

Climate Impact Advisory Committee

DRAFT Meeting Minutes

Date: May 2nd, 2019

Location: RE Store, 2309 Meridian St, Bellingham



QUORUM	
Members Present	
Seth Fleetwood	X
Casey Harman	
Tim Miller	X
Treva Coe	X
Eric Grossman	
Ellyn Murphy	X
John Yakawich	
Sharon Shewmake	X
David Kershner	X
Gabriel Westergreen	
Alex Ramel	
STAFF Chris Elder	X

1) Meeting began at 5:32 PM

2) Minutes

- a. Approval of the minutes was deferred until June meeting due to lack of quorum, though two minor corrections to the April 4th minutes were noted. Spelling of Atul Deshmane's name and ICLEI.

3) Public Comment

Seth invited everyone to introduce themselves. The committee members and Chris stated their names. Other attendees then introduced themselves. These other attendees included: Karen Holderman with Citizens Climate Lobby, Ashley Ubil, Whatcom County Planning and Development Services staff, Kathy Sabel, interested community member, Betsy Gross, Sierra Club, Clare Fogelsong, City of Bellingham, and Bruce Boren, Cherry Point Coalition

The only public comment was a request that committee members speak loudly enough that the folks in the back can hear the discussion.

4) Review of the draft Request for Proposals (RFP) to retain a consultant to assist the committee with climate action planning

The group discussed the key deliverables and scope of work. It was noted that the "Key Deliverables" section was the most important component of the RFP. The committee members agreed that the Scope

of Work be revised to include attending all CIAC meetings and facilitating any relevant scope of work agenda items at those meetings.

The committee discussed whether to have the consultant complete two separate years of emissions inventory using the ClearPath Model (2017, as well as 2012). It was noted that 2012 was the target year for emissions reduction goals in the County's 2007 Climate Action Plan but that a 2012 inventory would not be very useful unless earlier inventories were redone using the ClearPath Model. Given the cost of redoing the inventory for earlier years, it was agreed that a 2012 inventory was not a top priority. It was agreed that a 2012 inventory would not be included in scope of work as an "option."

Chris said he would revise the RFP and send it out on Friday. Chris requested that any suggested changes be sent to Chris by the end of the business day Tuesday, May 7th.

5) Update on Community Research Project

Ellyn described the project for members of the public (attached report).

Seth inquired about the timeline for completion of the research project. Ellyn said that the group had not yet been able to secure meetings with refinery contacts and that the draft report would likely be ready in early July as opposed to early June.

6) Report on Climate-related bills that were considered in 2019 Legislative Session

Sharon described SB 5116, the 100% Clean bill that passed both chambers of the Legislature. She noted that the bill transitions the state's electricity grid away from coal by 2025 and from natural gas by 2045. The bill considers hydroelectric power and nuclear as clean sources of electricity. She noted that the clean energy requirements in the bill provided a very cost effective way to decarbonize the grid and that utilities were neutral on the bill by the end of the process, though all Republicans voted against it.

Other notable climate-related bills included: HB 1112, which bans major uses of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), chemicals used primarily as refrigerants. Many of these "super pollutants" have global warming potentials that are far higher than methane. Sharon noted that these chemicals are no longer produced in the United States and that viable alternatives already exist. The practical effect of the legislation will be to end imports of these substances and accelerate the shift to alternatives. Two Republican Senators supported the final bill.

HB 1257, which a "green building" bill, will increase energy efficiency for commercial buildings, requires new multi-family buildings with off-street parking to include electric vehicle charging stations, creates a natural gas conservation program, incentivizes the use of "renewable" natural gas (i.e. biogas from digestion of manure), and adds an incentive program for "early adopters" of greater energy efficiency in buildings. No Republicans supported the bill.

HB 1444, an appliance efficiency bill, passed. It would establish state efficiency standards for certain appliances that are not regulated by the federal government and sets a minimum standard for light

bulbs that the Trump Administration plans to eliminate as a federal requirement. No Republicans supported the bill.

HB 2042, a green transportation bill, passed. It would impose a \$75 fee on auto registrations of EVs to fund EV incentives, transit electrification, a car-sharing promotion program for EVs, technical assistance for alternative fuel vehicles, and a study on how to facilitate greater access to EVs by low-income families. Sharon voted for the bill but she said she wasn't that enthusiastic about the funding mechanism because it requires early adopters of EVs to pay for incentives for future EV owners, even though the environmental benefits are shared by all Washingtonians. She noted that the incentives for new EVs could increase the demand for, and supply of, EV charging stations, which would benefit current EV owners. The bill passed with broad bipartisan support.

HB 1110, a clean fuels standard bill, failed in the Legislature. It would have reduced carbon pollution and incentivized EV sales. A similar standard is already in place in Oregon and California.

SB 5993, a bill to amend the Model Toxics Control Act, passed both chambers. It restructured the fee on hazardous substances from a percentage-of-value fee to a volume-based fee. Sharon said it will effectively raise the cost of oil use and help internalize that cost. There was no Republican support for the bill.

HB 1114, a food waste reduction bill, passed the Legislature with support of all members. It sets goals but primarily authorizes a study to determine ways to reduce food waste while maintaining food safety.

Sharon also noted some bills that didn't pass but would have created carbon reduction benefits. A bill that would have created an incentive for no-till farming to increase carbon sequestration.

She also mentioned some bills she supported that passed, such as a long-term care bill that facilitates in-home care for the elderly and a bill that approved a new tax on e-cigarettes.

SB 5947, is a bill that would have created a financial incentive for no-till farming. This could have created a market for sustainable farming as a form of carbon sequestration.

Sharon introduced a bill (HB 1986) that would have created a sales tax exemption for electric bicycles. Bicycle advocates didn't really get behind it and it didn't get a vote on the floor.

Sharon said she plans to champion a bill next year that would improve K-12 climate science literacy, as is already the case in California. This bill did not make it out of committee this year.

7) Old and New Business

Ellyn asked if the County is using triple bottom line analysis employed by ICLEI and said she would like that to be on the agenda for the next meeting.

Clare said that the Bellingham Climate Task Force is using triple bottom line plus technology analysis to evaluate policy measures. He described it as a "strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats

analysis for evaluating the feasibility of various policy proposals. He said that he would be willing to give a presentation about the analysis at the CIAC's next meeting.

Seth then asked for an update about the Bellingham Task Force's work. Clare said that the Task Force planned to have a preliminary draft by June. He said that waste reduction was not likely to be tackled as part of the report, noting that when the city requested waste hauling bids, it did factor in carbon emissions and chose the contractor with the lowest carbon footprint. He said that in terms of achieving the cities stated renewable energy goals, the toughest nut to crack would be transitioning away from natural gas and eliminating diesel use for transportation such as garbage trucks.

There was a brief discussion about the importance of compact development in reducing carbon emissions. David will send out a TED Talk about city planning and climate change, which was presented at the Bellingham Task Force meeting.

10) Meeting adjourned at 7:12 PM.

Recorded by David Kershner for W. Casey Harman, Secretary

Staff contact Chris Elder - (360)778-5932

See attachment next page

Attachment 1

Community Research Project Update

May 2, 2019

Volunteers for the Community Research Project (CRP) have so far conducted interviews with 60 organizations (e.g., NGO's, government officials, businesses, tribes, etc.) involving 75 individuals. The interviews are forcing some organizations to start thinking about how climate change may impact their business. Other organizations are already concerned that climate change will impact their business and are actively looking for solutions or guidance. We are impressed by the positive energy in many organizations, especially NGO's – the County is fortunate and needs to take advantage of the dedicated and passionate advocates working every day for the overall social good of the community

Understandably, every organization describes carbon mitigation/adaptation strategies from their own vantage points. One team lead likened this to the metaphor of the blind men all describing the same elephant differently. “While there is general agreement what the challenges are, there was disagreement about their causes or what to do about them.” For example, one County planner said that the reason no one is applying for a permit to build wind turbines is because there is no interest. Others say there is interest, but the county's zoning and permitting codes are so stringent that it is prohibitive to build them here.

So, it is back to my comment from last month – ultimately “the challenge for our committee will be integrating and adapting all the information and differing points of view into a cohesive climate action plan that meets the needs of Whatcom County and sets forth measurable goals.”

Some intriguing ideas from stakeholders that may be considered as we develop new mitigation and adaptation strategies for a revised climate action plan:

- Create a viable water bank so farmers can rent unused water rights. This would require changing state water laws to eliminate “use it or lose it” and would require metering of water use.
- Flexible and site-specific regulations regarding stream buffers to account for additional factors such as soil type and terrain.
- Planting more drought and heat-resistant species, especially in forest management, but also for perennial crops.
- Food waste is the 3rd largest contributor to green house gas emissions. The County should consider funding local food recovery initiatives. Last year Sustainable Connections saved 50,000 lbs of food waste that provided 30,000 meals to local needy organizations. Low-hanging fruit would be the County making sure that it is being sustainable in purchasing and has waste reduction programs in place for all of its facilities.
- Consider a climate-impact fee for developments in the floodplain and shoreline areas to cover the extra costs associated with providing continued access or protection from sea-level rise.
- Make climate change an integral part of all County planning and permitting, especially for major infrastructure projects.