then taking subsidy from less affluent homes. (What) this all comes down to: Rocky Mountain Power has to pay more for rooftop solar, but can do it cheaper with large solar farms.

**Q:** Details for installing and owning solar panels, how long they last, who maintains (them)?

**Vicky:** There is a solar association with a list of good solar companies. Vicky's (solar) panels are warrantied for 25 years, so if things go wrong, the company comes and fixes. Likes it.

**Gary:** With anything that costs \$20-30k, get a few quotes.

**David Scheer:** If you use the app NextDoor, you can ask questions about solar and other issues and get recommendations from neighbors.

**Stan:** (in) Salt Lake City (there is) Solar Simplified

**Gary:** Rocky Mountain Power has a Subscriber Solar program. They have a large farm. You can have that directly, a low cost option if you don't want to put (solar panels) on your roof.

Open questions:

**Q:** Gary, are you planning more solar fields in Utah or elsewhere?

Gary: in response to SLC, there will be several large farms needing to be built in central and northern Utah. One of the problems will be transmission. Very solvable, though. Yes, there are plans for hundreds if not thousands of megawatts in next 5-10 years.

**Q:** What is the benefit of solar compared to environmental impact where panels are made?

Vicky: There is potential effect there. Back in 2008 when there was a large tax credit to buy solar, most (panels) came from China. Impossible to control what goes on somewhere else. Starting to improve. Same with wind energy – birds got killed, improvements made. Same with batteries – even though not emitting, there's an impact. Good point.

**Q:** We have a lot of condos, high-rises – is solar practical?

Gary: That's a sweet spot for subscriber solar (if you) don't want to or cannot put on roof.

Stan: Not sure about future status with the City, but there is community solar. Utah Clean Energy working on it to. You could go in on solar together and share benefits.

Gary: Subscriber Solar is the same thing.

Stan: Actually, thanks to Vivint, you can lease solar panels. Owned by (Vivint) but you have them on your roof.

**Q:** For Gary, what is annual profit of Rocky Mountain Power?

**A:** It is a function of how much we have to invest. It's regulated. The answer is \$700 Million. Rate –regulated percentage is 9.5 percent.

**Q:** Rocky Mountain Power plans to phase out fossil fuels – what is the time frame for that?

**Gary:** It is very complicated, there are many stakeholders, 6 states, fleet of coal, gas, wind, solar, hydro, and many commissions. Stated goal is to decarbonize as fast as possible with least cost to customers. Rates have risen 6-8 percent – but hope is to make flat rates. Have to be measured about when to retire coal plants. If we turned off all tomorrow, rates would go sky-high. 3.5 billion dollars worth of wind because it's cheapest way to provide power. Goal is to decarbonize but not raise rates.

**Stan:** But mix of coal and gas is still over 60% - PacifiCorp is banking on demand-side management. By 2030, for instance, Oregon will cut out coal, that will make Utah a big part of fossil fuel use.

**Gary:** FYI, fossil fuels includes natural gas. Much cleaner (than coal). Need something that responds to load. Wind and solar do not respond to load. Replacing coal with natural gas. Some day, batteries may be answer, but for now, retiring coal means natural gas.

### **How to Vote/How the ballots work – David Scheer**

There are 2 resolutions we seek your vote on: UCARE Resolution and Joint Resolution.

**Q:** If we have more questions, can we contact you (panelists en masse)?

**A:** Panelists respond yes.

David Scheer: (Panelists) contact info will be posted to CHNC website.

UCARE: Utah Citizens Advocating Renewable Energy. Not Ted Wilson's group, which is great, but this UCARE is different.

Laura Arellano: You can vote now, put in ballot box, or go to our website – all links are there. Voting deadline is July 5<sup>th</sup>. At next CHNC Board meeting, we look at responses and discuss and decide how to proceed.

### **Other news:**

- July 8<sup>th</sup>, at 2:00 PM at the Marmalade Library: Eid al-Fitr event, a celebration marking the end of Ramadan. Will include a lecture and dinner.
- July Fourth Pancake Breakfast in Warm Springs Park. Please help us set up July 4<sup>th</sup> – info will also be posted to website.

*Motion to adjourn: Yes*

*Second: Yes*

*In Favor: Yes*

*ADJOURNED 8:02 PM*

**Next CHNC Board of Directors Meeting:**

Monday, July 10<sup>th</sup>, 6:30 PM, Marmalade Library

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**Next Reg. Council Meeting:**

Wednesday, July 19, 2017

6:30 PM, Marmalade Library, Multipurpose Room