

Foresthill Bioenergy – Steering Committee Meeting

June 4, 2014

Minutes of Meeting

Call to Order – Meeting was called to order by Vice Chairman Duane Frink at 6:14 pm. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Sherry Wicks. Introductions were made.

Members and Others Present – Sherry Wicks, Sharon Finning, Elisa Noble, Steve Eubanks, Bob Kingman, Duane Frink, Pam Cubbler, Jose Lerma, Neil Cochran, Tyler Harkness

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes – Sherry moved to approve the minutes, Neil seconded the motion, motion carried unanimously.

Review final proposals RCD/APCD (and SNC) – Neil gave a PowerPoint presentation (see attached) explaining the MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) and both funding proposals for a biomass Feasibility Study (i.e. \$10,000 from SNC and the anticipated \$30,000 from APCD) as well as the in-kind contribution. He also gave an overview of the tasks to be performed. The technical team (APCD funded) includes participants from Placer County Planning, Placer County Air Pollution Control District, Placer County Water Agency (PCWA), Phoenix Energy and TSS Consultants. Placer County Resource Conservation District (RCD) will be the fiscal agent coordinating various aspects of both proposals to create a final integrated Feasibility Study. The SNC proposal will help fund the coordination required for the technical portion of the study as well as investigating locally-based value-added forest product uses that could benefit the community economically, socially and environmentally. (See attached proposals.)

Steve Eubanks (APCD proposal Task Team member) explained that he is also the Chairman of the Biomass Task Force in Nevada County and that he will be working with Elisa to communicate and create community involvement in Foresthill. He suggested that we make a list of the probable industrial sites. He said that gasification is the most probable system and that it provides heat and bio char as well as electricity. He indicated that there were no emissions from a gasification system (per the Cabin Creek study) so there should be no issues if the project was located near the high school. There was some discussion about SB1122. He suggested that the reports for both funding sources be integrated into one study.

Bob Kingman talked about the Plumas County Biomass project. It will be a distributed heat system for supplying chips to smaller units for heating public facilities thereby avoiding central heating and piping issues. The chipping and processing will be done at a central location (yard). SNC has funded a grant to Sierra Institute (a 501c3) for purchase of equipment and currently they're in the process of purchasing land. They are working with Oregon consultants.

There was discussion about how to include consideration for off-site storage in the feasibility assessment. The request should be brought up when the technical team meets with the members of the community at the “pre-operation” discussions. There is an increase in costs associated with additional handling of chips but alternative sites could be analyzed. Electrical chip trucks or synthetically-fueled trucks could be a future option but they need to be evaluated to determine if they are commercially feasible.

Jose asked what if government subsidies from SB1122 become non-existent in ten years; will Foresthill residents be burdened with extra costs? Steve suggested that the sustainability of the project with or without the subsidies should be part of the “pre-operation” discussion. He also talked about carbon credits as income to a facility. APCD has a specific carbon credit protocol available to biomass used for energy. There would also be a carbon credit protocol for bio char and black carbon (fires and open burning). It was asked if Foresthill residents would get part of the revenue from carbon credits or energy sales. Carbon credits accrue to the project owner. The Foresthill residents get the benefit of a safer community while having diverse operations (other tenants) around an anchor tenant (facility) which would create jobs and business opportunities for entrepreneurs.

There was some discussion about the social benefits of the project to Foresthill. It was explained that there are five to seven associated-jobs created per one megawatt with a biomass facility. It was asked if the community is becoming a retirement community, is there a local work force that would seek those jobs. It was explained that not every problem in the community is going to be solved with the biomass project. Tyler asked if the FPU D could own and operate the system. The answer was yes. Anyone could form a corporation, seek investors and own and operate the project but a feasibility study needs to be done first.

Pam asked where the feedstock was coming from and it was explained that both private and public land will be a source. Additionally, she asked about other facilities in the area and if there was any impact. There is nothing within the targeted area. There are no overlapping supply circles. She said that within her organization, they have forty people who work in the woods and jobs would be important. She also suggested that there might be local private investors who could be interested in investing in a facility. It was reiterated that Foresthill needs to benefit.

Elisa explained that after the APCD proposal is approved, it will take 2 – 4 weeks to put the contract in place. There should be a “sit down” meeting first for a “pre-operations” discussions then another public meeting planned. Steve suggested having a major “kick off” community meeting to initiate the feasibility assessment process. Bob suggested documenting the progress to keep everyone in the community informed would be important and that we need to maintain momentum. Elisa also talked about the “parking lot” items that will require further exploration.

There was discussion about how to keep the project front and center within the community. Some suggestions included press releases, op-eds, a PowerPoint presentation by Neil at the Forum, 4th of July booth, etc., explaining the project, who’s funding the feasibility study (SNC and APCD) and the potential benefits to Foresthill. Steve will email a Power Point presentation and other information to Neil that his group had done. He also gave in a little history of his group.

Bob suggested that the “wish list” be available to the consultants working on the feasibility study so that there is a sense of the range of ideas within the community. We need to be careful about selling the project to the community suggesting that it will solve all the problems. We don’t want to set expectations that can’t be met. Bob stated that if the project does not bring benefits to the community, then the community won’t do it. Steve suggested that if we have a group of people who think that a biomass facility is good for the community and they want to carry it forward, then their main objective should be that there is no active opposition. A feasibility assessment is necessary before taking any steps forward regardless.

Elisa stated that this biomass project is not a County project but a community project.

Sherry said that Robyn suggested two sub-committees, one for the 501c3 and the other for the Wish List. Sherry, Robyn, Jose and later Duane volunteered to be on a committee for the 501c3. Neil indicated that the Wish List is separate from the biomass project. There was some discussion about the relationship between the 501c3 and the Steering Committee.

Wish List – See above limited discussion.

Next steps – See above limited discussion.

Set next meeting - The next Steering Committee will be 6/24 at 6:30 pm.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by Sherry Wicks

(Note: Video of the meeting can be seen at <http://vimeo.com/Foresthill/videos>.)