

**GREENSBORO COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY COUNCIL**  
[greensboro-nc.gov/csc](http://greensboro-nc.gov/csc)  
**Minutes, Regular Meeting**

4pm, Monday, January 11, 2021  
 Virtual Meeting, using the Zoom videoconferencing tool

**CSC Members Present:**

Vicki Foust, Chair	Veda Howell	Nicole Gaines
Tiffany Oliva, Vice-Chair	Raleigh Stout	Susan Phillips
Sophia Dubrovsky	Jacques Pierre	Jonathan King

**Staff and Others Present:**

Marikay Abuzuaiter, Greensboro City Council	Stephen Carter, CoG Transportation
Kimberly Sowell, Assistant City Manager	Judson Clinton, CoG Planning
Mike Borchers, CoG Water Resources	Elizabeth Link, CoG Planning
Zach Peterson CoG Water Resources	Christine Swanson, CoG Planning
Laine Roberts, CoG Water Resources	Jeff Sovich, CoG Planning
Jodie Stanley, CoG Human Rights	Melanie Neal, Guilford Metro 9-1-1
Allen Hunt, CoG Human Rights	Jim Young, CoG Libraries
Karen Kixmiller, CoG Budget & Evaluation	Will Yearns, CSC Advisor
Kenney McDowell, CoG Engineering & Inspections	Russ Behn, CoG Neighborhood Development
Sergey Kobelev, CoG Engineering & Inspections	Michael Pendergraff, Greensboro Neighborhood Congress
Paula Sieber, Guilford Urban Farming Initiative	Margaret Rowlett, Solar Power Now Coalition
Jean Pudlo, Guilford Non-Profit Consortium	Bill McNeil, Solar Power Now Coalition
Laura Oxner, Repurpose Food Recovery	Erin Marken, Raymond James Financial
Gerry Alfano, Greensboro Neighborhood Congress	Sean MacInnes, UNCG Sustainability Office
Davis Montgomery, Duke Energy	Shad Smith, Climate Reality Project
Skip Yeakel, GIA Link, Inc.	Crystal Dixon, UNCG
Plaxides Chitiyo, UNCG	Sue Polinsky, Tech Triad
Steve Drew, Resident	Mary Luckhaus, Resident

**1. Chair Greeting / Welcome Visitors**

Chair Foust called the meeting to order and welcomed visitors and city staff in attendance in 2021.

**2. CSC 2021 Officer Nominations and Elections**

Chair Foust called for nominations for the position of CSC Chair for calendar year 2021. Ms Phillips nominated Vicki Foust for Chair, seconded by Jacques Pierre. Chair Foust accepted the nomination. With no other nominations, a roll call vote was conducted. The nomination was approved 9-0.

Chair Foust called for nominations for the position of CSC Vice-Chair for calendar year 2021. Jacques Pierre nominated Tiffany Oliva, seconded by Jonathan King. The nomination was approved 9-0.

Chair Foust stated on behalf of Vice-Chair Oliva and herself, they are very much looking forward to great things happening with the CSC in 2021. The CSC is a great team and has done good things in the past and will continue to do so.

### **3. Strategic Energy Plan Introductory Presentation**

Chair Foust and Jeff Sovich gave an introductory presentation about the Strategic Energy Plan. Jeff Sovich stated in December of 2019, the Greensboro City Council adopted a resolution that called for development of a 20-year Strategic Energy Plan (SEP) for the City of Greensboro. The resolution indicated that a draft plan was to be presented to City Council within one year, which would have been December 3 of 2020. On March 13, 2020, response to the COVID-19 pandemic began in Greensboro, which up-ended everyone's lives and delayed the launch of the SEP. In recognition of this delay and all the changes that were needed throughout city operations, the City Council adopted a follow-up resolution in September of 2020, extending the due date for the SEP to August 24, 2021. The CSC and staff are moving forward to ensure meeting the deadline.

The resolution specifies that the Strategic Energy Plan should include:

- Steps to reduce GHG emissions from city operations by at least 40% from the estimated 2005 level by 2025;
- Steps to reduce energy consumption per foot in city-owned buildings by at least 40% from the estimated 2005 levels by 2025;
- Goals to reach 100% renewable energy in City Operations by 2040;
- Robust and inclusive programs of public engagement, outreach, and education;
- Preparation of an updated GHG inventory every two years; and
- Publication of an annual progress report, describing implementation activities over the preceding year.

The Resolution also calls for creation of a diverse community partnership comprised of city staff, residents, corporate partners, and other interested stakeholders to collaborate and provide guidance in developing the Strategic Energy Plan. Mr. Sovich advised that today's presentation and Q&A session are initial steps toward assembling the Community Partnership. Wednesday, January 27, will be an opportunity for anyone interested in being part of the Community Partnership to discuss ideas, priorities, interests, and concerns, and questions regarding the SEP. More opportunities for public engagement will be scheduled throughout the process, so that we continue to consult with the community partnership and ensure that interested individuals can participate at their convenience and interest level.

Chair Foust stated that for development of the Strategic Energy Plan, the CSC will create a long-term blueprint that focuses and guides the city's efforts and actions toward a defined energy vision. The big picture of this energy vision is described in the resolution that City Council passed. The SEP will include specific strategies and actions intended to achieve the goals and interim milestones. The strategies and actions will allow the city to identify and allocate resources needed to advance toward the goals. Chair Foust described a 10-step process for developing the SEP:

- Form a leadership team
- Identify and engage stakeholders
- Develop an energy vision
- Assess the current energy profile
- Develop energy goals and strategies
- Identify and prioritize actions
- Create a financing strategy
- Develop a blueprint for implementation

- Develop an evaluation plan
- Adopt and publicize the plan

There will be multiple points throughout this process for additional engagement with public stakeholders. The scope of the SEP is limited to a focus on government buildings, facilities, infrastructure, operations, and transportation. The strategies and actions in the plan will concentrate on activities that City government has direct influence on such as; personnel, operations, planning, budgeting. The staff leadership team includes members from almost every city department. Chair Foust stated CSC will be listening to the community to receive input and having community members as a part of this team. Chair Foust was hopeful community members will collaborate with the CSC to help develop this plan. The CSC will be looking for ideas and expertise, and representation from groups that are interested in this plan. Students may want to gain experience through participating in this planning process. Community stakeholder engagement is essential for ensuring that the plan meets the needs and expectations of the public and that there is a broad base of support for strategies and actions of the plan.

The CSC will work with stakeholders to gain insights regarding funding sources, grants, and other resources that can assist with implementation of the plan. An important aspect of Sustainability is ensuring transparency in city actions and the CSC wants to be transparent about the entire effort. Chair Foust provided the reasons for engagement; Information, Education, Soliciting input, and Contributions. The types of engagement CSC is looking for would be: Advisory Committees or local experts and Working groups. Chair Foust displayed the actual resolution on the CSC webpage of the City of Greensboro website. Chair Foust advised that the SEP applies only municipal operations and not community-wide. There could be some programs and policy changes that may result in engaging the larger community. The SEP will include an assessment of the city's current energy profile. There will also be an inventory of relevant city policies, and any relevant plans or policies of Duke Energy and other energy providers.

Next, clear goals and strategies will be developed for reducing the city's greenhouse gas footprint, such as expanding solar and other sources of renewable energy. The language used in the SEP's energy goals and strategies will need to be very clear, specific, and measurable, to ensure everyone is on the same page and that they can be successfully implemented. To do this, input received from stakeholders, both internal and external, will be woven in throughout the planning process. Once goals, strategies, and implementation actions have been developed, a system will be created to prioritize them, based on a variety of criteria. The goal is to put together a financing strategy that will allow implementation to move forward that achieves the greatest greenhouse gas reductions as quickly as possible with the lowest cost and broadest benefits. There are a lot of opportunities for funding such as a Green fund, and a Sustainability project revolving fund where the savings can be rolled back into additional projects. Performance contracts can also be an opportunity. Identifying potential funding and financial mechanisms can be used to determine which ones would work best.

A blueprint for implementation is the next step, detailing the timelines and responsible departments for carrying out actions that can be achieved by 2040. Everything will be incorporated into the Strategic Plan. Then, a system will be developed for evaluating the implementation process and measuring performance results. As the City Council develops future budgets and department level long-range plans are developed, this plan will be rolled into those processes. It's a complicated process, but there are staff from nearly every department on our team, and they're very smart, talented people who are excited about developing the plan and about making Greensboro more sustainable.

The final step in developing the SEP is to submit the final draft plan document to the City Council for adoption by August 24, 2021. Once the plan is adopted, implementation can begin. Chair Foust stated the SEP will probably need to be tweaked as it goes forward as things will continuously change during the 20-year plan horizon.

Mr. Sovich stated that today's Q&A session is step one in building the diverse Community Partnership called for in the December 2019 resolution. There will also be a public listening session on Wednesday, January 27, from 3:30 to 5:30 pm. That listening session will be an opportunity for anyone in the community to attend and discuss their ideas, priorities, interests, concerns, or remaining questions related to the Strategic Energy Plan. The city seeks assistance from stakeholders who are present at these meetings, and recipients of CSC email announcements to help spread the word and forward the invitations out to others in the community who they believe should or would like to be involved and included in this process.

Chair Foust stated this is a huge lift and will not be easy, but we have the help of a great team of city staff. This plan is near and dear to everyone within the CSC and very excited to see it launched. There has been huge community involvement in making it happen and wanting to be a part of it.

Mr. Sovich stated today's presentation will be posted on the CSC web site, along with information regarding the January 27, meeting. An email reminder will be sent out as well. A new page is being added to the City web site devoted to information about the Strategic Energy Plan.

## **Break**

Break at 4:45 pm to 4:55 pm.

## **4. Strategic Energy Plan Q & A – All Attendees.**

Chair Foust thanked everyone for attending. The remainder of the meeting will be for attendees to raise specific questions, thoughts, or comments.

Skip Yeakel stated his interest lies in the transportation arena and was curious if anyone had any thoughts on how measurements would be made and if there were any plans that might be in the transportation pipeline that he could help with. Chair Foust stated it was good to have someone on the Community Partnership with experience in the transportation field. The SEP will include several metrics relevant to transportation such as gallons of fuel per mile and greenhouse gas emissions per gallon. Sergey Kobelev stated that a metric of kilowatts per mile is used for the city's 16 electric buses. Jacques Pierre advised that BTUs is a measure of energy that can be readily converted for analysis across all use categories. Chair Foust stated greenhouse gas emission was a good point to look at energy in general, whether looking at gas or electricity, but that ultimately all energy usage data will be converted to BTUs as a single common unit of measure.

Mr. Yeakel advised he served on the Department of Energy's 21st Century Truck Partnership for over 20 years. Mr. Yeakel stated by the time 2040 is here, would hope there would be some penetration of electric vehicles in the city fleet. Chair Foust advised there are 16 electric buses and further EV procurement will definitely be part of the SEP. Jeff Sovich advised there are about 1,300 or 1,400 vehicles in the city's total fleet. Chair Foust stated one strategy that may be part of the SEP is to establish a policy requiring all city vehicles acquired after a specified date to be EVs. Stephen Carter stated that the Transportation Department intends to continue purchasing electric buses as appropriate. Transportation is also in charge of the city's public parking decks and surface lots, some of

which already have public EV charging stations. Transportation is considering adding more EV chargers.

Paula Sieber stated that the City of Boston has a goal for all vehicles acquired after 2035 to be EVs and asked if Greensboro could do better than that. Chair Foust responded that Boston already has a plan in place and has a head start on implementation, so it may not be possible for Greensboro to catch up. If Duke Energy accelerated its phase in of solar panels, Greensboro could reach its goals much faster. A lot needs to be accomplished and the city does not have unlimited funds.

Margaret Rowlett asked if there was a group that will be studying what other cities are doing, so we can learn from their plans. Chair Foust responded that various working groups will be formed and further information shared soon. There are some energy plans from other cities that could provide good examples. The City of Asheville has a Strategic Energy Plan in place. CSC could learn a lot from what they are doing and also what the state is doing. The state, through the EO-80 initiative from the Governor, is developing a strong clean energy plan for the state. CSC would like to partner with the NC Department of Environmental Quality for technical assistance. Ms Rowlett also asked what role Duke Energy would have in helping Greensboro achieve the goals of the SEP. Chair Foust responded that Duke Energy is and will be an essential partner of the City of Greensboro in achieving the goals of the SEP. Duke Energy will need to be at the table at every stage of the process.

Paula Sieber, via chat, stated landscaping devices are a huge source of greenhouse gas emissions and could be an opportunity for low cost, quick improvements. Chair Foust responded these are all things that need to be on the table. All city departments will need to look at their energy use and identify ways to improve energy efficiency and reduce energy demand.

Michael Pendergraff, stated he was a retired attorney. One thing he learned during his practice was you don't need to reinvent the wheel. Mr. Pendergraff suspected somebody somewhere has all of the technical things worked out and the question is can the staff team find them. Sergey Kobelev, stated the technical issues were discussed a year ago among people from local engineering firms who were involved over the years in design and construction of the facilities. These companies are ready to participate in developing the SEP project. Mr. Sovich asked if Mr. Pendergraff was referring to what units of measure should be used, or whether the measurements had been carried out to determine many kilowatts per square feet are currently being used, and how many miles per gallon, or BTUs per mile. Mr. Pendergraff responded the concepts have probably been worked out by somebody. The question would be has anybody worked out the measurements. That is, how did you reach those measurements and how do you determine those measurements. Mr. Sovich advised some of the information is available, some of it is not or has not ever been compiled in the form that it would be needed for the SEP.

Chair Foust stated Greensboro's SEP will be developed using a process described in the Department of Energy's "Guide to Community Energy Strategic Planning", so we are not going into this blind. Mr. Sovich stated for the greenhouse gas inventory, we will need to use one of the widely accepted greenhouse gas inventory protocols to ensure that what is measured is directly compatible with what other communities have measured. Chair Foust stated that Greensboro will use the World Resources Institute protocol for its GHG inventory, which is the most recognized throughout the world. There is a specific set of formulas designed for municipal government operations. Mr. Pendergraff asked if most of the technical work has already been done. Mr. Sovich responded that an outline of the planning process has been developed, but that the technical work has not really begun.

Chair Foust stated that not all cities can use the same strategies and actions to reach their goals, but Greensboro may be able to borrow from and adapt ideas from what other cities have done. All of Greensboro's municipal operations data will be collected and we'll be working with partners such as Duke Energy and the NC Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ), in order to prepare our GHG inventory and SEP.

Bill McNeil asked whether the CSC will see and review the Strategic Energy Plan before August of 2024. Mr. Sovich responded that the CSC will be intimately involved in the process of developing the SEP and will be well aware of the contents of the plan before it is presented to the City. Chair Foust stated the intention of CSC through this year is to have updates on the SEP at every official meeting. A big piece of this is going to be transparency; the CSC wants people to understand each step of the way and be a part of the process.

Margaret Rowlett asked whether Duke Energy would provide financial assistance and other types of support. It would be helpful to know that answer because Chair Foust has pointed out that CSC would not be able to do a lot of things without assistance. Chair Foust stated she could not answer the question of financial assistance from Duke Energy and noted Duke Energy was a positive strategic partner with the City of Asheville. There are programs that are available that CSC may be able to capitalize on as part of the Energy Plan. Davis Montgomery stated Duke Energy has assisted the City with a couple of sustainability projects. Duke Energy provided approximately \$450,000 for rapid charge equipment for the city's electric buses and worked with Adam Fisher on that project. The money came through a specific program within Duke Energy. Duke Energy also has energy efficiency programs and energy rebate programs available to the City. The City did do some of the lighting upgrades and other things to the tune of several hundred thousand dollars on some of those programs. Duke Energy's involvement directly in terms of financing would be dependent upon the Public Utilities Commission and what programs are in place at the time.

Sergey Kobelev added that Duke Energy provided a great deal of financial support for solar energy. Mr. Kobelev asked to make it possible for John Millard, the city's account manager from Duke Energy, to be able to participate in this project. Mr. Millard knows the City of Greensboro and is also responsible for places like Cone Hospital, large manufacturers, and more. Mr. Kobelev stated Mr. Millard is one of the most knowledgeable people in the field. Chair Foust stated Mr. Millard also works with NCA&T and was very helpful in determining how the university could reduce its GHG footprint and get the best rates. Mr. Montgomery stated that he is Duke Energy's District Manager for the district including the City of Greensboro. John Millard is Duke Energy's large account executive for the City of Greensboro and has very deep knowledge of energy usage of the City's account and other large accounts.

Michael Pendergraff asked if there was a line item in the city budget for the CSC or the Energy Plan and if so, the dollar amount(s). Chair Foust responded that the CSC does not have a budget. Relevant members of city staff have been directed to be a part of the SEP team so a significant investment of staff resources will be involved.

Shad Smith asked if there could be more than one forum or breakout group to ensure greater participation. Chair Foust stated the meetings would be open. Mr. Sovich stated that today's meeting and the January 27 event, are not the only opportunities there will be for public engagement or participation by community partnership. There will be multiple opportunities throughout the process. We'll check on a regular basis to ensure that we're hearing from stakeholders what they need to tell us, and that they're hearing from us

what they need to know. We'll keep an open line of communication and collaboration throughout the process.

Michael Pendergraft stated that "wherever your heart is, there is where your money is" and expressed concern, that there are only 5 years left to reach 40% reduction goal time for action is running out. Chair Foust stated that at some point, the City will budget beyond the planning process, but currently funding has only been established for preparing the plan, not for implementation. When the plan has been adopted, City budget resources will be established to support implementation.

Margaret Rowlett stated that in Durham and Asheville, the counties are big players in getting to the clean energy goals and asked how are the City and CSC plan to communicate and work with Guilford County on this work. Chair Foust responded that Guilford County is welcome and encouraged to participate as a member of the Community Partnership. There may be a greater role for the county when we start to explore emissions and energy reduction efforts at the community-wide level. Jeff Sovich stated that at present, there are no specific plans to directly involve Guilford County in preparing the Strategic Energy Plan, since the focus of the SEP will be on City Operations.

Ms Gaines stated that she was glad to see people from a variety of backgrounds on the call, especially Allen Hunt, with the Human Rights Department. It indicates CSC and the City of Greensboro are connecting with all of the aspects of sustainability and the clean energy plan. As the SEP is prepared, it will be important to ensure that information about the plan is provided in non-technical plain English so that the message can reach people as far and wide as possible. There are people of color and others in the community who may not recognize some of the language.

Russ Behn stated that the SEP should walk in-step with Duke Energy, regarding their short term, 5-year, 10-year plans to be in sync with their every move. Chair Foust stated Duke Energy is working on their Integrated Resource Plan for the next 15 years. Mr. Montgomery stated the Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) is something Duke Energy is required to deliver to the NC Utilities Commission (NCUC). The latest IRP examines 6 different scenarios with different combinations of generation resources. How much natural gas, how much hydroelectric, how much solar and others. There are projections for the cost of energy in each of these scenarios. The IRP presents the detailed pros and cons of each scenario. The plan is available to everyone at this meeting and is a very interesting read (<https://starw1.ncuc.net/NCUC/ViewFile.aspx?id=043e4966-fec7-43d4-bf00-b3eb7c788f90>). The State Energy Office will take a look at the scenarios and will choose one, or may choose a hybrid of several scenarios, as a sort of preliminary approval of how Duke Energy should make investments moving forward.

Skip Yeakel stated that with regard to transportation, please keep the US Department of Energy's longstanding "Clean Cities Coalition Network" program in mind; as the SEP proceeds, good to have a bid team at the ready. Some cost-share with Guilford County would also be helpful. Chair Foust stated those were good points.

Chair Foust asked Mr. Sovich to remind everyone how exactly they can register for the Community Partnership listening session on January 27. Mr. Sovich stated that individuals who received information about today's meeting are already on the distribution list and will receive the information about the January 27 meeting. The Zoom session for that meeting has not been created, but will be within the next few days. As soon as that is done, Mr. Sovich will send out the email distribution about the meeting to all of those on that distribution list. New email addresses have been already been added to that list since today's meeting was originally announced.

Mr. Sovich advised that anyone who would like to be on the distribution list should contact him via email at [Jeffrey.sovich@greensboro-nc.gov](mailto:Jeffrey.sovich@greensboro-nc.gov) and they will receive the information directly and not miss anything. Chair Foust asked if they would need to RSVP as was done for this meeting. Mr. Sovich responded that the process should be simpler because it is not a formal meeting of the CSC. The details on how to participate will be finalized in the next few days and will be spelled out in the announcement message. Information about the meeting will also be posted on the City website and as many of the City's social media accounts as possible.

Marikay Abuzuaiter was recognized for her valued opinions and help with CSC matters, and her service on the City Council. Chair Foust thanked Kimberly Sowell with the City Manager's office for being on the call and being an advocate of the resolution and plan. Ms Sowell thanked everyone and stated she was looking forward to working on this project and the plan as it comes together. Ms Sowell advised that the City has contracted with Chair Foust to help pull this plan together. Part of the work that Chair Foust has been doing as the Chair of the CSC utilized her expertise to ensure the City had a really sound and good plan. Chair Foust will be working even more intricately with the City in pulling the plan together. Chair Foust stated her thanks to everyone on the call.

### **Acknowledgement of Absences**

There were no CSC members absent. Chair Foust thanked CSC members for being dedicated and attending all of the meetings and being all-in. Everyone has worked hard on different efforts. Chair Foust stated she was honored to be working with everyone.

### **7. Incidentals and Announcements**

- **Items from Chair** – Chair Foust advised Tiffany Oliva was named as a 20s mover and shaker.
- **Items from Vice-Chair** – Tiffany Oliva stated she was looking forward to being involved in the SEP process and seeing the results. She thanked the CSC for her nomination. Referring to Chair Foust's announcement, she added that the Triad Business Journal has named 20 people in their 20s who are doing noteworthy work in the Triad. She was included, specifically with regard to her work on hydroponic farming and urban gardening. In addition, her husband was also included in the list. Chair Foust suggested Tiffany team up with Paula Sieber and Laura Oxner regarding urban gardening and food issues.
- **Items from CSC Members** – None.
- **Items from Public** – Shad Smith announced that a Climate Reality Project: Guilford County, NC Chapter has been established. Chair Foust added that she, along with Shad Smith, Nicole Gaines, and others worked together to form this chapter. Shad Smith is working on a "Truth in Ten" presentation for the local Rotary Club on how all need to be working to address climate change. Anyone interested in becoming a member of this organization is invited to contact us.
- **Items from Staff** – None.

**8. Adjournment** - Chair Foust adjourned the meeting at 5:55 pm.