

**CITY OF CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA**



Agenda Date:	March 3, 2014
Action Required:	None
Presenter:	Susan Elliott, Climate Protection Program Coordinator
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Title:	Anticipated Process to Prepare Application for the Georgetown University Energy Prize Competition (GUEP)

Background:

In December, 2013, staff submitted a letter of intent to participate in the Georgetown University Energy Prize (GUEP) signed by the City Manager and, in January 2014, Council passed a resolution supporting the City's entry to the competition. The GUEP is a nationwide competition for small and medium-sized localities designed to spur action on energy efficiency and renewable energy at a local level and requires a coordinated, cooperative effort between the municipality, local electricity and gas providers, and the community. As such, staff has prepared this memo to present the expected activities that will be pursued over the coming months in pursuit of a compelling and competitive application. Specific participation rules, standard forms, and resources are available at a dedicated competition website (www.guep.org).

There are multiple stages of the competition where localities are reviewed by the Prize Judges to be deemed eligible to continue to the next stage. The following is based on a Feb 19, 2014 update:

- Stage 0 – Letter of Intent - completed.
- Stage 1 – Application – opens April 2014
- Stage 2 – Energy Efficiency Program Plans –due Nov 2014
- Stage 3 – Competition – January 2015 – December 2016
- Stage 4 – Final reporting by competition finalists – due June 2017

The information required for Stages 1 and 2 will include descriptions of existing community energy-savings initiatives, identification and brief biographies of key community members involved in the GUEP effort, letters of commitment from the local utilities, letters of commitment and support from community organizations and members, the proposed energy savings strategy that would be deployed during the competition, and a description of how the grand prize, if awarded, would be used.

The City has made commitments to reducing its community-wide greenhouse gas emissions, associated with energy use, and has referenced energy efficiency and renewable energy in multiple forms. As presented in the 2012 Charlottesville Emissions Report Update however, community-wide

emissions and associated energy use increased between 2000 and 2011 and the residential sector showed the largest increases with 15% more emissions and 13.5% greater energy use (www.charlottesville.org/emissions),.

In efforts to address continuing increases in energy use, an approach recommended by the US Department of Energy and implemented in a variety of localities across the country is to create a community energy strategic plan (CESP). A CESP includes all sectors of energy use within a community, documents existing efforts, and lists future efforts with prioritization based on each community's goals, resources, and the potential feasibility. CESP's are intended to be living documents, updated periodically and informed by developments in technology, funding opportunities, the community, and the surrounding regulatory framework. The activities required to create a CESP would serve both the GUEP and the City's Climate Protection Program (CPP), and Charlottesville has a strong basis to begin this process drawing on products from the CPP and the Local Climate Action Planning Process (LCAPP, www.charlottesville.org/lcapp).

Discussion:

Preparation of the GUEP application and plan materials will require input, feedback, and involvement of the community. As such, staff wishes to ensure that there is an adequate awareness and understanding of the process this competition solicits.

Charlottesville is well positioned to be competitive within the GUEP with commitments of support from the two local utility providers, Dominion Virginia Power and Charlottesville Gas. Additionally, the City has support from the Local Energy Alliance Program (LEAP), a relationship that offers unique advantages to our area, builds on an ongoing relationship, and offers a nimble, effective, innovative, and replicable model to other localities.

Involvement of the community and City staff/departments is anticipated to be an organic and iterative process. Previous efforts, such as the LCAPP and existing efforts in the community, provide a strong framework with which to begin, leaving space and opportunity for members and organizations within the community to supplement, inform, and fill-in ideas and approaches. Staff's preliminary plan is to reach out to specific groups either identified by the GUEP, such as local schools and public housing, or with which a relationship already exists, provide an introduction to the GUEP and CESP process and invite their input and participation in identifying strategies and CESP goals. For some groups, this may take the form of a larger open meeting and presentation. For others, it may take the form of focus group work sessions with a few key individuals identified by that group. As documents and input have taken more shape and we are nearing the time to submit our community plan, staff anticipates the opportunity for broader input from the community through an event such as an open house.

Staff foresees that an approach, such as described above, will produce the documentation that will be required by the GUEP application process, demonstrate a cooperative and collaborative approach within our community, and create a compelling plan with a short-term two-year implementation strategy that will be competitive.

While the GUEP focuses on the residential and municipal sector, staff anticipates and welcomes that this process will produce comments and input that address other sectors within our community and additional efforts that are long-term in nature. These pieces, while they may not be as highly prioritized during the GUEP competition years, will serve to help move Charlottesville towards its community-wide emissions and energy-savings reduction goals and have the potential to begin

deeper conversations in our community about how we use and source energy.

Community Engagement:

As referenced in the discussion section above, community engagement will include an introduction to the CESP and GUEP to community groups, invite and host focus group work sessions with members of the community, and offer a couple open house workshops. The community will continue to be engaged during the GUEP to implement the CESP through strategies identified and developed during the upcoming process.

Alignment with City Council's Vision and Priority Areas:

The CEP is an implementation document aligned with the 2013 Comprehensive Plan Chapter 7, Goal 5 and 6. As such, it is anticipated to be reviewed and updated periodically as strategies are completed, technology and opportunities develop, and priorities and other tools are developed. It is aligned with City Council's "*A Green City*" Vision.

Budgetary Impact:

All activities will be pursued using existing program funds.

Recommendation:

This memo is informative in nature and does not require action from Council.

Alternatives:

Suggestions and comments from Council are welcome.

Attachments:

None