



**Community Advisory Panel  
Meeting Minutes for July 6, 2023**

**Members attending the meeting:**

Mark Campen, Erin Gill, Barbara Kelly, Terry Ledford, Amy Midis, Kent Minault, Stephen Smith

**Others in attendance:**

Facilitator: Dawn Ford

KUB Staff: Susan Edwards, John Gresham, Tiffany Martin, Mark Walker

**New Business**

The Community Advisory Panel met at 3:00 p.m. on July 6, 2023 at KUB's Hoskins Operations Center (4505 Middlebrook Pike).

Ms. Ford asked if anyone had corrections to the May meeting minutes. There were no corrections, and the panel approved the minutes.

Ms. Ford explained the agenda for the meeting, which included presentations by panel members Erin Gill, Kent Minault, and Stephen Smith about work of their organizations related to the federal Inflation Reduction Act (IRA).

Mark Walker, KUB Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer, provided a brief recap of KUB's work to evaluate IRA funding opportunities for KUB and its customers. He explained KUB's consultant, West Monroe Partners, has helped evaluate funding for KUB's community solar project and other renewable energy projects that could be part of TVA's generation flexibility agreement.

Stephen Smith asked about TVA's flexibility agreement and the amount of generation that is allowed under that. He indicated with the Solar For All federal funding, KUB could be eligible for a funding amount that would support solar beyond what is allowed by TVA. Mr. Walker confirmed the amount of generation currently allowed through the TVA agreement is about 80 megawatts, and he is not aware of TVA evaluating an increase for this amount. Both Dr. Smith and Kent Minault expressed interest in KUB asking TVA to increase the amount of self-generation that is allowable.

Mr. Walker noted tax credits are available for customers at this time for weatherization and energy efficiency retrofits, and KUB will be sharing information about this with its customers. He said KUB would like to have the panel's input on how to best share this

information with customers. He explained it is KUB's current understanding that the State of Tennessee may not make its decision about how the program will be administered and if TVA may administer the program through EnergyRight until early 2024.

Ms. Ford recognized Erin Gill to share her remarks about the City of Knoxville's work to pursue funding related to the IRA. Ms. Gill described COK's active grant applications and others COK is monitoring. These include:

- A climate pollution reduction grant; COK is eligible for these funds for climate action planning for the region surrounding Knoxville.
- Electric vehicle charging infrastructure for the Broadway corridor.
- A Safe Streets and Roads for All grant to help improve roadway safety for vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists.
- An energy efficiency and conservation block grant that could support energy efficiency for some of COK's facilities.
- An Urban and Community Forestry grant to help increase tree canopy in disadvantaged areas.

Grants that have recently been awarded to COK include:

- A \$3.6 million grant for overhead electric charging infrastructure for City buses.
- A \$128,000 grant to support a community food waste composting project.

Potential partnership opportunities include:

- Solar For All – a new program to expand existing low-income solar programs or support residential solar projects in disadvantaged areas.
- Renew America's Nonprofits – this grant may be used to help non-profits decrease energy use and utility costs.
- National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure – this grant opportunity has not yet been announced but may possibly support local expansion of charging infrastructure.

Dr. Smith said SACE has been talking to other large cities in Tennessee about collaborating to pursue grants for multi-family housing developments, and he was hoping to see COK pursue this. He explained there are partnership opportunities to approach multi-family housing upgrades at a large scale to serve a sector that has not previously been served with efficiency programs. He explained some of this work has already started with THDA with \$60 million in funding, but there could be additional funds allocated.

Ms. Gill explained there are several funding opportunities like this that are being monitored so COK and its partners can be ready to assess them and apply. She noted COK has learned its best to know how to integrate equity considerations and have projects that are "shovel-ready" and have a proven approach to be most competitive. Barbara Kelly commented on the possibility for CAC to help pursue low-income solar opportunities, as this is something they have done in the past.

Kent Minault asked about the overhead electric bus charging project. Ms. Gill said COK's strategy would be to locate this at the KAT station so that more buses can be quickly charged and to support a larger transition of the fleet to electric buses. Mr. Minault also asked about the local "gaps" in charging infrastructure. Ms. Gill noted Broadway and Magnolia avenues and a portion of Chapman Highway are known to have gaps in charging

infrastructure. Mr. Minault mentioned the importance of helping the community know where the charging stations are located.

Ms. Ford recognized Stephen Smith to share any information related to the IRA on behalf of SACE. Dr. Smith said he primarily wanted to encourage partnerships for the Solar for All funding. He said SACE has offered to support Solar for All applications for multi-family developments. He also reiterated his interest in partnerships to pursue funding to improve energy efficiency for multi-family developments and the potential to leverage a contractor network to accomplish this work on a large scale.

Ms. Kelly noted CAC recently received a competitive grant from THDA and part of that is to add solar to about 10 homes that have been weatherized and in which the residents have certain medical conditions. She noted that CAC is working on this project and it can help demonstrate success in order to qualify for larger grants to support similar work.

Ms. Ford recognized Kent Minault to share the information he prepared for the panel. Mr. Minault shared an excerpt of a video produced by the Sierra Club. He noted he feels it is a good example of an effective way to share information through a “trusted messenger” with lower income customers.

Mr. Minault also shared information about the Sierra Club’s partnership with KUB, SACE, SEED, and Three Cubed to recruit applicants for the weatherization program. He described Sierra Club’s work to develop a promotional video for Home Uplift and what help he would like to have from partners to complete the video. He also shared recommendations for KUB to promote weatherization assistance, including with billboards, posters and paper applications at payment centers, and direct assistance for customers to complete applications.

Ms. Ford recognized Susan Edwards, KUB Chief Administrative Officer, to describe KUB’s communications plans related to the IRA. Ms. Edwards explained KUB has developed a web page dedicated to IRA information, and KUB’s customer service representatives will have information so they can direct customers to resources. KUB plans to share information through social media, community workshops, bill messages, and other methods. She noted it would be helpful to have the panel’s input not only on communication methods but how to present the information, as it is complex.

Amy Midis asked if CAC may be able to share information about the IRA while they are assisting clients with tax returns. Ms. Kelly noted this may be possible, but the volunteers who help with the tax returns may not be able to share the information. She indicated other resources could possibly be made available to share the information in conjunction with tax assistance. Ms. Kelly explained CAC has a series of videos called “Budget in a Box,” and it may be an option to have a feature on the IRA.

Dr. Smith asked about the status of SEED’s door-to-door canvassing to recruit weatherization applicants. Mark Walker said it is KUB’s understanding that has generated about 20 applications. Dr. Smith asked how many homes SEED contacted, and Mr.

Walker confirmed it was 300. Dr. Smith expressed he feels there are opportunities for canvassing at a larger scale that may be beneficial for sharing information about the IRA. He stated he feels the one-on-one, direct contact is most impactful.

Erin Gill said it is her hope that private businesses who would implement home improvements may be willing to distribute information to the public and KUB could possibly provide information that would be easy for them to share and from a trusted source.

Mr. Minault spoke about the cultural considerations that affect sharing information effectively.

Dr. Smith suggested that online information about the IRA and Home Uplift be linked for KUB customers.

The next meeting will be on September 7, 2023 from 3:00 – 4:30 pm.

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.