THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE

Staff Report

Council Meeting Date: January 28, 2020

Subject: Transition of the Energy Innovation Task Force to the Blue Horizons Project Community Council

Staff Resource(s): Amber Weaver, Sustainability Officer
Bridget Herring, Energy Program Coordinator

Action Requested: Adoption of a resolution to dissolve the Energy Innovation Task Force (EITF) and to create the Blue Horizons Project Community Council to advise the Blue Horizons Project and adoption of a resolution authorizing the City Manager to enter into an interlocal agreement with Buncombe County to issue a joint Request for Proposals (RFP) for a non-profit to implement the Blue Horizons Project.

Background:

- In March 2016, Council adopted Resolution 16-64 to establish a joint City, County, and Utility Energy Innovation Task Force (EITF) to address 1) prevention of Duke Energy's Peaker Plant, and 2) provide clean renewable energy for Western North Carolina.
- The EITF created and advises the Blue Horizons Project, a community campaign for energy efficiency and renewable energy.
- The EITF accomplished the initial goal of preventing the Duke Energy Peaker Plant and will dissolve as a City/County Task Force.
- The Blue Horizons Project will continue the work on Goal #2 - provide clean renewable energy for Western North Carolina - and be advised by a new community based advisory board to be known as the Blue Horizons Project Community Council.
- Elected officials and staff from both the City and County along with Duke Energy drafted a revised charter for the Blue Horizons Project which received support from both the EITF and the Sustainability Advisory Committee on Energy and the Environment (SACEE).
- A local nonprofit will manage the Blue Horizons Project and will provide staff support to the Blue Horizons Project Community Council. The City and County will have representation on this council.
- The City of Asheville will enter into an interlocal agreement with Buncombe County to give the authority to issue a joint RFP for a non-profit to implement the deliverables of the Blue Horizons Project.
- The City will have a role in selecting and negotiating the responsive bidder.
- The Blue Horizons Project Community Council will support the work of the City and County's 100% Renewable Energy Goals.

Council Goal(s):

- A Clean and Healthy Environment

Committee(s):

- Energy Innovation Task Force (EITF), January 10, 2020 recommended approval
- Sustainability Advisory Committee on Energy and the Environment (SACEE), January 15, 2020 recommended approval

Pro(s):

- Establishes a new charter for the Blue Horizons Project now that the initial goal of delaying the Duke Energy natural gas peaker plant has been achieved.
- Re-commits the City and County to the support of the Blue Horizons Project

Con(s):

- None

Fiscal Impact:

- The Sustainability Office's adopted operating budget for the current fiscal year includes $205,000 to support the EITF. Sustainability staff have requested that same budget amount for FY 2021 to support the Blue Horizons Project Community Council. Buncombe County has also requested funds for FY 2021 to support the Blue Horizons Project Community Council. If a responsive bidder is selected, a contract will be issued after FY 2021 has begun.

Suggested Motion:

- Motion to adopt a resolution dissolving the Energy Innovation Task Force (EITF) and creating the Blue Horizons Project Community Council to advise the Blue Horizons Project.
- Motion to adopt a resolution authorizing the City Manager to enter into an interlocal agreement with Buncombe County to issue a joint Request for Proposal (RFP) for a non-profit to implement the Blue Horizons Project.

Attachment(s)

- Resolution dissolving the Energy Innovation Task Force (EITF) and creating the Blue Horizons Project Community Council
- Resolution authorizing an interlocal agreement with Buncombe County
- Blue Horizons Project Charter

RESOLUTION NO. 20-____

RESOLUTION DISSOLVING THE ENERGY INNOVATION TASK FORCE ESTABLISHED BY RESOLUTION NO. 16-64 AND ESTABLISHING THE BLUE HORIZONS COMMUNITY COUNCIL FOR THE PURPOSE OF ACHIEVING THE COMMUNITY-WIDE RENEWABLE ENERGY GOAL THROUGH THE BLUE HORIZONS PROJECT

WHEREAS, in 2016 the City, County and Duke Energy Progress agreed to establish the Energy Innovation Task Force to meet the goals of avoiding construction of an additional fossil fuel powered generating facility in Asheville and co-create a clean energy future for the region; and

WHEREAS, the initial goal of avoiding construction of the additional fossil fuel powered generating facility has been accomplished; and

WHEREAS, the Energy Innovation Task Force, City of Asheville, Buncombe County, and Duke Energy Progress desire to continue the transition to a cleaner, affordable and smarter energy future in the region by continuing the work of the collaborative under the new name of Blue Horizons Project Community Council; and

WHEREAS, per City Council Resolution No. 18-279, the City established a goal to transition to 100% renewable energy from fossil fuel energy by December 31, 2030 and support the County's community-wide goal to transition to 100% renewable energy from fossil fuel energy by December 31, 2042; and

WHEREAS, per County Commission Resolution No. 17-12-06, the County established a goal to transition to 100% renewable energy from fossil fuel energy by December 31, 2042; and

WHEREAS, the City, County and Duke Energy Progress will continue to co-convene the Blue Horizons Project Community Council to advance the City and County renewable energy goals through active community engagement and collaboration, deliberate investment in distributed energy resources and greater promotion of energy efficiency programs, subject to appropriate North Carolina Utilities Commission approval; and

WHEREAS, the Blue Horizons Project Community Council will include members from environmental and clean energy advocates, large and small businesses and local institutions; and

WHEREAS, supporting a clean energy future will foster protection of our natural resources, increase resiliency, and facilitate growth of the clean energy industry in our region; and

WHEREAS, the Blue Horizons Project Community Council will engage with our community to provide cost effective services, programs, and new products they value through investment in clean renewable ways to power Western North Carolina, while keeping rates competitive; and

WHEREAS, Buncombe County residents and businesses have the ability to seize this opportunity to use renewable energy and participate in energy efficiency and demand side management programs to increase the region's resiliency and to become a model to other communities in the state and around the country;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE THAT:

The Energy Innovation Task Force, having now accomplished its goal, is hereby dissolved, with any of its residual or remaining objectives and purposes to be assumed by the Blue Horizons Project Community Council; and

The Blue Horizons Project Community Council is hereby established for the purpose of achieving the community-side renewable energy goal through the Blue Horizons Project

Read, approved, and adopted this the 28th day of January, 2020.

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City Clerk Mayor

Approved as to form:

City Attorney

RESOLUTION NO. 20-____

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO ENTER INTO AN INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT WITH BUNCOMBE COUNTY TO ISSUE A JOINT REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR THE MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BLUE HORIZONS PROJECT AND BLUE HORIZONS PROJECT COMMUNITY COUNCIL

WHEREAS, the City of Asheville has authority pursuant to N.C.G.S. 160A-461, units of local government may enter into agreements with each other in order to jointly exercise any power or function of local government; and

WHEREAS, per City Council Resolution No. 13-288, the City adopted a resolution supporting a clean energy economy; and

WHEREAS, per City Council Resolution No. 18-05, the City adopted a resolution incorporating the recommendations from the Energy Innovation Task Force into the Sustainability Management Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Blue Horizons Project will engage our community to provide cost effective services, programs, and new products they value through investment in clean renewable ways to power Western North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, the joint City-County Energy Innovation Task Force will be dissolved and replaced by the Blue Horizons Project Community Council which will be implemented and managed by a local non-profit to be select by an RFP process; and

WHEREAS, City residents and businesses will have a greater ability to participate in the Blue Horizons Project through the Blue Horizons Project Community Council and seize the opportunity to use renewable energy and participate in energy efficiency and demand side management programs to increase the City's resilience;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE THAT:

The City Manager is hereby authorized to enter into an interlocal agreement with Buncombe County to issue a joint request for proposals to implement and manage the Blue Horizons Project and Blue Horizons Project Community Council.

Read, approved, and adopted this the 28th day of January, 2020.

City Clerk Mayor

Approved as to form:

City Attorney