

GREENSBORO COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY COUNCIL
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Minutes, Regular Meeting

4pm, Monday, September 13, 2021
Virtual Meeting, using the Zoom videoconferencing tool

CSC Members Present:

Dr. Vicki Foust, Chair	Veda Howell	Jacques Pierre
Dr. Susan Phillips	Dr. Marcia Hale	Sophia Dubrovsky
Nicole Gaines		

Staff and Others Present:

Will Yearn, CSC Advisor	Marikay Abuzuaiter, City Council
Chris Marriott, Field Operations	Jim Young, Libraries
Sergey Kobelev, CoG Engineering & Inspections	Jeff Sovich, CoG Planning
Marlene Pratto, League of Women Voters of the Piedmont Triad	Sean MacInnes, UNCG Office of Sustainability
Carmen Honeycomb, Volvo	Davis Montgomery, Duke Energy
Laura Oxner, Simple Gesture / RePurpose Food Recovery	Trent Rogers, resident
James Allred, resident	Grace Messinger, resident

1. Chair Greeting / Welcome Visitors

Chair Foust called the meeting to order at 4:00pm and welcomed visitors and city staff in attendance.

2. Welcome Taylor Jones-Curtis (New At-Large Member)

Ms Jones-Curtis did not attend the meeting. Welcome and introduction of Ms Jones-Curtis will be taken up at a later meeting.

3. Approval of July 26 CSC Meeting Minutes

Veda Howell moved to approve the minutes of the July 26 meeting, as presented. The motion was seconded by Nicole Gaines. The CSC approved the motion unanimously.

4. Tiffany Oliva (Vice Chair) Resignation from CSC

Chair Foust stated that Vice Chair Oliva has resigned from the CSC due to an increase in her hours at work and other commitments. Ms Oliva's resignation leaves a vacancy on the CSC, in the seat designated to represent City Council District 3. The City Council has been informed of the vacancy and the process to fill this seat has been initiated.

5. Elect New Vice Chair

Chair Foust noted that Ms Oliva's departure means that the CSC will need to elect a new Vice Chair from among its members. She offered a nomination of Jacques Pierre to fill this position through the remainder of 2021. Mr. Pierre has previously served as vice chair and has done so with distinction. Nicole Gaines moved to accept the nomination of Jacques

Pierre as Vice Chair, and was seconded by Dr. Hale. The CSC voted unanimously to elect Mr. Pierre as Vice Chair.

6. Update on Lighting Ordinance Proposal

Chair Foust stated that the CSC now has sufficient information to be able to move forward with developing a proposed text amendment to the City's Land Development Ordinance that would make it compliant with relevant portions of the Model Lighting Ordinance. This effort is aimed at meeting the requirements of the Light Pollution Reduction credit in the LEED for Cities certification program. She suggested that the CSC send background information to Planning Director Sue Schwartz and invite her to participate in the October 11 work session, to begin the conversation and get a reality check about the process to develop and adopt an LDO text amendment. She noted that it may be helpful to include Chris Spencer in the conversation, since he works with Duke Energy on issues related to street lamps. The Light Pollution Reduction credit also includes requirements for street lamps.

7. Update on Office of Sustainability Recommendation

Chair Foust stated that she presented a brief summary of the recommendation for establishing, funding, and staffing an Office of Sustainability to City Council Member Marikay Abuzuaiter. She understood that Ms Abuzuaiter would pass the recommendation along to the City Manager in order to begin exploring how the recommendation could be implemented. Chair Foust also noted that because the need for an Office of Sustainability was mentioned in public comments throughout the process of developing the Strategic Energy Plan, it has been suggested that this recommendation be included in the SEP. More broadly, the City is seeking to make sustainability an organization-wide priority, and in order to do so, an office dedicated to this function is needed.

Ms Abuzuaiter stated that she discussed the recommendation with Interim City Manager Chris Wilson, who recognized all of the great work the CSC has done to advance sustainability. The Interim City Manager is well aware of the value of having a centralized office that can take the lead on sustainability issues. However due to the pending process to select a new City Manager and the upcoming City Council election in 2022, this initiative may not be included in the FY 2022-2023 budget, which would be adopted in June 2022. Instead, it may have to wait until the FY 2023-2024 budget. She stated that she would ensure that the new City Manager receives this recommendation and understands that it is a top priority for her.

Sophia Dubrovsky noted that the City has been awarded over \$59 million in funding from the American Rescue Plan, and wondered if some of this funding could be used to support establishing an Office of Sustainability, or implementing some sustainability projects. Ms Abuzuaiter stated that this possibility is being explored. She noted that the City is seeking public input on how to use the ARP funds and has created an "ARP Simulator" where residents can indicate their preferences (<https://greensboro.abalancingact.com/arp-funding>), and urged everyone to do so if they have not already. She also encouraged those present to attend a public outreach event hosted by the Transit Alliance of the Piedmont at LeBauer Park on Saturday, September 23, from 3 to 5pm. This event is aimed at gathering public input on how Greensboro's ARP funding should be used.

8. Review Air Curtain Burner Letter of Support

Chair Foust stated that the CSC is generally in support of the proposal by the Field Operations Department to purchase an air curtain burner to enhance yard waste mulch operations at the White Street Landfill. However, there are a few points that need further research before the CSC will be comfortable issuing a formal letter of support.

11. Announcement of SEP Community Partnership Meeting September 22nd 4-6 pm

Note: Chair Foust adjusted the agenda order to place this item before the scheduled break period.

Chair Foust announced that the next Community Partnership meeting for development of the Strategic Energy Plan would be held on Wednesday, September 22, from 4 to 6pm. The meeting will be held on the Zoom videoconferencing platform, and will be simultaneously live-streamed on the Planning Department's Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/GreensboroPlanning>). In preparing the latest draft of the Strategic Energy Plan, Chair Foust and Jeff Sovich met with staff from nearly every City department. She stated that staff are taking the SEP very seriously and provided excellent thoughtful feedback. Following the Community Partnership meeting, the draft SEP will be revised once more into a final version that will be provided to the City Council for review and consideration.

9. Break (10 Minutes)

The CSC adjourned for a brief break at 4:37pm and reconvened at 4:47pm.

10. Review of the Strategic Energy Plan (SEP) - Finance Strategy / Actions / Implementation / Evaluation

Chair Foust stated that she would provide an overview of sections of the Strategic Energy Plan that have not previously been presented to the CSC. She also noted that the CSC had formed a task force to review the SEP through an Environmental Justice lens and recommend appropriate revisions to the plan.

The Environmental Justice task force began by developing a definition of Environmental Justice (EJ). This definition and a statement of the City's commitment to promoting EJ, by including the perspectives of low-wealth neighborhoods in decision-making processes, will be added into the next draft of the plan. A key part of this will be developing criteria to identify where the most impacted and vulnerable residents live, and expanding outreach efforts in those areas, in order to ensure their voices and concerns are heard. A complementary strategy could include offering child care or compensation to residents of vulnerable communities, in order to encourage their participation as the SEP is implemented.

Nicole Gaines stated that the EJ recommendations will be a great addition to the SEP. She added that although the upcoming Community Partnership meeting is an important effort in engaging Greensboro residents and key stakeholders, more is needed. She stated that she hoped to see all City Council members attend that meeting, and encouraging their constituents to attend. Chair Foust noted that when she presented the draft SEP during a City Council work session a few weeks ago, that Council Member Sharon Hightower

suggested the possibility of conducting a pilot project to generate clean energy by contracting with Historically Underutilized Businesses.

Among the issues addressed in the EJ recommendations are: water quality at City facilities; priority electrification of City vehicles that serve vulnerable populations; training and assistance for Historically Underutilized Businesses in securing City contracts related to clean energy; minimizing negative impacts of clean energy projects on vulnerable residents; and reducing energy and other utility expenses for low-wealth households. While these items do not all relate directly to energy and greenhouse gas emissions, these issues are important examples of the types of Environmental Justice concerns that City can take steps to address and promote a more equitable and sustainable community. Dr. Hale noted that it's important for the SEP to clearly state that without environmental justice, sustainability is not achievable; they are not two separate agendas even though they may often be pursued separately or through different means. Chair Foust noted that the next draft of the SEP will prominently feature environmental justice beginning on the first page of the plan, to clearly indicate its central importance. The EJ recommendations can also be used to guide future CSC initiatives and City plans, beyond completion of the SEP, which is narrowly focused.

Chair Foust proceeded with a summary of other revised or newly added sections of the SEP. Looking at the City's overall energy profile, it turns out that 70% of greenhouse gas emissions in city operations are produced by electricity use, followed by diesel fuel (18%), gasoline (8%) and natural gas (4%). This helps identify where the City can achieve the greatest reduction in emissions, by improving energy efficiency, reducing energy consumption, and switching to clean, renewable generation sources. In the recommendations section, the following new goals have been added to the Overall (organization-wide) subsection:

Overall

- Goal 1:** Create and fund an Office of Sustainability.
- Goal 3:** Ensure energy decisions are made with respect to environmental justice.
- Goal 4:** All City-owned buildings will meet green building standards (new construction and substantial renovations).
- Goal 5:** The City fleet will be composed entirely of zero-emission vehicles by 2040.
- Goal 6:** Increase the tree canopy throughout the city for improved air quality, reduced heat island effect, and carbon sequestration.
- Goal 7:** Develop an Energy Education Program for all City staff.
- Goal 8:** Review current purchase/lease process for potential improvement of vehicle and equipment efficiency.

A new section of recommendations called "Community Incentives" has been added, which includes the following goals:

Community Incentives

- Goal 1:** Incentivize Greensboro residents and businesses to achieve similar progress on GHG reduction, energy efficiency, and renewable energy use as the city.
- Goal 2:** Address cost burdens to ensure a just transition to renewable energy for all and prioritize at-risk populations.

A new section has been added called "Identify and Prioritize Actions" which groups various recommended actions into Immediate (Years 1-5), Mid-Range (Years 6-10), Long-Range (Years 11-15), and Horizon (Years 16-20). This section is still a work in progress.

A new section has been added called “Putting Together a Financing Strategy”, with subsections that deal with: Energy Efficiency and Energy Conservation Financing; Solar Installation Financing; Energy Development Project Financing; and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Financing. This section is also still in development.

A new section has been added called “Evaluation Plan” which describes how implementation of the SEP will be monitored and evaluated. Implementation of the SEP will include preparation of an annual progress report that contains an update on the implementation schedule and justification for any missed deadlines; an update on overall energy consumption and justification for missed reduction goals; and an updated greenhouse gas inventory (every 2 years). The section then lists all of the recommended goals, and specifies evaluation methods and metrics. This section is also still in development.

12. Acknowledgement of Absences

Chair Foust acknowledged the absence of Taylor Jones-Curtis.

13. Incidentals and Announcements

- **Items from Chair** – None.
- **Items from Vice-Chair** – None.
- **Items from CSC Members** – None.
- **Items from Public** – None.
- **Items from Staff** – None.

14. Adjournment - Chair Foust adjourned the meeting at 5:59 pm.