**COMPACT IMPLEMENTATION WORKSHOP**

**Summary Notes**

**Nancy Gassman**

December 10 - 11, 2013

InterContinental at Doral Miami

Doral, Florida

**Catalyzing Solar Development and Implementation in Southeast Florida**

This workshop was held to gather interested parties in the Southeast Florida to discuss the expansion of renewable energy use, specifically solar, in the region. This workshop is part of a series of meetings being conducted by the Institute for Sustainable Communities to further implementation of the Southeast Florida Regional Climate Action Plan (RCAP) , a work product of the Southeast Florida Regional Climate Change Compact (Compact) Counties (Monroe, Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach).

**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2013**

The morning sessions were introductory and stage setting. These gave context to the work of the Compact, key recommendations in the RCAP, the viability and economics of solar, an overview of the GoSolar Florida program and efforts to establish Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) financing programs in the region. My discussion of GoSolar Broward and GoSolar Florida was well received and generated a number of questions about municipal options for participating in the streamline permitting.

The talk given by Jim Fenton, Director, Florida Solar Energy Center, was particularly enlightening and his slides will be valuable for marketing and education. His key message was to look at solar not as an alternative electrical supply but rather as an alternative fuel for vehicles. The costs comparison of kilowatt hours to price per gallon strongly favors solar. He also regularly re-iterated that properties need to address energy efficiency first before considering solar. Dr. Fenton also talked about the Vermont utility model to sell efficiency rather than electricity.

The key messages coming out of the PACE discussion were that they are up and running. YGRENE has $5M in projects moving forward at this time. EcoCity Partners highlighted the difference between their PACE program (Florida Green Energy Works) and Ygrene’s (Green Corridor and Coastal Corridors). Mr. Wallander also described a pilot program at Demeter Power to work on solar “services” under PACE for small commercial.

Buck Martinez, FPL, spoke at lunch in support of utility solar and suggested that FPL would be interested in utility-controlled community solar. Mr. Martinez expressed concern about the residential solar PV rebate program because it created an impact to non-participating rate payers. The idea of a special “solar” utility rate class was discussed among the group. It was further noted that FPL currently is meeting its customers’ demand with existing plants and therefore does not need to add generation (e.g. solar). FPL could be compelled to create community solar programs if consumer demand for renewables could be demonstrated to the Public Service Commission. This idea and working with FPL to approach the PSC was discussed in the sessions and during the networking time.

The afternoon session moved us into creating shared (a.k.a. Community) solar programs and supporting more municipal solar. Shared solar is installing an array and then allowing interested parties to subscribe, buy, or lease electricity (solar credits) from the array. Shared solar is a good option for individuals that want to use renewable energy but either won’t or cannot install it onsite due to not owning the building, shaded roof, insurance or roofing concerns etc. Joe Weidman, Interstate Renewable Energy Council, has worked on creating these types of programs in the Florida Keys. Our Institute for Sustainable Communities (ISC) hosts introduced the idea of getting the region’s 25,000 Homeowner Association excited about the idea of shared solar.

Karly Zimmerman, Project Coordinator, Strategic Energy Innovations discussed municipal solar support programs in California as a model for Florida. This included technical support and funding for program planning. Their key tool is called the [Solar Road Map](http://www.solarroadmap.com/what-is-srm/). Municipal collaborative procurement was discussed (during the workshop solar, public solar panel buying clubs were also mentioned). The use of ground-mounted municipal solar especially for parking lot shading was brought up many times. Ephrat Yovel, ISC, also mentioned that financing may be available from the Seminoles who have provided loans for solar installations.

**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2013**

Peter Amendola, Systems Engineer/GIS Supervisor, Florida Keys Electric Cooperative Association discussed their Simple Solar shared solar program and described the impetus for FKEC installing their array in marathon. It was noted that shared solar (offsite) programs should work in tandem with on-site solar programs to give customers flexibility in their choices to adopting renewable energy.

Jim Fenton discussed the Orlando Utilities Commission (OUC) approach to Community Solar buying the power from a third party. Third parties can sell electricity to utilities without the issues related to Power Purchase Agreements (wholesale versus retail sales of electricity). While OUC paid more for the third-party electricity than they sold it to their customers, this was a business decision to meet a customer need, reduce peaking costs and demand for renewables.

During the afternoon session, Scott McIntire, CEO, Solar Energy Management and member of the Florida Alliance for Renewable Energy (FARE), spoke on new products and using tax incentives to encourage commercial solar. He reiterated many times that FPL’s low rates were a disincentive for his business to work in SE Fl.

Final conversations revolved around mandating or finding other mechanism to compel Home Energy Rating Audits for homes. Jim Fenton felt that we should engage the banking/home mortgage industry to provide incentives for including energy efficiency retrofit including solar into the mortgage as a way to reduce utility costs which would increase the ability for the home owner to pay off the mortgage. The idea of getting property appraisers, AC technician or home inspectors to add a HERS audit to their list of service offered or rendered under requirement was discussed.