

Mountain Maryland Energy Advisory Committee

May 20, 2015, 3:00 p.m., Garrett Information Enterprise Center, McHenry, Maryland

Meeting Notes

Committee members attending: Jim Torrington, David Dorsey

Committee members attending via conference call: Paul Durham

Committee members not in attendance: Bob Sutton, Rodney Glotfelty, Jo Gilman, Dr. Ed Gates, Eric Guthrie, Mike Dreisbach

Others attending: Cheryl DeBerry, Evan Hansen, Andrea Varrato, Woody Getz, Barbara Beelar, Michael Bell

Approval of April meeting minutes:

A quorum of committee members was not present at the May meeting, and therefore the April meeting minutes were not approved. April meeting notes were captured in an attachment ([Attachment A](#)).

Provide general updates on active projects:

Few updates were offered due to low committee member attendance. A brief update was provided on the biomass at Garrett College initiative.

Discuss PechaKucha event details and event planning:

Committee members reviewed an updated copy of the PechaKucha planning document ([Attachment B](#)). Seven potential topics and speakers were identified as high priority during the last meeting. Committee members reviewed the list a second time to select additional high priority topics and presenters.

Provide information on Maryland Clean Energy Center 3rd party financing:

Andrea Varrato provided an update on potential funding opportunities for the Garrett College biomass system. She detailed the 3rd party financing structure offered by the Maryland Clean Energy Center (MCEC) ([Attachment C](#)). MCEC's financing structure is applicable to a variety of clean energy systems. The center borrows money from a bank on behalf of the energy system installer and accrues the associated debt. Banks will lend money for projects that pay for themselves through reductions in energy costs or other savings, such as reductions in fossil fuel usage. If Garrett College were to enter into this type of an arrangement, they could avoid accruing debt while using the energy savings associated with the biomass energy system to pay for the system.

Legislative Update on SB 398:

Ms. Varrato also provided an update on state legislation previously discussed by the committee ([Attachment D](#)). SB 398 was passed and approved by the Governor on May 12, 2015. This bill establishes a community solar energy generating systems pilot program under the authority of the Public Service Commission (PSC). The bill also provides for the structure and operation of the program and requires the PSC to conduct a meaningful study of the program's results. The PSC is required to adopt the specified regulations on or before May 15, 2016. The passage of this bill has implications for Mountain Maryland Energy Advisory Committee idea # C104 – Community Renewable Energy Generating Systems. Although the committee found the Community Renewable Energy Generation project to be favorable, this idea was not pursued due to state legislation prohibiting residents from installing community solar energy systems. With the passage of SB 398, this idea has the potential to be moved forward.

Discuss draft report for the Garrett and Allegany county commissioners:

Committee members and members of the public provided suggestions to Downstream Strategies regarding the draft report for the county commissioners. There was interest in community outreach opportunities to inform local

residents and businesses on what the committee is and what it has researched and accomplished. Emphasis was also put on encouraging the counties to continue with the alternative energy development strategies imitated by the committee and to follow up on initiatives that could be implemented in the future.

Committee members reviewed the draft report and provided feedback on the structure and organization of the final report. Feedback was also offered on committee member and non-committee member contact information sheets. Dissemination of the final report to the public was discussed.

Public comment:

Public comment has been captured in an audio file ([Attachment E](#)).

Adjourn:

A motion was made by Paul Durham, seconded by David Dorsey, to adjourn the meeting at 5:00pm.