

GREENSBORO COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY COUNCIL
greensboro-nc.gov/sustainability
Minutes, Regular Meeting
3pm, Monday, October 10, 2017
Transportation Conference Room, 3rd Floor
Melvin Municipal Office Building

CSC Members Present:

Faun Finley, Chair	Bill McNeil	Dr. Vicki Foust
Kelli Swain	Will Yearns	

Staff and Others Present:

Jeff Sovich, Planning	Ellen VanVelsor, Citizens Climate Lobby	Maura Conley, UNCG Sustainability
Dana Clukey, Planning	George Wissmiller, Watch NC	

Chair Finley called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

1) APPROVE MINUTES OF JUNE 12, 2017 MEETING

Chair Finley suggested changes to the August 14th minutes and Ms Swain offered corrections to the June 12th minutes. Ms Swain moved for approval of both minutes, Mr. McNeil seconded and the Community Sustainability Council (CSC) approved.

2) CHAIR GREETINGS, WELCOME VISITORS

Chair Finley welcomed visitors in attendance and informed the group of her recent visit to Ireland and would speak to it at the December meeting.

3) APPROVE CHANGES TO CSC BY-LAWS

Chair Finley postponed this item.

4) DEBRIEF: TEXON BIODIESEL PROJECT

Dr. Foust told the committee of how biodiesel from local states is going to be injected into the Texon pipeline, which is limited to a certain percentage of the total. There will be around 10 jobs created in a small facility in Greensboro. Dr. Foust stated that it is located near the tank farm on Market Street on Colonials properties, distributed to Selma, Fayetteville, Greensboro and Apex. Chair Finley asked if this project could be related to the Community Sustainability Council’s efforts. Dr. Foust didn’t have a direct connection.

Mr. McNeil asked if there are policy decisions that can affect the success of the project and biodiesel as a whole. Dr. Foust stated that there are no North Carolina companies or facilities that meet the regulations and certifications required.

5) WATER RESOURCES ART ON THE MITCHELL PLANT CLEARWELL PROJECT

Chair Finley reminded the group of Steve Drew, Director of Water Resources, and his visit to the CSC in the past. In her workings with Mr. Drew, they discussed the possibility of art work on the Mitchell Plant Clearwell Project, located at Battleground Avenue and Benjamin Parkway and directly adjacent to the planned greenway path. Chair Finley talked about the potential for the artwork to be related to sustainability. She also fielded questions related to the project: there is no planned funding, there is no timeline as the project is in its infancy, and there are educational tours of the plant.

6) PRESENTATION BY CITIZEN'S CLIMATE LOBBY

Ms VanVelsor talked about the Citizen's Climate Lobby (CCL) and its laser focus on taking action in one particular area: to create political will for a carbon fee and dividend program to be introduced in Congress. The Greensboro chapter is relatively young, only 6 months. Ms VanVelsor gave information related to the program. It is a carbon pricing proposal and different from a carbon tax because it includes a dividend. It is market based, allowing it to be palatable to conservatives. Every household would receive a dividend check. One of the concerns is usually how it would affect the economy. There is large support among climate scientists and companies, including Exxon.

Mr. Sovich asked how the fee and dividend is determined. Ms VanVelsor stated that the figures have been obtained through the Treasury Department and a private company (REMY?). The intent is not to harm the economy. The proposal is going through the technical work to get it introduced to Congress. Two ways that they get political will: they lobby Congress about this policy and to the point where they at least won't block the measure. Ms VanVelsor stated that it is going well with NC representatives and that the local chapter is working in particular with Representative Ted Budd. The CCL is also educating the public to let them know they must voice their opinion about climate change with their representatives. Ms VanVelsor stated that the proposal text is subject to change and that the CCL would support a carbon tax.

Chair Finley asked how CSC can help. Ms VanVelsor stated that the CCL asks for resolutions of support from municipalities and endorsements from organizations. She stated that they would probably ask for Greensboro City Council support after the first of 2018. Ms Swain asked about helping individuals to cover the upfront costs of fuel. Ms VanVelsor stated that the goal of the program is to change the industry. Also, she stated that dividends typically help the young, old, and rural populations more so than others. The average dividend is \$300 per person. Mr. Yearns asked how companies that are paying carbon fees would have an incentive to reduce carbon fee, therefore the dividend will go away eventually and will upset the public. He asked if it would be incentivizing the wrong thing. Ms VanVelsor stated that it is a temporary measure to get carbon stopped and that the end goal is to get back to 1992 carbon levels.

Ms VanVelsor informed the CSC that the CCL Greensboro Chapter is showing Merchants of Doubt at Kathleen Clay Brian Library at 7:00 on October 10th.

BREAK - The CSC adjourned for a brief recess, then reconvened.

7) STAR COMMUNITIES STRATEGY

Chair Finley suggest that the CSC prioritize the initiatives that have been proposed to the group: BEE City, Bright City, and STAR Community. There was discussion concerning all initiatives, but mainly around STAR Community. Dr. Foust stated that the CSC could ask other groups for help in determining the requirements and meeting those requirements for becoming a STAR community. It would also give the CSC a chance to bring all these groups together. Mr. McNeil asked what next steps are for the STAR community, including how to get feedback from City Council. Chair Finley stated that all of these organizations and programs are related to being a STAR Community. She suggested that they discuss the feasibility of the program. Mr. McNeil suggested that one starting place would be to look at local cities that are already STAR communities. Dr. Foust has a spreadsheet showing which communities have STAR communities designation, a suitability plan and other factors. She also stated that the City already has certain credits for a STAR community, which would just need proof, giving the example of proving the Ambient Noise and Light factor by linking to the ordinance requiring those protections.

Chair Finley stated that the work would be in compiling data and that the CSC needs to determine how far they want to move with this and need to get buy in from the management level. Chair Finley asked each member if they wanted to continue to investigate STAR Communities: Each

member stated they would like to know more. Mr. Yearns asked if there is an initiative that is supported by economic development. Ms Conley said it would be a good way to highlight what we are already doing and asked if there was a reason to not complete the application. Dr. Foust was concerned with who would actually complete the application and the work associated with keeping up the designation.

Mr. Yearns looked up the cost associated with the initial application and annual maintenance and said that it might be a hard sell. Ms Conley asked if a graduate student could complete the application. Mr. Sovich stated that there would be legal issues with hiring a student. Mr. McNeil said he is curious to know how other STAR Communities have proceeded without a paid sustainability position. Chair Finley stated that if the CSC fully supports the STAR community then the CSC should present the idea and a plan to the City.

8) INCIDENTAL ITEMS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

- A. ITEMS FROM CHAIR** – Chair Finley made a motion to establish the 2018 calendar beginning in January, Ms Swain seconded and the CSC voted to have official meetings starting in January. Be Corp was voted against in Raleigh.
- B. ITEMS FROM VICE-CHAIR** – The Imagine a Day without Water will be held October 12th. The City's Water Resource Department is hosting.
- C. ITEMS FROM CSC MEMBERS** – Mr. Yearns stated that the Missing Middle workshop held by the City's Planning Department on October 19th is important to the City's Sustainability. Chair Finley reminded the CSC of the Reception for Boards and Commissions hosted by the Planning Department on October 17th.
- D. ITEMS FROM PUBLIC** – Ms Conley told the CSC about the Sustainability Film Festival, Sustainability Conversation series, and the Ashby Dialogue series at UNCG.
- E. ITEMS FROM STAFF** – None.

9) ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF ABSENCES

Chair Finley moved to acknowledge the excused absence of Ms Mansell, Ms Meredith, Mr. Pierre, and Ms Ritter-Lipscomb; Mr. Yearns seconded the motion. The CSC acknowledged these excused absences.

10) ADJOURNMENT

Chair Finley made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 4:56 pm.