



Solar Workgroup meeting for Solar Development in Southwest Virginia

Tuesday, February 21st 2017 - 2:00 – 5:00 pm
Ridgeview High School Cafeteria, 310 Wolfpack Way, Clintwood, VA 24228

Agenda

- 1:45** *Registration and refreshments*
- 2:00** **Welcome, Agenda review, and Introductions**
- Welcome - *Denechia Edwards and Adam Wells*
 - Agenda review and Introductions - *Christine*
 - Updates – upcoming meetings, solar fair, Solarize SWVA, other updates
- 2:20** **Updates on Solar Site Selection and Sunshot Application – Matt**
- Share results of solar site selection Feb. 9 call and Sunshot application
 - Questions, discussion, next steps
- 2:35** **Panel on Opportunities for Solar in Southwest Virginia**
- *Rick Chaffin, American Electric Power and Russell Co. Chamber of Commerce*
 - *David Huff, Old Dominion Power*
 - *Becki Joyce, UVa-Wise and Russell County IDA*
 - *Nick Polier, Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy*
 - Questions and discussion
- 3:05** **Solar Workgroup Draft Goals and Actions in small group**
- Brief overview of draft Goals and Actions developed at Nov. 15 meeting and updates from Solar Workgroup solar sites calls
 - Roadmap outline
 - The Roadmap is a document about how to develop a renewable energy industry cluster in Southwest Virginia and has been developed from the ideas from the Solar Workgroup thusfar
 - What’s missing?
 - What feedback do you have or any changes?
 - What kind of expertise is needed to develop a robust Roadmap?
 - **The DRAFT Solar Workgroup goals include (see below for more detail):**
 1. Improve solar policies and legislation in Virginia
 2. Advance solar workforce training and entrepreneurship opportunities
 - a. Partner with community colleges and academic institutions

- b. Develop strategies to maximize local benefits
 - 3. Develop solar site and identify ambassador projects for solar in SWVA
 - 4. Expand and facilitate community education and outreach around solar
 - a. Others?
- Small group break out groups by topic to:
 - Identify chair/ co-chair for Action Groups
 - Determine priorities for next steps
 - Next Action Group communication
 - Who will communicate with group next?
- Identify top next steps within Group

3:50 Break

4:00 Report out from small groups and suggestions for next steps

- Report out from each small group
- Questions and next steps

4:30 Planning for community meetings and next steps

- Next steps for potential grants or developing funding and resources
- Upcoming Solar Workgroup meetings:
 - **Tuesday, February 21 from 2-5 pm** at Ridgeview High School in Dickenson County with a back-up snow date of March 14
 - **Tues. Feb. 21 - Community Solar tour and meeting** from 5:30 - 7:15 pm after the Solar Workgroup meeting at Ridgeview High School (snow date of March 14)
 - **Tuesday, April 11 from 1-4 pm** in Duffield at the LENOWISCO PDC office
 - Jail tour at 11 am + SPARC-E
 - **Tuesday, May 9 in the afternoon** likely in Wise, VA with a **Community Solar Fair** to follow at the UVa-Wise Convocation Center
- Are there any other key elements that are needed to ensure success of the Solar Workgroup?
- Any additional information needs or next steps

5:00 Adjourn

Potential Best Practices for Solar Development in Southwest Virginia (building on ideas from Oct. 4 scoping meeting):

- Power generated in the region should benefit the region
- Develop job opportunities and training programs that will be of long-term benefit to communities and individuals throughout SWVA
- Other ideas?

Solar Workgroup around Solar Development in Southwest Virginia
Draft Goals and Action Ideas
December 12, 2016

The draft goals and action ideas for the Solar Workgroup around Solar Development in Southwest Virginia, shared below, were developed from feedback from the first two Solar Workgroup meetings held on October 4 and November 15, 2016 (a copy of the October 4 scoping meeting summary is available at this [link¹](#), and a copy of the November 15 meeting summary is available at this [link²](#)).

The DRAFT Solar Workgroup goals include:

1. Improve solar policies and legislation in Virginia
2. Advance solar workforce training and entrepreneurship opportunities
 - c. Partner with community colleges and academic institutions
 - d. Develop strategies to maximize local benefits
3. Develop solar site and identify ambassador projects for solar in SWVA
4. Expand and facilitate community education and outreach around solar

Draft Action Ideas developed from the November 15th Solar Workgroup meeting.

After the small group breakout discussions during the November 15th Solar Workgroup meeting, the group shared their top ideas and suggestions for next steps across the four focus areas above. These ideas included:

A. Solar Policies and Legislation

1. Move forward by developing solar projects that are allowable under existing law (low hanging fruit). In particular, explore projects that would benefit from the exemptions given to IDA's.
 - a. Example: Data Center projects
 - Model that can be replicated
 - Interest in multiple counties: Wise, Duffield
 - Build on existing momentum in VA for attracting stronger data center industry
2. Engage elected officials to improve laws for solar
 - a. There are strong partnership possibilities to consider with Delegate Kilgore who chairs the House Commerce and Labor committee, which oversees energy laws.
 - b. The Solar Workgroup should be prepared to organize and push back if there are attempts to rollback provisions in the law that benefit solar development or new laws that weaken solar development.

¹ https://www.dropbox.com/s/myja1ktp0kb1bfa/SWVA_Oct4_Solar_meeting_summary.pdf?dl=0

² https://www.dropbox.com/s/9qka7y1igj9rm7n/SWVA_Nov.15_Solar_meeting_summary_final.pdf?dl=0

- c. Shepherd future momentum in Richmond around solar policies and legislation.
 - Continued engagement in policy dialogues by work group.
 - Engage with other existing tables where statewide solar policy discussions are happening.
 - Ensure SW Virginia has a voice in policy decisions in Richmond.

B. Solar Workforce Training

1. Acknowledge that workforce training must address an actual demand for jobs. Training programs for jobs that don't exist will not be attractive or valuable.
2. Identify all the job needs and skills that are associated with all aspects of solar development.
 - a. Build these skills and opportunities for solar workforce training in a systematic way.
3. Identify entrepreneurship possibilities around solar development.
4. Identify how other energy clusters or sectors have evolved around workforce training across the state (such as around auto, breweries, etc.).
5. Identify internship opportunities around different solar and renewable energy technologies and specializations.
 - a. Develop a roster of certified solar installers in the region (particularly with the NABCEP certification. See this link for more information: <http://www.nabcep.org/certification/pv-installer-certification>).
6. Identify opportunities for partnership with Mountain Empire Community College's solar training program and other academic institutions, community organizations and businesses.
7. Look at the solar industry structure for additional workforce training possibilities (i.e. supply chain, value chain functions and enterprises).

C. Potential solar site and project identification

1. In Phase II, look at larger industrial solar projects in the longer-term.
2. In Phase I, develop residential, commercial and community scale solar projects (this should be the current focus of the Solar Workgroup).
 - a. Develop Ambassador projects that have strong marketing and public relations components (and that can assist with community outreach and education).
3. Identify financing options for solar project development.
 - a. Identify clear mechanisms to access capital and project financing.
4. Develop solar gardens – community solar projects that are of public benefit.
 - a. Consider economies of scale.
 - b. Look at AML sites and possible funding opportunities.
5. Create an inventory of possible sites for solar development in the seven coalfield counties of SWVA.
 - a. Use GIS to develop this inventory.
 - b. Consider schools, hospitals, and AML sites.

D. Community education and outreach

1. Identify community needs and outreach possibilities.
2. Establish a committee for identifying community outreach and education activities and projects.
3. Collaborate with colleges.
 - a. Look at hands-on activities for community outreach.
 - b. Look for opportunities with SPARC-E (at MECC).
4. Develop a Roadmap.
 - a. Engage in a region-wide Solarize project.
 - b. Identify projects.
 - c. Identify partners and next steps.

E. Additional Ideas for Action

1. Develop an inventory of the solar capacity of rooftops in the seven coalfield counties of SWVA.
 - a. Look at the Arlington, Virginia example (which has completed this).
 - b. Use GIS and LIDAR.
 - c. This should be done within 60-90 days.
 - d. Next steps should involve reaching out to the GIS directors of each county about this possibility.
2. Identify the number of counties with a tax exemption for solar (where the property assessment will not increase due to solar installation).
 - a. Wise County has this exemption.
 - b. Next steps = develop a map of the Appalachian region.
 - c. Share this information.

After the four breakout groups shared their top ideas for action during the Nov. 15 meeting, the Solar Workgroup discussed overall considerations for the Workgroup for moving forward and next steps, which included the ideas below.

Overall Workgroup considerations

- Site selection is important to the community perception of solar. Sites should be able to have a community education and outreach component wherever possible.
- Engage utility companies in the effort.
- Examine and understand the regulations around solar systems.
 - DEQ regulates solar systems that are under 20 megawatts (mW).
 - SCC regulates solar systems that are over 20 mW.
- Cost is a barrier to solar development – we need to identify ways to bring the cost down including:
 - Project/installation costs (fair and transparent).
 - Up-front cost (how to pay for a 30-year investment).
- It is important to note that installers just need to be a master electrician – they don't have to be certified to be a solar installer.

Next steps for the Solar Workgroup

- Coordinate community education and outreach around solar, and other potential next steps of the Solar Workgroup, with the upcoming May 10th, 2017 Economic Forum at UVA-Wise (the third in a series of Economic Forums at UVA-Wise).
- Identifying projects is an important immediate next step for the Solar Workgroup.
- Focus on making the Solar Workgroup and community outreach as much of a regional effort as possible.
 - Consider holding meetings and events in different locations across the entire seven coalfield county region.
- There is a sense of urgency for action, particularly around project identify and development.
- Examine what could enable or restrict progress of the Solar Workgroup both in legislation and outreach.
 - An outreach team is needed.
- Populate the solar website with existing background information and next steps.