

DRAFT

Dec. 5 Energy Future Communications and Outreach Working Group Meeting Summary

**Dec. 5, 2012, 5:30-7 pm
Energy Future Office**

Present: Sarah Huntley, Andrew Barth, Kristen Hartel, Angelique Espinoza, Craig Cox, Julie Zahniser, Chris Hoffman, Bob O'Herron, Robb Shurr, John Egan

Objectives:

- Reporting in on homework assignments
- Discussion about whether we need to develop revised messages or simply reach more people or reach audiences in different ways
- A look ahead toward Jan. 21 to Jan. 31 public outreach
- Assignments for next time

Agenda items:

Brief report outs and updates

Sarah updated the group on a few things that have happened recently. A few communications bursts have gone out in last 24 hrs; a few more will be going in next 48 hours. Staff has sent a letter to neighborhood groups and asked participants to send staff any additional contacts for any neighborhoods listed, especially those which we do not have contacts for. She explained that the purpose of the letter was to inform neighborhoods of where we are in process & that we want to update them. We are continuing to go where our community is to update them.

Sarah indicated that we are sending a press release out tomorrow about consulting groups we brought on for financial & engineering consultants. Staff had just realized that we haven't announced who they were. Sarah will send copies of the PR to group.

Julie asked if the press release will contain individual names. Sarah explained that it will provide the names and bios of selected firms, but not individual team members. However, the attachment from last week's memo has a list of all members in working groups & their bios.

Sarah explained that the city is putting finishing touches on white paper/brainstorming document outlining possible alternatives to muni & how we could potentially partner with Xcel if they're willing to partner with us. Staff is hoping to get this out by Friday, maybe late tomorrow. Sarah indicated that this will also be the subject of roundtable before Tuesday's study session. We're choosing to present this at the roundtable because staff really wanted to have the opportunity for public to provide feedback, which is not an option at the following study session.

Angelique asked if council will also discuss this paper at the Study Session after. Sarah indicated that it will probably only be discussed at roundtable, as council is not being asked to provide any vote.

Angelique asked where the white paper will be released. Staff responded that it will be dispersed through the website, press release, to council, and to EF listserv. Also, Xcel knows the white paper is coming and our executive leadership has met with their executive leadership.

Sarah indicated that we may also get some press coverage on neighborhood outreach/letter that was sent out.

Report on homework assignments

Sarah asked if everyone has been finding Basecamp usable. The general response was yes. Craig asked if we could also attach meeting agendas, or other time sensitive materials, via email or meeting appointments, as it's difficult to access Basecamp from mobile devices.

Sarah mentioned that staff has received a few reports from group members, mostly on audiences and community groups. She explained that we will use those as launching point on bulk of information being discussed tonight, as we will be talking about audiences before discussing tactics to reach them.

Sarah indicated that we could do similar outreach to faith groups as neighborhood outreach.

Chris asked how far the group would like us to go in generating emails & contacts. Sarah responded that some of the larger community groups are already plugged in, but we need help getting contact information for less obvious and prominent groups.

Angelique added that she made the most additions to business community groups.

Sarah mentioned that we haven't reached out to most of these groups. We are really looking to attend other group meetings, rather than host them, since we're so busy. So far this has been a successful tactic.

Craig asked if we're also looking for out of town events. Sarah said to some extent we are. Craig said that there is a western market conference put on by the American Wind Association in California. Sarah asked if we could attend virtually or send a video. Craig said he will send information about this. Sarah said we're trying to limit our travel over the next few months due to high workload.

Julie said she would like to add civic & environmental groups, League of Women Voters, University of Women, and New Era.

Angelique asked if we're also looking for places where people put information out as well. Sarah said absolutely.

Sarah posed the question of what involvement these groups want to have.

Bob indicated that he put together an outline of groups and what they may want to know/how to be involved. Bob explained that getting awareness & confirmation means that someone has to actually read something. Sarah asked to add checkmarks to CU & some federal labs to be more involved with collaboration.

Angelique said that there are separate groups at CU: experts who work there, engineers; and then there are facilities managers, who are interested in operations and fall under large users of electricity. Sarah indicated that Heather has wanted to hear from facilities managers.

Sarah indicated that in Boulder, under the broad category of residents & voters, some folks want to be in full collaboration. Angelique said that there's a way to define them differently. The vast majority don't even know what muni is and it's difficult to distinguish between vast majority and the few engaged/activists.

Chris gave an anecdote about an acquaintance, who is an average Boulder resident, asked why we need to municipalize? What is muni?

Do we strive to reach new people or people in a different way?

John questioned if the challenge is about messaging or about channels. He indicated that we have the messaging, content, and materials, but asked how we focus more on specific channels and disseminating information.

Sarah agreed, but added that part of the challenge is that we're continually being inundated with requests from people who want much more detailed info, so we spend our time creating more detailed info rather than pushing out other messaging. She added that staff needs to continue to involve existing information.

John added that part of challenge is that we voted to authorize council to investigate muni, not just go ahead and municipalize. Sarah added that that nuance creates 2 sides: those wanting city to take their time and do diligence, and those who want to file the case now. The history has been to vote to muni, file the case, and do it.

John added that it may be that a steady drip communications strategy would be effective, but we just need to dial it up a little more. He said that we should make sure that we're addressing more interested groups with a "development" type relationship.

Robb suggested that we could maybe increase the drip in chunks, like 6 months apart, to surge more awareness. He added that if we have info out there all the time, our community will get tired of it & tune out. However, those that are very involved need all information. Robb mentioned a few surge tactics designed to raise awareness: busses, bus boards, drive people to website, online ads. These help people start to see it again and know that city is still working on the project, and provides them with the opportunity to engage & plug in again.

Sarah added that we need to ensure that the awareness raising techniques gets people to the information. Angelique suggested incorporating an QR code to accomplish this.

Julie was concerned if we doing a drip communications push every six months that might not be enough. She indicated that we don't want to burn people out, as would happen with a continual information push, but a drip push should be more often than six months. Sarah suggested that we continue to implement a continued information drip with a pour at big timelines (like every six months), but we would need to make the steady drip more visible.

Angelique suggested that we need something that's in between a bus message and a one page letter for those who want an executive summary of what's happening with the project. She also added that she knows many people who won't read the Energy Future newsletter, as it's too much information.

Angelique added that many of the groups and channels the team has identified won't be willing to just pass along the city's message. For example, the Chamber will put their perspective on the issue, rather than just passing along what the city requests. She also differentiated the value of paid media, where you can control the message, verses earned media. Sarah responded that as much as we would love for people to cut and paste messages from the city, it's ok if they don't. The content still raises awareness, get's people talking about the issue, and provides access to the information. Angelique also added that sometimes even bad media can get more people involved earlier than they would have otherwise. She used the example from Commercial Brokers of Boulder.

Public meeting in January

Sarah explained our next key dates. We're planning to set aside a 10-day period of time from Jan 21 to Jan. 31 to focus on public engagement. The team should start brainstorming about this now. Sarah expressed that she was nervous about the working groups and staff getting all necessary information together by that time, as well as nervousness about the short turnaround time to incorporate feedback between Jan 31 and the Feb 26 study session.

Sarah explained that staff will be developing anywhere from 1 to 3 possible scenarios or draft recommendations that will be vetted enough to explain the pros and cons of each. Staff will be presenting these scenarios to the community prior to council as a way to incorporate public feedback to council. Combination of getting people to come to 1+ open houses & having some online opportunities

John suggested we could host a webcast to engage the public.

Sarah indicated that we allowed people to send in questions via web mail at our June open house. She explained that while most questions came from those in the room, we did get some questions from people who just emailed in. She added that we will also just be posting information online and get feedback via existing channels.

Sarah then explained that the June open house the city hosted was geared towards general residents. She posed the question of whether we should offer a different open house geared towards businesses and large customers. Angelique responded that she doesn't think that an open house is going to get a business audience. Robb agreed. John added that it might be worth

having it anyway to bring the public in and build the record that we've completed work and pulled the community in for input.

Sarah offered the idea that we could do the open house, but we could also stream it online, provide documents online, and go give individualized updates to business groups. She added that we would need to contact large groups/users to see what they have going on and if they're available during that time frame. Angelique added that if there are materials available, business groups can discuss them without needing a city staff member there. Sarah agreed, as long as there is someone there willing to pass along feedback to city.

Angelique indicated that the most important thing is letting people know when materials will be available and informing them of the window to check in with your constituents. Some community groups would also work that way. If we can let people know very early when that timeframe will be, they can schedule around it. She added that all materials should have an executive summary page on top.

Chris added that the Boulder County Audobon group is also very interested in getting involved. However, like other groups, they only have monthly meetings, so if they're going to provide input, they need to know in advance that the information is coming out & when they need to get feedback in. Sarah asked if they have an online forum. Chris responded that some of these groups email around, some have online group platforms.

Julie added that if it's highly desirable to get feedback, the team should convey the need for groups to provide input. Sarah added that this feedback can come through comment form on the Energy Future website.

Chris added that people are interested, can send out information, and encourage others to get feedback back to city through existing channels.

Angelique asked when materials will be available for feedback. Sarah answered that she is hoping that it can be out the Friday before Jan 21st (Mon), but it's going to be very close.

Chris added that a heads up to the community that this is coming could be very helpful. Sarah suggested doing a save the date ad in the BCBR and Daily Camera, like a movie release campaign. John indicated that ads could point people to existing information in the meantime, and Sarah agreed that this would be a good use of existing funds.

John added that paid and earned media need to work together.

Julie suggested that Heather do another op-ed. John suggested visiting with the editorial board to see if we can get an editorial about the importance of participation.

John asked if the messages or channels should be prioritized. Julie expressed more concern about the channels. Sarah responded that channels are very important between now and Jan. to remind people who were plugged in to get plugged in again and to get new people plugged in. We need to find balance between remaining high level and getting very technical.

Craig asked about the option of profiling municipalization efforts in Winter Park, FL, or other success stories of munis created to increase renewables. Sarah said that the city has a lot of data on other communities around other munis, but there is a lack of info around these communities & their communications efforts.

John added that in Winter Park, the community voted in Dec 2003 to muni and flipped switch 18 months later. During that period, a bi-monthly magazine (*Power Talk*) came out with an article in each edition put out by the city that provided an update on the project. He also added that the city has been posting regular updates as part of a *Watts the Status?* campaign. Angelique added that that information gets to the bottom line. John agreed and mentioned that there were 5-6 items which they touché don regularly: purchase status, financing, reliability, bulk power, operation & maintenance system, and the Supreme Court case.

Craig asked if John could send this information on Winter Park to Sarah to post on Basecamp. The team agreed.

Julie added that this is a perfect example of drip feeding, where people know where to get more information and it facilitates a familiarity with topics. John asked if we feel like we've covered this information, with this frequency, in the BEF newsletter? Sarah said yes, but more in an article-long form. She suggested that we could dedicate a page of that newsletter to a bullet point executive summary. John encouraged the newsletter to tell people to forward this on to their friends and neighbors.

Robb added that the Daily Camera does a good job of covering the project on their energy page (<http://www.dailycamera.com/energy>). They also post this link on all new BEF articles. Sarah suggested that we work on making this page more obvious.

John suggested that we could make use of the neighborhood leader material, put a business gloss on it and provide a fact sheet. This could be helpful to provide to businesses to drive them to the January engagement window.

Sarah added that if we do an open house, we would like it to be hosted by activists or community groups and not the city. Julie agreed and expressed desire to look into ideas for this. She also agreed that other groups could help bring more people to the open house.

Craig asked if we're interested in what other munis are doing, and if we're we trying to popularize muni itself. Sarah responded that we're trying to make people aware that conversation is happening & help them understand pros and cons of conversation, lessons learned from others, and enable them to participate. Sarah added that we would be interested in the communication strategies of other municipalization efforts.

Next Steps

- **Angelique** will put together leaders and contacts from business groups. She will also ask those leaders for leaders in other groups.
- **Sarah:** to post electronic version of neighborhood letter

- **Robb w/ John's help:** to shorten neighborhood letter for faith based groups
- **Julie:** Will brainstorm different formats for an open house/public meeting. Will coordinate a sub group with Bob and John to discuss formats.
- **Bob & Angelique:** looking into what conference calls options, cost, and how to set up. Will research 3 options: basics, middle, most extensive options.
- **Sarah:** will look into what resources city has to host a conference call
- **Robb:** productive collision lunches at CU through Demming. Board members, students, faculty, & businesses. Will look into if this lunch attracts a lot of Boulder people.
- **Angelique:** Add political parties not on spreadsheet. Want Democratic & Republican women.
- **John & Craig:** can look for small digestible tidbits from existing materials, website, newsletter (e.g. 101, 202, 303 info).
- **John:** can talk more to colleague at Winter Park to learn about communications muni strategies, lessons learned.
- **Andrew:** dig up traffic & data on website.
- **Robb:** can look at re-tiering website, information, messages, categories of information. Look at cleaning website, messages up. Can also look at reinviting the Faces folks to get involved and reengaged.
- **All:** send names of group leaders for audience groups. Ask these leaders for other leaders that they may know.
- Homework due before the holidays, by Fri Dec 21.
 - o Prioritization: reach out to initial leaders to find other leaders first so we can work on getting the Jan timeline on their radar. Brainstorming around open house, format, who can be involved would be next.