From:	Nancy@enrichlife.net
To:	Citycomm
Cc:	Bielarski, Edward J
Subject:	Support effort to buy the biomass plant
Date:	Thursday, March 16, 2017 2:04:37 PM

Dear Mr. Mayor and Commissioners,

I strongly support purchase of the biomass plant, and appreciate the efforts of our GM to work out an acceptable deal that is transparent and protects our interests. I listened to his presentation at the UAB yesterday, which included the chart of progress in the MOU negotiations, and was very encouraged by the progress.

From my understanding that the hurdle of this needing to be an asset sale not an entity sale has been met— that GREC has agreed to an asset sale and all our terms except the price.
And that at the requested price of $750 million, we will still save a great deal of money, as well as owning the facility, being able to modify it to be able to utilize it in our fuel mix more effectively.

This is a time to purchase while rates are still low, but more importantly, looking ahead this accomplishes a number of things important to our energy security and reliability, plus important to our health and our future economic stability— not just here but globally.

I am not happy that we have joined the rush to natural gas because of it's current low price (which is below cost— increased debt is how they are functioning) . We have gone from having a diversified mix utility, that was moving toward increased renewables, to being dependent on fossil fuels just like the rest of FL .

Natural gas is NOT "clean"— it is a fossil fuel, mostly methane, a shorter acting fossil fuel, that in a 20 year period is 86 times as bad as CO2 in heating our planet, thus impacting the short, perhaps 10 year period we have left to avoid the worst effects of global warming, and accelerating the tipping points and weather wilding we are already experiencing. These impacts will adversely affect our health, our economic opportunities, etc and be increasingly costly.

Biomass, is a regionally appropriate, renewable current-carbon fuel. It must be used within very clear parameters of scale, distance, amount, process etc, but is the only renewable currently usable as a baseload fuel, and that has a Energy Return on Energy Invested ratio higher than many of the unconventional fossil fuels now being extracted.
There is no free lunch, but the importance of using current sunlight, not fossil sunlight, is critical, and we are in an area that can do it properly, using strict stewardship standards and monitoring.

It gives us a diversified fuel mix and returns us to moving away from fossil fuels
It gives us energy security because it is locally produced so we are less vulnerable to national and international fossil fuel markets and supply issues
We are one of 2 merchant utilities in FL, and this gives us and edge and something to sell when the natural gas market or supply becomes problematic, which could occur as early as 2018.
It creates more local jobs, particularly for rural folks who have been badly hurt

It gives us a positive multiplier effect. I would be interested to know how large a multiplier is generated, given the number of local jobs, recirculation of dollars around our county, and if we include the externalities usually ignored, of reducing our vulnerablity to supply disruptions, participation in fracking with all its pollution and health impacts etc

Florida has become the 3rd most natural gas dependent state. The Union of Concerned Scientist published a report in 2015, reported in the Sun Sentinel, about Florida's vulnerability http://www.sun-sentinel.com/business/consumer/fl-natural-gas-reliance-20150311-story.html — Florida is even more dependent and vulnerable now.

Projections about natural gas out to 2040 are extremely optimistic. We should not assume that the current prices and supply will continue. We are purchasing fracked gas, i.e. unconventional gas, now, since conventional gas has been in decline for years now. Unconventional gas is far more problematic and volatile. Our savings from buying the biomass plant could turn out to be far greater than is now projected. http://www.postcarbon.org/publications/2016-shale-gas-reality-check/

In summary,
I support continued negotiations and think that buying the plant is in our best interests, from what I am aware, and that the price appears to be worth it now that all other points of MOU negotiations have come to agreement. I understand this is not yet a contract, and that due dilligence and great care will go into any contract that is agreed to.

It is long past time to move past the intense fixation on the original contract,— that is the past, and only keeps us locked in an unhealthy situation. The important thing is to have identified the points of weakness in policy and communication, which the Navigant report and other analysis have done, and fix those to prevent future mistakes. It is critical to look ahead now, take care in how we pursue a contract, and hopefully buy the plant. We must position ourselves for the future where energy supplies, aging utility infrastructure, fossil fuel impacts and economic pressures will be far more problematic and costly.
Having local control over our energy supply and generation will serve us well. we must move toward a renewable future which for us means energy conservation and efficiency, biomass and solar. A renewable future is an electric future— not a natural gas/fossil fuel one. Moving to electric vehicles and charging stations could provide GRU a new revenue stream as other usage stays flat or declines. Energy is the economy— lets keep our power in our control!
Thank you
Sincerely,
Nancy Deren