



## UTILITIES ADVISORY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES OF APRIL 7, 2021 SPECIAL MEETING

### CALL TO ORDER

---

Chair Forssell called the meeting of the Utilities Advisory Commission (UAC) to order at 4:02 p.m.

Present: Chair Forssell, Vice Chair Segal, Commissioners Danaher, Jackson, Johnston, Scharff and Smith

Absent:

### AGENDA REVIEW AND REVISIONS

---

None.

### ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

---

David Coale mentioned that in light of the recent power outages within the City, he believed that the City should make the system more robust if the City plans to move towards electrification. He encouraged the UAC and staff to use the funding for the second utility line on local resiliency.

### APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

---

Commissioner Johnston mentioned that on Page 2, the fifth paragraph of the Director's Report under CPAU - Vaccine, the following verbiage is missing.

*The Utilities staff is now starting to vaccinate our staff and are moving forward with the staff coming in on a daily basis or at least 3-days per week. There will be appointments set up in the same manner as the PD and Fire. We had 10 staff go to get vaccinated today, there are approximately 100 staff coming in on a daily basis remaining. Once they have been vaccinated the staff working remotely will start to move forward with appointments for them through the city at a later date. We are encouraging our staff to take advantage of the opportunity if they have not yet been able to receive vaccines through their own providers or through the county itself.*

Commissioner Jackson moved to approve the minutes of the March 3, 2021 meeting as corrected. Commissioner Danaher seconded the motion. The motion carried 7-0 with Chair Forssell, Vice Chair Segal, and Commissioners Danaher, Jackson, Johnston, Scharff, and Smith voting yes.

### UNFINISHED BUSINESS

---

None.

### UTILITIES DIRECTOR REPORT

---

Dean Batchelor, Utilities Director, delivered the Director's Report.

**Outage Update:** The first power outage took place on March 27 with the second happening on April 4. The first outage occurred due to a failed maintenance project at a substation and impacted 7,000 customers for approximately 2-hours. The current outage management system allows customers to call in and report

outages but due to the size of the outage, the phone lines were maxed out and residents were not able to make a report. The outage on April 7 was due to an under-ground transformer failure that impacted 570 customers. Within 3-hours, 445 customers had power with the remainder having power restored in the early morning hours of April 8. Analysis is being conducted on the transform to determine what failed. We are exploring ways of how to better communicate with the public when outages occur. Also, underway is an internal and third-party review on the outages and we will follow up with that information as it becomes available.

**New Schedule for Sustainability and Climate Action Plan:** On April 19 the Council will host a study session on the Sustainability and Climate Action Plan. After some internal review we were able to move the timeline up and release some high-level results from the impact analysis to coincide with Earth Day. At the April 19 meeting we will discuss the process for getting community and Commission review of the S/CAP in the coming months. We will follow up with more information as it becomes available.

**Business Advantage Program Launch:** CPAU launched a new Business Advantage Program this month to help small and medium business customers save energy, money, and improve indoor air quality. The program provides business customers a free Energy Management System that includes smart thermostats, zone temperature sensors, and a cloud-based energy management portal to remotely schedule heating and cooling. The program also offers free MERV-13 air filters to improve indoor air quality. As of April 2, 14 customers have signed up for the program.

**Free Virtual Energy Assessments for Low-Income Customers:** CPAU is now offering free virtual Home Efficiency Genie assessments to Palo Alto residents who have demonstrated a financial or medical need. The Genie virtual assessment uses a smart phone-based system that allows the technician to virtually walk participants through their home and provide live, interactive efficiency advice. Following the assessment, customers are offered free efficiency devices like LED light bulbs, smart power strips and water saving fixtures. CPAU has reached out to around 100 customers to notify them of this free service.

**Refrigerator Recycling Program:** CPAU has been operating a Refrigerator and Freezer Recycling Program funded by a grant from the Bay Area Air Quality Management District. The contractor for the program, Appliance Recycling Center of America (ARCA), picks up refrigerators and freezers twice a month. ARCA recycles the refrigerants and foam-blowing agents, which are both highly potent greenhouse gases, and recycles metal from the units. The program exhausted its original budget, but CPAU has secured additional grant funding and will resume picking up units this month.

**Water Conservation Showcase:** CPAU is a proud outreach partner of the 18th annual Water Conservation Showcase—a free virtual conference hosted each Tuesday in April. The showcase features dozens of sessions and speakers discussing major water issues of the day. Attendees will learn about scalable strategies and solutions to conserve one of Earth most precious resources. Register at [waterconservationshowcase.com](http://waterconservationshowcase.com) and join us each Tuesday this month!

**Drive-Clean-a-Thon:** Join us for an electric vehicle and electric bike Drive-Clean-a-Thon on Saturday, April 24 from 4-5pm. This event is organized by Drive Clean Bay Area with support from several climate- focused organizations, including CPAU. EV and e-bike experts will share unbiased expertise about how driving and biking electric can help you save time, money, and the planet. This webinar is free. Sign up at [cityofpaloalto.org/workshops](http://cityofpaloalto.org/workshops)

**Valley Water Advanced Purification Treatment Plant Scoping Meeting:** On March 29, Valley Water hosted a public scoping meeting to discuss potential siting options for a new advanced purified water treatment plant. One location option is the former Los Altos Treatment plant site, located on San Antonio Road in Palo Alto. At this meeting, community members were presented with the opportunity to learn about the project, the planning process, and provide feedback related to environmental impacts that will be analyzed as part

of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). We will continue to share information with the UAC about the “Purified Water Project” as plans evolve.

**Landscape Design 101 Workshop:** On March 23, CPAU hosted a free virtual workshop about how to design and create a sustainable, low-water use landscape. This event was coordinated in partnership with the Bay Area Water Supply and Conservation Agency (BAWSCA) and Valley Water. Attendees learned about the variety of free efficiency services and rebates available from CPAU and our partners in water conservation. More than 120 people attended the workshop, which is one of the best turnouts we have seen for an event of this type.

In answered to Vice Chair Segal’s questions regarding power outages and Twitter, Bachelor mentioned that it does take time for operators to respond when they are on call and the outages are not broadcasted on social media until the Utilities Department knows what happened.

In response to Commissioner Jackson’s observation that the outage map shows a broad black out when in fact not everyone in the area is without power, Bachelor explained that all the feeders do not run out of the same substation which causes spotting among the map where some customers have power and some do not.

### **COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

---

None.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

---

**ITEM 1:** DISCUSSION: Discussion of City of Palo Alto Permitting Processes for Various Energy Technologies.

David Coale confirmed that the City is still having problems with Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Permitting even after decades of himself trying to have it corrected. He submitted a letter to the UAC that outlined the long history of the permitting process. He recommended that the City outsource everything and remove the requirements that only Palo Alto has. He concluded that he is disappointed with the staff report and that it does not truly address what the problems are.

Dean Bachelor, Utilities Director, announced that the Utilities Department has been working with the Planning and Development Services Department and Geoffrey Blackshire, the City’s Fire Chief, to address the issues that have been raised by the community regarding the permitting process. The team has reviewed the report from TRC and changes have been made. The team plans to meet regularly to refine the process and address community concerns.

Jonathan Lait, Director of Planning and Development Services, shared that in July of 2019 the Development Services Department was merged with the Planning Department. After the merge, the Coronavirus Pandemic occurred and during that time the department was working on an online program to respond to the pandemic. When the online permit system was implemented, there were significant delays for PV and other permits, but staff continues to refine the system and progress has been made. An update will be brought back to the UAC as the collaboration between the departments moves forward. TRC’s report evaluated the City’s permitting process for various energy technologies. The report did compare the City’s electrification permitting process and system to 13 other agencies in Santa Clara County. The report found several areas for improvement including, but not limited to, streamlining the City’s process for approving permits, rectifying inconsistencies within the City’s corrections, relax the inspection process, and several others. Corrective actions that have been discussed among staff to make the process smoother included reducing Development Service Review timelines which will go into effect on April 5, 2021, establish coordination and have one joint final inspection for residential stand-alone PV Systems under 10 Kilowatt

(kW), determine if one alternating current (AC) disconnect can be utilized if properly placed within the electrical system. Additional near-term actions included creating a checklist for stand-alone residential PV, electric vehicle supply current (EVSC) and energy storage system (ESS) applications, provide a list of common plan check and inspection errors for applicants and contractors, and review state mandates to ensure compliance. Long-term actions included improved tracking of Electrification Permits, determine feasibility for automating certain electrification application intake information into the online permit system, and review the Permit Fee Structure as part of the current Fee Study. Many of the complaints the City has received is against the new online permitting system. When the system was implemented, pre-requisites were installed before any application was submitted, which caused confusion among staff and residents. After it was discovered that the pre-requisites were what was causing the delay, staff removed them, and now applications have been processing quicker.

In reply to Commissioner Scharff's question of why car charging permits for residents is not an over the counter permit and what is the process if it is over the counter, George Hoyt, Chief Building Official declared that it is an over the counter process for under 50-amps installations. In terms of the process, plans are required for Level Two chargers and one build inspection is done at the installation. In answer to Commissioner Scharff's inquiry if a Level Two charger is a 220 outlet and if the process is the same as installing a dryer, Hoyt answered yes, it is 220 outlet but the existing load has to be calculated to see if the additional load can be accommodated. The reason to do the inspection is to double-check that the installation was done properly. Commissioner Scharff understood the need to confirm that the installation is done right but he wanted to understand if the inspection has to happen and what the consequences are for not doing a City inspection. He acknowledged that the City does require more when it comes to construction and he predicted that is because there was a concern and the City reacted to it by over mitigating. He concluded that if the City is going to be moving forward with electrification, the process to convert should be easy and simple. In answer to his question what is the plan for when in-person application processing begins again, Lait acknowledged that the TRC report has flagged that there is bureaucracy in the process but the reason to have a City inspection is to provide peace of mind to residents. staff involved in reviewing this topic plan to discuss where the City can reduce over mitigations of the process. In terms of when in-person applications will begin again, there is no formal timeline for that, but staff is hoping for the Development Center to open back up in August or September of 2021.

Commissioner Danaher remarked that is it encouraging to see that these issues are a priority. He agreed that there is a balance between the need for safety and other considerations and that the City has been conservative on how that balance is managed. He recommended suspending any requirements that are not enforced by neighboring jurisdictions and set a high bar for old or new requirements to be adopted that are not required by other agencies. He felt uneasy about the recommendation to study the existing requirements because that can take a long time. In answer to his query why multiple inspectors are needed for a residential program, Lait clarified that staff is exploring ways of how to not have multiple inspections for small projects. Hoyt confirmed that additional training of staff will have to take place but that is the direction that the City is moving towards. In reply to Commissioner Danaher's inquiry regarding Level Two chargers and upgrading the electrical panel, Hoyt confirmed that a separate permit is required for an electrical panel upgrade.

Commissioner Smith agreed that it is cumbersome to have to apply for another permit when an electrical panel needs to be upgraded and the process is onerous. Also, having to supply a one-line diagram for a Level Two charger is another expense for a homeowner. He encouraged staff to streamline that process to help promote electrification. Hoyt explained that staff does have a residential sizing spreadsheet that is available to residents so they can determine their load capacity without hiring someone. Commissioner Smith confirmed he has seen the spreadsheet but it may be too advanced for the average homeowner.

Vice-Chair Segal received feedback from several experts and homeowners in the City. She relayed that all new homes need 400-amps to function and many folks said that there is not enough consistency and predictability in terms of permits and inspections. She acknowledged that new technology does cause

hurdles but she recommended those hurdles be included in the checklists that staff is drafting. Another comment she received was that having an online-only checklist is not useful for in-field use. She agreed that the requirements that are unique to City has are not helpful. The City should be open to using technology if other agencies are using it and she wanted to see more opportunities to include new technology. In terms of automation for permits, she supported that idea. Lait confirmed that staff does plan to keep the online system up and running even after the pandemic has ended. He agreed that new technology is a challenge but staff continues to find new ways to incorporate and anticipate new technology that is coming on board. Vice-Chair Segal foresaw there being a barrier of having water heaters or heat pumps outside of a home when most of the homes in Palo Alto reside close to setbacks. Lait agreed but shared that it is a policy question of the City Council on if they want to allow encroachment into the setbacks. He mentioned it has been an issue for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) and staff is working to correct it.

Commissioner Johnston found the discussion important. He shared the concerns that the other Commissioners have expressed regarding electrification and that the process should be easy to navigate. In reply to his inquiry regarding the missed timelines and what caused that, Lait agreed that it is a combination of the process being too complex, the departments being short staffed, technology advancements, and staff training. He acknowledged that staff needs to do better at tracking applications and making sure those applications are processed in the allotted time. Commissioner Johnston did not agree that the requirements unique to the City has should be removed but that the City should show justification as to why it has those requirements. He requested staff to come back at a future meeting and explain those justifications to the UAC. Lait agreed to report back to the Commission on that topic.

Vice-Chair Segal suggested that a notice be sent to residents and contractors that indicates that a policy or permit requirement has changed. Included in that notification should be the justification of why the policy or permit requirement has changed. Lait found the idea intriguing and announced he would take it back to staff for discussion.

Commissioner Jackson appreciated the TRC report but stated the report did not address many of the issues that were raised by Mr. Coale and himself. He understands that the pandemic has caused delays but the issues raised were issues before the pandemic. He suggested that it is human nature to draft a report that pleases the client, and it is not in the best interest of the contractors to criticize the Planning Department. He wanted to see more urgency in fixing the problems and more exploration. He proposed staff to review the Utility Interconnect Requirements, revise them and he wanted to see a scheduled timeline for that work. He articulated that unique requirements need to bear the burden of demonstrating the counterfactual. He agreed with Commissioner Danaher's comments about eliminating all unique requirements. He shared that he is not aware of the City of Palo Alto Utilities (CPAU) having an Interconnection Variance and encouraged staff to explore having one. He emphasized that the code does not support interconnection. He shared that retrofitting a house is usually more challenging than building a new one and the prescriptive code does not help homeowners who are in retrofit situations. He shared a photo of a modern ESS and PV Service Entrance system that is smaller in size and does not take up huge amounts of wall space on a house. He reviewed his understanding of the code, permit, and inspection lifecycle where he emphasized that if the code is wrong, the rest of the lifecycle is compromised. He agreed with Mr. Coale's comment that the City should explore outsourcing electrification permitting and inspections. Also, staff should initiate immediate compliance with permitting and inspection laws and mandates. He mentioned one ESS requirement is that it has to have a fire suppression system but most residents do not have one and that is a major hurdle. He disclosed that many residents are concerned about power resiliency when it comes to electrification. He predicted that many residents will install a generator instead of an ESS because of the cost difference and he emphasized that is a bad message to be sending to residents. In answer to his questions regarding the fire-suppression requirement and is there a plan to present the TRC report to Council, Lait reported that if there are City requirements that go above state law, those requirements should be explore further. Scott Woodfin, Hazardous Materials Inspector, emphasized that fire-suppression systems are not required for residential ESS installations. The City's "ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEMS (ESS) SUBMITTAL GUIDELINES" state Rooms containing an ESS shall be

equipped with an automatic sprinkler system, smoke detection system, ventilation, and gas detection systems. Please submit adequate information for review by Fire Department. (CFC 608.5)

<https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/files/assets/public/development-services/building-permits/ess-submittal-with-fire-requirements-2019-05-03.pdf>. Tikan Singh, Engineering Manager of Utilities, shared that there have been discussions about reducing the number of disconnects. The reason for a visual AC disconnect is for the safety of personnel and that is the only requirement for residential installations. Commissioner Jackson requested a further explanation from staff offline. Batchelor agreed that staff should go back and investigate disconnections further as well as new technology and come back to the Commission with an update.

Commissioner Scharff requested that when staff returns, the item be agendaized as an action item so that the UAC can make recommendations to City Council on things that may need to be changed. He agreed that any unique requirements to Palo Alto should be listed as to why they are important and then allow the UAC to have a discussion about if they should be kept, modified, or removed. Batchelor and Lait agreed.

In response to Chair Forssell's query what took place that triggered the study to be done, Jonathan Abendschein, Assistant Director of Utilities, mentioned that staff partners with other agencies in the region and Silicon Valley Clean Energy is doing an Electrification Permit Process Benchmarking Study. Staff felt that the consulting company that worked with Silicon Valley Clean Energy was a good group to help the City understand its permitting system. Chair Forssell agreed with other Commissioner's comments that it is important to make the process as streamlined as possible. She expressed excitement that the item will be brought back to the UAC in 4-months. She specified that the largest issue has to do with new technology and staff should use neighboring jurisdictions as reference points but not implement their exact approach. She agreed that there needs to be a process to evaluate new technologies. She acknowledged that while the study did look at several energy systems, she wanted to see storage systems for residents who already have PVs be explored in any updated code changes. While she was not sure about outsourcing the permitting process, she did want to see a timeline of when the process will be streamlined by.

Council Member Filseth appreciated the UAC and staff for the comprehensive discussion. In answer to his question if 4-months is enough time to accomplish the work that is being requested of staff, Lait anticipated that after the first initial check-in with the UAC, staff could return with follow-up updates. The idea for the first check-in is to show the UAC and the community that staff is making progress. He indicated that he needed to understand what the City is requiring that other agencies don't require before a determination can be made on how the City should proceed forward. He welcomed any communications from Commissioners, staff, and the public on what unique requirements the City has from a permitting perspective as well as in terms of the utility and how the City differs from Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E).

Commissioner Jackson mentioned that the document he sent out in February of 2021, as well as Mr. Coale's emails, have listed out all the differences between Palo Alto and other agencies. He stated that he appreciates all the work that Mr. Coale has done for the City in regards to the topic.

**ACTION:** None.

The UAC recessed at 6:00 p.m. and returned at 6:11 p.m.

**ITEM 2: DISCUSSION:** Discussion and Update on the FY20 Demand Side Management Report.

Jonathan Abendschein, Assistant Director, introduced Micah Babbitt who presented the item to the UAC.

Micah Babbitt, Resource Planner, disclosed that the item before the UAC outlines the performance of the programs around energy efficiency, water efficiency, and sustainability. In terms of the efficiency and saving goals verse achievements, the goals that were set in 2017 the City has surpassed in the last 2-years but in year 2020, the City fell short. staff has since updated the goals for the Electricity Utility for the next 10-year period and will be updating the Gas Utility and the Water Utility goals soon. The City fell behind in

reaching its goals due to the state standard becoming more and more stringent as well as many of the programs were put on hold due to the Shelter-In-Place Orders. One of the positives for the efficiency portfolios is the City was still able to maintain cost-effectiveness which resulted in the City being able to further increase the amount of funding that is spent through rebates or hiring new vendors. For Fiscal Year (FY) 2020, the major highlights included commercial and industrial energy efficiency providing 65 percent of electric savings, and cost-effective portfolios were maintained despite decreasing energy and water savings. For the Electric portfolio, staff set goals for FY2022 at .55 percent of the total load. The goal for FY2021 is set at .8 percent and the City has achieved .3 percent. Staff is in the process of launching a program called Home Energy Reports and the Business Advantage Program was recently launched. In FY2019, the City claimed a lot of savings from the Business New Construction Program but that was halted in FY2020 due to Coronavirus Pandemic. In terms of total net electrical savings, non-residential heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) held 41 percent savings, nonresidential lighting held 37 percent savings, Nonresidential Local Reach Code at 15 percent savings, residential lighting at 4 percent savings, and all other residential components at 3 percent savings. The Gas Utility is a performance-based program, and one project that was completed in FY2020 generated the bulk gas savings. The gas efficiency goals have not been updated due to the City working through the Sustainable Climate Action Plan (S/CAP) process. In terms of the Water Utility, all water programs are administered through the Silicon Valley Water District. In FY2020, a large project was completed that helped the City in its water savings. Unfortunately, all the programs combined, minus the one large project, resulted in lower savings historically and staff is currently in the process of refining the commercial and industrial program. Staff is in the process of launching a program called Water Home Reports which has caused additional costs in the water portfolio. The majority of water savings comes from the Nonresidential Green Building Ordinance at 72 percent savings, with residential valley water programs at 25 percent savings and residential domestic hot water at 3 percent savings. Besides efficiency, staff holds workshops and events for the community including the Home Efficiency Genie and Electrification Expo. A large number of installations continue for solar panel installation. In terms of historical program expenditures, the City spent less money in FY2020 due to completing fewer projects in the commercial and industrial sectors.

In reply to Commissioner Johnston's inquiry if the Commercial Industrial Energy Efficiency Program has concluded, Babbitt explained that the program is still in progress and was extended through FY2021. Staff is in the process of contracting with a new vendor for FY2022. He agreed that the program is one of the more effective programs the City has. Commissioner Johnston encouraged staff and the City to continue the program.

In response to Vice Chair Segal's question if recycled water would impact water efficiency, Karla Dailey, Senior Resource Planner confirmed that the City does have a partnership with Valley Water and the partnership agreement does not directly impact Palo Alto's ability to expand the City's recycled water system. She predicted that recycled water development is not directly applicable to the efficiency goals.

In answer to Chair Forssell's inquiry of the larger commercial water project done in FY2019 and the breakdown of historical expenditures, Babbitt explained that it is a large commercial office building that was rebuilt to include more efficient water devices. In terms of the breakdown, Babbitt shared he would provide that break down to her offline. He summarized that in years where the City achieved more energy savings, there is a larger portion tied to customer rebates. In years where there are fewer expenditures, there are more fixed costs which is a combination of staff time and contracts that are not performance-based.

In reply to Commissioner Smith's query regarding the Low Carbon Fuel Standard Credits, Abendschein confirmed that the City does still receive credits. The credits are allocated to the City based on the number of EVs that the City served electricity to. He explained that there are multiple programs in the Low Carbon Standard Credits program. One program provided direct rebates through a state-run program for anyone who buys an EV in California. The other portion of the revenue goes toward a workplace charging program called Cali VIP Program. In response to Commissioner Smith's inquiry where the City is with respect to the

implementation of EVs across the City, Abendschein disclosed that he would provide Commissioner Smith with that answer at a later time.

**ACTION:** None.

**ITEM 3: ACTION: Staff Recommendation to Revise the Meeting Start Time for the Utilities Advisory Commission Temporary Schedule.**

Dean Batchelor, Utilities Director, stated that the UAC meetings have been starting at 4:00 p.m. Commissioners have discussed moving the start time to 5:00 p.m. to allow more community members to participate during the pandemic. Staff requested feedback on when the Commission would like to start in-person meetings.

David Coale indicated that a later start time allows for more public participation.

Commissioner Scharff shared that it is not clear what time would provide more public access. He shared that if the meetings start at 5:00 p.m. and run till 8:00 p.m. There is no time to eat dinner and any meeting that runs after 8:00 p.m. is difficult. He supported the idea of leaving the start time at 4:00 p.m. In terms of in-person meetings starting at 6:00 p.m., if dinner is provided then a start time of 6:00 p.m. is fine. If dinner is not provided then it becomes a hassle for Commissioners to find a time to eat dinner.

Commissioner Danaher expressed that changing the start time from 4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. would help him.

Commissioner Smith agreed with Commissioner Danaher that 4:00 p.m. is difficult and his preference is to move it out to 5:00 p.m. In terms of in-person meetings, both 6:00 p.m. or 7:00 p.m. start times worked for him.

Commissioner Johnston shared that it is important to balance public participation and Commissioner's availability. He was amenable to having the meeting start at 5:00 p.m. and he did not have an opinion for in-person meetings.

Vice Chair Segal acknowledged that it is better for staff to start early. For that reason, her preference was a 4:00 p.m. start times for virtual meetings and 6:00 p.m. for in-person meetings but she emphasized that she is flexible.

Commissioner Jackson liked earlier start times but is sensitive to the other Commissioners who find the earlier start time burdensome. For in-person meetings, starting at 7:00 p.m. is hard and he preferred a 6:00 p.m. start time.

Chair Forssell preferred to start at 4:00 p.m. now and then for in-person start at 7:00 p.m. She acknowledged that she is sensitive to other Commissioners who can't do the earlier start time and was comfortable starting at 5:00 p.m. for virtual meetings and 6:00 p.m. for in-person.

Commissioner Smith emphasized that sometimes members who have a conflict are not present at a meeting until later and that is unfair to residents who expect the full Commission to discuss items. Also, within the by-laws, Commissioners are reprimanded for missing meetings and could be voted off the Commission.

**ACTION:** Commissioner Danaher moved Staff Recommendation that the Utilities Advisory Commission approve revising the current temporary special meeting start time from 4:00 pm to 5:00 pm through the remainder of the Covid-19 pandemic. Commissioner Jackson seconded the motion. The motion carried 7-0 with Chair Forssell, Vice Chair Segal, and Commissioners Danaher, Jackson, Johnston, Scharff, and Smith voting yes.



In reply to Commissioner Scharff's question when in-person meetings will resume, Batchelor shared that Governor Newsom has said June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021 but he predicted it will be in August of 2021.

In answer to Chair Forssell's query if the decision to resume in-person meetings will be a City-wide decision, Batchelor predicted it would be. He raised a concern that when in-person meetings return, there may not be a lot of public engagement. He summarized that community engagement has increased since the Commission has been doing virtual meetings. He mentioned that he plans to discuss with information technology (IT) staff if there is a way to have Zoom broadcasting when in-person meetings resume.

Commissioner Scharff supported that approach of allowing Zoom to be broadcasted during in-person meetings.

Chair Forssell also agreed.

Commissioner Scharff acknowledged that a code change is required to change the start time to 6:00 p.m. for in-person meetings and he wanted to give staff enough time to work through that process.

**ACTION:** Commissioner Scharff moved Staff Recommendation that the Utilities Advisory Commission approve revising the current temporary special meeting start time from 6:00 pm after the Covid-19 pandemic. Commissioner Smith seconded the motion. The motion carried 7-0 with Chair Forssell, Vice Chair Segal, and Commissioners Danaher, Jackson, Johnston, Scharff, and Smith voting yes.

#### **REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONER MEETINGS/EVENTS**

---

Commissioner Jackson attended a conference called Power held by the Haas School of Business. The conference had many research papers on energy and energy policy. He shared he also attended a roundtable discussion on the future of the energy system.

In answer to Chair Forssell's question regarding key takeaway that could be applied to the City, Commissioner Jackson answered there were none.

#### **NEXT MEETING: Special – April 21, 2021**

---

Chair Forssell announced that the UAC will be receiving an update from Magellan.

#### **FUTURE TOPICS FOR UPCOMING MEETINGS: May 05, 2021**

---

Commissioner Smith suggested an informal training session on funding for fiber to the home as well as what funding mechanisms does the City regularly use.

Chair Forssell agreed it would be interesting to learn more about that.

Council Member Filseth shared that the two regularly used funding mechanisms were state or federal grants and the General Fund.

Vice Chair Segal requested a discussion on sea-level rise and an update on the regional project that is address sea-level. She wanted to understand if there is a rule that when a street is dug up, recycled water pipes are installed.

Commissioner Johnston wanted to schedule the update on the permitting process and Palo Alto's requirements. Chair Forssell noted that the discussion will take place in August of 2021.

In reply to Batchelor's question if the Commission will be taking a summer break, Chair Forssell noted that it is too earlier to make that decision but historically the UAC takes a break in July. Vice Chair Segal supported a summer break.

**NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING: May 05, 2021**

Vice Chair Segal moved to adjourn. Commissioner Johnston seconded the motion. The motion carried 7-0 with Chair Forssell, Vice Chair Segal, and Commissioners Danaher, Jackson, Johnston, Scharff, and Smith voting yes. Meeting adjourned at 7:17 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted  
Tabatha Boatwright  
City of Palo Alto Utilities