**Plans Approval Team**

**July 8 Conference Call**

**10 a.m.**

**Call Summary**

**Call Participants:** Jeff Halsey (Broward County), Icilda Humes (Broward County), Stephen Barkaszi (FSEC), Greg Farrone (Alachua County), Cindy Nielsen (Orange County), Alan Plante (Orange County).

*At the invitation of Alan Plante, John Rimes from the Florida Board of Engineers joined the meeting for the discussion on the Certification Process.*

**Meeting Discussion Summary**

The meeting discussion centered on the prerequisites for FSEC’s Plans System, the certification process, and the Solar Community Advisory Group.

FSEC’s Plans System

* FSEC continues to work on developing the plans engine and should have a demo available shortly to share with the team for feedback.
* FSEC has determined what the system will be nominal with the size being 10kW AC (tier 1 for utilities.) The master file will not address building integrated photovoltaics. The panels will be kept parallel to the roof and within a few inches. Low slope roofs will not be included. The team will need to determine how components will be registered/listed; that is, whether by modules or inverters. FSEC only registers modules while inverters are via system certification.

Certification Process

* The plans generation systems will be similar to a master file. That is, it will be public access master files that is non-site specific. Master file plans are currently required to be signed, sealed and dated by engineers and available for use by contractors to put together plans sets for permitting purposes.
* The Florida Statutes has provisions for the creation of master file peer-reviewed documents by engineers. The statutes are silent on specific formats as long as parameters are met. There is no provision that requires engineers to prepare site-specific structures and there does not appear to be a limitation to structural engineering only. Master design manuals are for construction and designing; the statutes make reference to “overall building permits” but not structural, mechanical or electrical components.
* It is recommended that the team seek an interpretation of the statutes from the CILB with respect to whether the statutes are making reference to only physical structures or to all building components. The Board of Professional Engineers does not have authority to offer an interpretation of the statutes but this board may be able to offer the team its opinion on engineering responsibilities including anything that would preclude an engineer from developing a manual that includes all the components (structural, mechanical, electrical.)

Solar Community Advisory Group

* Colleen is awaiting feedback from some partners
* Orange County is conducting research on which contractors pull permits most frequently. The findings will help them to make recommendations to Colleen about possible members.

PR Campaign

* This matter was deferred to the next meeting. The question was raised whether this was part of the scope of the plans approval team.

Other Items

* Greg shared that he had an idea for site specific plans for roof envelope where a person can draw plans using soft plans software. It would need site specific plans of arrays. Stephen has received the link with respect to the aforementioned. He noted that there are different options for people to prepare those or they could use embedded sketch programs. One of the biggest difficulties in getting the final permit is getting the site-specific details.

**Team Challenges/Goals**

**Plans Approval System Information Discussed and Gathered During Call:**

* There is no current need to pursue legislative actions with respect to master files because the Master File option seems to be viable path forward.
* There is no need to approach the Florida Building Inspectors Board because they do not have to accept the master files.
* The contractor needs to know location of site (Google map or similar program could be used) and information about the roof. Site location will help to determine wind loads. Parameters such as distance from the edge of the roof, roof zone 1 only, etc. would need to be included as well as notes and instructions for contractors. A specific sheet could be created with details for different roof types and options. Contract inspection prior to applying or the permit will include observation of field conditions such as existence of structures that could cause conflict with the panels.
* Installation details in Go Solar I were very specific and prevented flexibility. However, Go Solar Florida will include details from many manufacturers on how their products are installed.
* In reference to concerns about product approval, the information from Mo Modani is that there have been some approvals by the Florida Building Commission. They were not part of the “envelope” even though they were attached to the “envelope.” They were submitted to the commission so they approved it. The sentiment is that they think that the definition of “envelope” is intentionally vague so that individuals can submit to the commission if they so desire; however, they push for Florida product approval.

**Other items we may want to address:**

* Sandbox should be an abbreviated version of the permit design tool because homeowners can roughly sketch their roof, pick out the components, get an idea of what energy will be generated, and prepare a lead sheet for contractors so that they can secure an estimate. Thereafter, contractors will visit the site, observe and note field conditions and apply for the permit.

**Questions we may want to answer:**

* Do we want a separate registration with respect to modules and inverters?
* Do we want vendors to pay a fee to have their equipment listed in the system?

**Action Items**

* Orange County will secure the calendar for CILB and Engineering Board meetings for the remainder of the year. They will also explore how to get on the agenda. The team was informed that the CIBL meets in Tampa so Alan offered to attend a meeting of the CILB on the team’s behalf. The team will determine the form of request that will go the CILB and the Engineering Board. It was suggested that concurrence of our interpretation of the statutes be sought from the CIBL and feedback from the Engineering Board be sought.
* FSEC with get more info to the group on the plans engine and will share a basic demo before the next meeting.
* Partners will continue to provide recommendations for memberships to the solar community coordination team. FSEC will make a decision on whether to wait for more recommendations or whether to move forward with the existing recommendations.

Meeting adjourned at 10:53 a.m.

**Next Conference Call: July 22 at 10:00 a.m.**