

Climate Impact Advisory Committee



FINAL Meeting Minutes

Date: April 14th, 2022

Location: Zoom

QUORUM	Y
Members Present	
Charles Bailey	x
William Bethel	
Sue Gunn	x
Steve Harrel	x
Ray Kamada	x
David Kershner	x
Katherine Kissinger	x
Ellyn Murphy	x
Imran Sheikh	x
Phil Thompson	x
Eddy Ury	x
STAFF Chris Elder	x

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

2. Welcome & Introduction of New CIAC Members – Ray Kamada and Charles Bailey

Ray has a background in meteorology, atmospheric science, and air pollution. He has worked at Cape Canaveral and the Denver Airport. He wrote a decarbonization plan for the Council a few years ago.

Sue asked what happened to the plan

Ellyn said that it was a well written and comprehensive plan that she has referred to in writing the CAP. She suggested that Ray send it out to the committee.

He said that he wishes to advise an update to the plan to make it more accurate.

Charles has helped out on the ferry committee and is looking forward to contributing to the Climate Impact Advisory Committee

3. Review and approve agenda

4. Review and approval of minutes from March Meeting

Sue motioned to approve the agenda,

Dave seconded,

Motion passed

5. Public Comment

No public comment was brought forward

6. Wrap Up of Climate-Related Bills in Legislature

Building Electrification – Ramel

A new Transportation Package was passed. One of the big points is that kids under 18 will be able to ride public transport for free. As well as increased Ferry electrification.

In terms of Salmon there is also funding to remove culverts that block salmon passage

The Climate Commitment act will be moving forward with the cap and invest program

Hydrogen policy has promise for aviation, shipping, and heavy industry. Hydrogen made from electrolysis powered by renewables could be a powerful solution to keeping these industries at peak operation. The goal is to make Washington a hub for clean hydrogen as a potential next step for our heavy industry and refineries sectors.

This year was a short session so they were limited in what they could get done.

Public facilities bill and energy performance for existing buildings passed.

Some of the packages that didn't pass will likely be brought up again.

1099, providing funding for communities including climate change mitigation in their upcoming comprehensive plan updates, unfortunately failed again due to stalling in the senate on the last day. Basically, they just ran out of time.

Community Solar Bill – Shewmake

Community Solar would allow for community members that are low income, or renters to invest in solar to allow for them to manage their costs over time and have reliable access to solar energy. This also opens up projects developed by community programs.

Jon Oesting asked about loan options for homeowners and there being a way to make it easier for folks to access those loans to get solar panels on the roofs of homeowners

Alex Ramel said that there is a proposed model that if a homeowner gets a loan to put solar panels on their roof and that if they move out the next owner will take over the loan. This is basically the PACE (property assessed clean energy) funding program discussed in the County's climate action plan.

Jon Oesting said that approach is called running with the deed

Phil asked if the community solar project bill was signed by the governor and how it would help low-income people

Sharon said that the program will be run through the WSU energy office. People come up with the plan, then send it to WSU and then go find customers. The plan allows projects to be built without having to deal as much with the upfront costs. **Sharon** said that many buildings in the county could be great candidates for resiliency hubs that could provide heat or cooling for the community in times of severe weather events. Some other things that **Sharon** is working on are tax incentives for businesses that have high labor standards and in helping farmers. Another big thing that **Sharon** is working on is housing.

Ellyn mentioned that resiliency centers are also mentioned in our CAP and asked where the funds would come from

Sharon said the State Energy Fund

Alex said that his next steps include supporting **Sharon's** work and also continuing to work on buildings. Some specifics include housing weatherization, efficient electricity usage, and property tax policy for renewable energy projects.

Sue asked if our electricity needs would only need to be doubled?

Alex said yes because the newer electric components are much more efficient.

Climate Risk in Comprehensive Plan

Alex said that this was another issue where the legislature just ran out of time on the last day. It will be brought up again next year. It was a big disappointment because they had the votes to pass, but discussion was prolonged by numerous amendments.

7. Update on Climate-Related Issues Before the Council – Kaylee Galloway

Kaylee said that there has been a lot of discussion in the county about the Bessie Timber Sale and there will be a pilot program that is going to be set up to help the County respond to water quality and forest management issues. And there likely will be an opportunity for committee members to help out with updating some of our forest management plans in the future.

Carol Frazey and Kaylee Galloway are writing a resolution to include the priorities of climate change risk, equity and economic security in the next comp plan revision.

Phil said that he left some comments in the document and will send them to Kaylee.

Charles asked about the level of detail that will be in the plan how will we know when goals will be met.

Kaylee said this is just a recommended framework and not a full draft.

Sue asked about forestry and that she has been working with an organization and that the DNR carbon program is including acreage that has already been protected.

Steve mentioned that the Bessie issue is a hot topic in the community, and he has received the most engagement on that.

8. Update on Climate Action Manager & Office of Climate Action – Gary Stoyka

Gary said that the job description has been drafted up.

Ellyn asked how we should submit comments on it

Gary said it can be sent out as a word document but that having consolidated comments from the Committee would be ideal

Internally they have figured out the placement for this position

Ellyn said that she would like to get this out in the next week

Ray, Steve, and Charles offered to help

Charles asked about the coordination of this position and where they will fit in the County staff

Gary said that the addition of a Natural resources manager would help with the staff's ability to get things done and allow for better cross departmental discussion

Steve asked what the timeline for hiring someone would be

Gary said that it would at least be a month but it could be longer.

Charles asked how the job will be advertised

Gary said that HR advertises via several job portals

Charles asked if there are similar positions in other counties

Chris said that King, and Chelan County have similar positions and that many cities around the state have similar roles.

9. Update on Executive Office Strategic Initiatives Director – **Jed Holmes**

Jed said that the goal of this position is to be another set of hands to help implement projects and that this job is currently hiring and will be going through their first review on April 26th. **Jed** asked for a representative from CIAC to participate in the interview process.

Dave wanted to nominate **Ellyn** to be on the interview committee

Ellyn said that she would be happy to help and mentioned that Alex Ramel might be a good option as well

Sue worried that the background of this person is incredibly broad and asked how much knowledge that the applicant will need.

Jed said that the applicant doesn't need to be an expert per se but they are looking for someone who will be able to help facilitate projects in all these different areas. The position will act as a liaison to help get projects funded.

10. Geothermal Energy Potential in Whatcom County – **Jon Oesting**

Basic way to access geothermal energy is with a heat pump and a well

It's a closed renewable system that is always on

One of the main downsides to geothermal energy is that it is expensive to drill and the drill sites don't always give results.

Mount Baker being a volcano is an ideal spot to access high temperature geothermal energy for utility-scale electricity generated by this energy.

There are 140 records of geothermal zones in Whatcom County.

Jon wants to investigate why some of the lands that are leased aren't currently pursuing geothermal energy there.

Jon also proposes that we could begin a project to illustrate how geothermal could be used in a city. A place like a large apartment complex could be an ideal location. This could show that geothermal is a good investment.

Jon mentioned a project called forge that is working on the drilling problem.

Charles mentioned an MIT project and said that he will send **Ellyn** the paper.

Jon said that there is a lot of seismic data that the oil companies have collected and they don't really want to turn it over

Sue asked about the transmission problem.

Jon said that transmission is a big issue and that transmission lines are being held up in court in places like California.

Eddy asked about the DNR research and if he was able to find anything there

Jon said that he has found that a lot of DNR research is out of date but he has found that WSU has a lot of research ongoing in the state.

Phil Mentioned that the WWU Geology department could also be a good place to look at.

11. CIAC Advisory Role to Executive and Council

CNG Franchise Update- **Chris**

Chris talked with the real estate manager that the negotiation is proceeding and it is going along with our recommendations in the process

Steve asked if the term will be 5 years

Chris said that will be argued for in the negotiations

Wind Energy Code Subcommittee – **Eddie**

Eddy said that their group has met and that they are working on line-item revisions.

Kaylee asked if **Eddy** needed council sponsor for that

Eddy accepted **Kaylee's** proposal to sponsor

Climate Action Dashboard – **Steve, Dave, Chris**

Steve said that this group has been meeting and decided that the best course of action would include an internal data hub as well as a public element on the website for free and see what the county is working on in terms of climate goals.

Dave said that he found some graphics from King County that he will send to **Steve**

Chris said that currently the county has created a hub for watershed recovery but it is only accessible by staff and showed that interface as an example to what the goal of the dashboard development could be.

Steve said that in terms of next steps he is looking to civic tech experts to help get this information out and accessible. He also suggested hiring a contractor to get this webpage set up.

12. Old/New Business

Sue offered to do a presentation on the DNR forest proposal and legacy forests and put together a data analysis.

Steve said that the County food committee is putting together a grant proposal and he asked about food system related projects.

Ellyn said that she was considering having a planning session in May and having committee members to pick an area in implementation and come up with ideas on how to get these things started this year.

Steve is also looking for additional help in terms of outreach to help with running the Instagram account. He has reached out to WWU and they are looking for a student to help take it over

13. Adjourn

Next meeting scheduled for May 5, 2022

Recorded by **Katherine Kissinger**

Staff contact, **Chris Elder**