



## September 6, 2023, Meeting

The meeting was at the Wet Weather Pond facility. Members Elizabeth Garr, Beulah Matczak, Bryan McMillan, Rod Vargo and Pat Turner, City Utilities staff, Doug Fasick, Blake Nelson, John Smith and Frank Suarez attended.

The informal meeting began with a bus tour of the wet-weather ponds and the pump station.

Jon Smith from the Water Pollution Control Plant (WPCP) and Engineer Doug Fasick shared information on the tour at stops along the three wet weather storage ponds and the pump room.

During wet weather events, when the combined sewer system the ponds fills up with sewage and rainwater, it heads to two of the ponds before being pumped back to the pollution control plant for treatment. The third pond goes through a reaeration structure where oxygen is added back to the water as it discharges into the Maumee River. The water discharged into the river is cleaner than what is in the river.

The tour allowed attendees to get an up close view of the floating solar panels, which led to the main presentation.

Doug Fisick discussed a plan for a microgrid system using solar panels on a pond. Twelve thousand panels will cover 30 acres, generating 5.5 Megawatts. This energy will power three of City Utilities' most significant power users: the filtration plant, water pollution control plant, and wet weather pump station.

The microgrid will connect all the facilities to an efficient system that will allow City Utilities to reduce dependence on outside energy sources and optimize electricity distribution.

Doug explained that the plants are large electricity users. In the past 20 years, our electric bills have gone from \$1.1 million to \$2.5 million today. Even with our efforts to power 30 percent of the water pollution control plant through methane power generation, the electric bills have continued to increase, mainly through higher rates.

The microgrid integrates solar power, methane power generation, natural gas, and battery storage to create an abundant power supply and reliable backup for emergencies at all three facilities. The additional backup generators will operate at 1.5 megawatts using natural gas at the pollution control and filtration plants.

Rod Vargo asked if the panels needed routine cleaning. Doug said not routinely, but there's a system in the panels that monitors output and sends an alarm to investigate the panels. The panels have a system where the snow will naturally fall off during winter months.

The system will store excess power in batteries that can generate power beyond sunlight. This stored energy acts as a buffer, smoothing production fluctuations and reducing operational costs associated with traditional generators' start-stop cycles.

Solar power will reduce our carbon footprint by approximately 4,600 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent annually. That's a 20% reduction.



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Doug shared that there will be 12,000 floating solar panels when complete and that the array will fulfill a substantial portion of daily power requirements during sunlight hours while minimizing algae growth in storage ponds.

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Pat Turner asked about the timeline. Doug said the panels are expected to be in place by the end of 2023 and commissioned in the late spring of 2024.

Frank Suarez added that UAG members are invited to a September 19, 2023.

Frank also gave a brief update about the AMI meter installations. Sixty-seven thousand meters are in as of August 31, 2023, and fewer than 1 percent of the customers have called with concerns.

The contractor is behind the deadline for completion and was now being fined. City Utilities is using the fine money to pay our employees to install the meters on their off, to keep the project moving.

Rod Vargo stated the next meeting is December 6, 2023 and thanked Doug Fasick and John Smith for the tour and presentation.