

Sunday, March 6, 2022

3-5-22 GrassRoots Institute - Climate Crisis Workgroup (GRI-CCW) Meeting Notes

Attendees: Carrie Durkee, Jim Schoonover, George Reinhardt, Marcy Snyder, Richard Hubacek, Sandy Turner, Baile Oakes, and Peter McNamee

- Willits Economic Localization (WELL) has invited GRI to co-sponsor an event at the Little Lake Grange in June to examine options for meeting Mendocino's power needs. Presenters would include representatives from PG&E, Sonoma Clean Power and local experts with insights into what must be done to move towards net-zero carbon emissions. Marcy Snyder and others expressed concern about PG&E's participation and if GRI should co-sponsor an event providing PG&E a public venue. Carrie Durkee said if we co-host then we will make sure its a people's event and not a platform for PG&E propaganda. Suzanne Pletcher from WELL contacted Jim Tarbell and Peter McNamee about enlisting GRI's involvement.
- Peter McNamee also noted that at a town hall zoom session held earlier in the week, Senator McGuire said that he supported halting any further cutting of large redwood trees in Jackson Demonstration State Forest. He also said that to offset reductions in tree cutting jobs, he supports creating new clean green jobs & industries. He wants to lead the effort to get state funding for workforce development programs locally to transition to a local green economy. Peter McNamee was tasked to draft a letter to Senator McGuire offering a partnership with him and GRI to create and expand businesses in the green solidarity economy such as solar installation companies, EV charger installation & maintenance businesses and sustainable carbon sequestration forestry.

- Eileen Mitro was unable to attend the CCW meeting, but she sent a report following up on the discussion at the last Mendocino Council of Government meeting. In particular, Eileen had a conversation with Stephen Kuhlman regarding Redwood Coast Energy Authority (RCEA) Rural Regional Energy Network (Rural REN) and he clarified some of the issues raised at MCOG.
- \$96 million is being proposed as the 2023-2027 Rural REN business plan and covers five years. Kuhlman explained the dollar amount will change once the plan is reviewed by the state, so it's a target budget amount.
- Kuhlman said no money through the Rural REN could be used for actual solar or EV charging station installation. Tech support is available for application work, i.e. filling out applications, applying for loans, board presentations, talking to contractors, etc.
- The head of the RCEA is Matthew Marshall. The RCEA's Rural REN will (only!) cover:
 - tech support for what I mentioned above: applications, contractors, etc.,
 - a rebate program for residential and non residential to install or upgrade energy efficient appliances,
 - public equity for schools, gov't buildings to provide resources through grant programs to facilitate energy efficiency,
 - connecting to energy efficiency audit kits,
 - workforce education and training contractors, with at risk youth a priority, for obtaining high paying jobs in the energy efficiency field,
 - higher standards beyond the CA building code (informed data, energy efficiency),

- financing program for bridge loans to cover the costs of installation (savings from rebates and the energy efficiency savings would pay for the installation)
- The next MCOG meeting is on Monday, March 7. Eileen expects the Rural REN will be discussed further then.
- Jim Schoonover reported that despite repeated efforts, he's not been able to get further clarification from Supervisor Williams about how CCW can assist him in regard to implementing Climate Mitigation Actions by county departments. He will try contacting Supervisor Williams again and report back at the next CCW meeting.
- Jim Schoonover also reported he continues to research and refer promising grant funding sources to Supervisors Gjerde & Williams and to Marie Jones. He hasn't received any report back on which if any of the grant funds are being pursued. However, the Bd of Supervisors has proposed creating a grant writing and administration unit in the county administrator's office, and once operational the county would have some dedicated staff to pursue such funding.
- George Reinhardt reported that he has reached out to VW of America about installation of EV charging stations in Mendocino county. Its somewhat frustrating, but VW seems only focused on partnering with business or government entities offering to install chargers at specific locations. As part of a discussion of possible businesses that might be encouraged to install an EV charger, it was noted that the new CEO of the North Coast Brewery was a former Fort Bragg City employee and might be sympathetic to a joint city/brewery EV charger project. George said he would follow up with the Brewery.
- Carrie Durkee talked about funding available for student groups from the California Coastal Commission for learning and civic projects. She also suggested GRI consider starting a scholarship program for local students with the Youth Climate Justice program of Bioneers.

- Peter McNamee reminded everyone that the Chair of the California Coastal Commission, Donne Brownsey would be speaking at a zoom session sponsored by the Mendocino County League of Women Voters on March 22. If you have questions about the role of the California Coastal Commission, this will be an opportunity to get some answers.
- There was a general discussion about having in person meetings. There were pros and cons discussed. While there is interest in being able to share comradeship in person, zoom meeting seem less destructive to the environment. A decision was deferred to a future discussion. The meeting was then adjourned. The next Climate Crisis Workgroup meeting is scheduled for Saturday March 19, 2022 at 10 am.