



**City of Tacoma
Sustainable Tacoma Commission
Meeting Minutes**

Date: May 23, 2019

Commission Members Present: Phil Coughlan, Liberty Evans-Agnew, Chris Karnes, Lexi Brewer, Grace Sullivan, Matthew Benedict, Emily Pinckney

Commission Members Excused: Todd Hay, Jade Monroe

Commission Members Absent: Kenny Coble, JC Rubi

Others Present: Jim Parvey, Pat Babbitt, Mike Carey, Arin Lewis, Elizabeth Purington, Brandi Yañez-Riddle, Adriane Wilson

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chris Karnes at 4:36 pm.

Review of Agenda

Motion to approve agenda made by Lexi Brewer, motion passed.

The April 25, 2019 Meeting Minutes will be reviewed at the June meeting.

Sub-committee Updates

Infrastructure, Planning, and Sustainability – Jade Monroe

Commissioner absent.

Transportation – Chris Karnes & Matt Benedict

Nothing to report.

Planning – Lexi Brewer

Nothing to report.

TPU – Todd Hay

Commissioner absent.

Outreach – Liberty Evans-Agnew & Jade Monroe

They did not meet. Nothing to report.

Port – Kenny Coble

Commissioner absent.

Staff Updates

Pat Babbitt shared that the Google Drive and the STC website are both up-to-date. STC members can find the up-to-date Work Plan and updated Rules of Procedure on the Google Drive. They can also find a draft form of the EAP priorities that they set for 2019.

Pat updated STC members on the status of the first quarter Sustainability Small Grants. All of their selections were put through with the conditions outlined, and all necessary troubleshooting was completed.

Pat reminded the group that they still need Commissioners to sign up for EAP meetings with Councilmembers. A few spots were filled immediately, but there are still spots open.

Pat gave a brief overview of the Work Plan for the next few months.

Pat also updated the STC members that their letters regarding the proposed recycling changes and the Tacoma Dome Link Extension were sent along to Council.

Jim Parvey shared that they will begin interviewing candidates for the Green Building Specialist position on June 4th.

Letters: Tideflats Subarea Plan Stakeholder Advisory Group

There had been previous discussion of drafting a letter regarding the Stakeholder Advisory Group. Pat Babbitt had reached out for more information and shared what he learned with the group. As it currently stands, the remaining seat at the table is reserved for a non-governmental organization. Deliberation around the seats will be happening in June. There was discussion of pursuing a seat at the table versus looking for other avenues to advise on the Subarea Planning process. Lexi Brewer pointed out that it's unclear where in the process they will be able to plug in and offer input, if not through this advisory group. Matthew Benedict added that the STC can't comment on a process that they're not a part of, and that he thinks it is worth getting a seat.

Motion to make a bullet point outline for a letter made by Matthew Benedict, motion passed.

The group dictated their thoughts and Lexi took them down as bullet points. The STC would like a seat to be created on the Stakeholder Advisory Group so that STC can be represented without taking away the seat of an NGO.

Motion to adopt the bullet points with the Co-chairs drafting the final letter made by Matthew Benedict, motion to adopt passed.

Presentation from the Puyallup Watershed Initiative Just & Healthy Food System Community of Interest (JHFS COI) - Brandi Yañez-Riddle and Adriane Wilson

Brandi and Adriane introduced the STC to the work that the Just & Healthy Food System COI does. They focus on creating a just and healthy food system and on undoing institutional racism, through projects related to all of the things that touch on this/affect this. They fund ideas and projects, and they intentionally focus on funding very specific types of projects with an anti-racism and racial equity lens. They encouraged STC members to become general members or join the activity support team. In both, there are opportunities to attend socials, to listen, to help make connections, and to see where you can help. They also emphasized that they support - but don't own- many projects; ownership is with the people/organizations who run them.

After their presentation, Lexi Brewer brought up Action A3 from the EAP, which is: "Create and fund a reporting system and feedback forum for the city to hear from those suffering from food insecurity." She was wondering about the status of this, and if/how the JHFS COI was involved in this reporting system, as they are deeply involved in this topic. Pat Babbitt explained that the City has set aside a portion of his staff time to serve as a liaison to JHFS COI, providing a kind of reporting and feedback system proposed by EAP Action A3. He has started to meet regularly with the COI and reports back to other staff and stakeholders as appropriate.

Someone asked about other barriers, and Adriane and Brandi elaborated on the many barriers there are for communities of color in Tacoma/Pierce County to accessing food. There was a recent food report, which Pat will send to the STC members. Someone asked if they collaborate with health care providers at all, regarding healthy food. Brandi answered that they currently do not, but that their work revaluing food and agriculture involves connecting people to their ancestry and to new foods, which can sometimes introduce variety and healthier foods into someone's diet.

The JHFS COI and the City have worked together some, but there is room to grow there. With the current EAP expiring in 2020, it's good timing to emphasize the importance of having stakeholder involvement in creating the next plan. Emily Pinckney suggested that the JHFS COI should lead a training or workshop for the STC, to dive deeper into some of their work.

Urban Forestry Program Update - Mike Carey and Arin Lewis

Mike and Arin gave an update on the City's tree incentive program and the current status of the new Urban Forest Management Plan. The tree incentive program includes Grit City Trees and Tree Coupons. Arin emphasized the success of both programs in 2018, with more than 3,000 trees being planted. With both programs, they are prioritizing outreach to historically underserved communities. The EAP has a map outlining these communities in Tacoma, and Mike Carey mentioned the City's new equity tool that he hopes to make use of for Urban Forestry programs in the future. Arin showed how much the

programs have grown, and highlighted increased funding from Tacoma Public Utilities (TPU) that made this expansion possible. This year, for the first time, the tree coupons were \$30/off per tree. Mike emphasized that this discount allowed people to buy trees who otherwise could not have afforded them. Arin also showed data on the types of trees they gave away, and noted that they tried to give people big trees when possible, since bigger trees have more environmental benefits.

Mike gave an overview of the Urban Forest Management Plan (UFMP), which has made exciting progress. Like the EAP, the UFMP lays out actionable items that will help Tacoma get to its desired goals regarding our urban forest. One of the first stages is working with the internal city stakeholder groups who interact with trees in some way in their work. There will be an update on the plan for the STC in July, before the external engagement phase begins. A community member asked about the risks of arsenic exposure when people are planting trees. The City is not present when people are planting their trees, but Mike said they could look for more opportunities to alert people of soil conditions in Tacoma. Someone mentioned tying in the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department's Dirt Alert resources into the coupon and giveaway programs. Mike shared that an important outcome of the consulting work will be proposed draft changes to the Municipal Code so that the code better matches our tree goals. STC should have a chance to weigh in on these proposed changes. They hope to accomplish a number of things with the community outreach component, including increased awareness of Urban Forestry and a better understanding of what people need and expect from the Urban Forestry team. Emily Pinckney asked about how much they work with community groups, especially groups that center voices of color. Mike said that he would like to be able to spend more time reaching out to groups and listening and collaborating. Mike and Emily will follow up on this conversation and discuss some potential collaboration.

Sustainable Tacoma Commission's 2019 Priorities - Discussion with Councilmember Beale

Councilmember Beale highlighted his interests in transportation, land use, and equity, and noted that he was glad to hear so many great conversations today. He is interested in being involved in the 2020 update to the EAP and in thinking about how the City frames its new goals. Do we take small bites or make bold statements about GHG reductions? He voiced his support for bold and aspirational goals. There was some discussion of EAP Actions T1 and T4 and the progress being made. Lexi Brewer pointed out that if the EAP will need to be updated soon, STC should make a plan to request funding. She notes that a bold and actionable plan would likely require involving a consulting group. Councilmember Beale encouraged the STC members to prioritize the EAP in their conversations with councilmembers. The timing is good, as their conversations about the next budget are just now coming up. There was also discussion of land use in Tacoma, and the land in Tacoma that is primarily single family homes. Land use and home ownership are racial justice and environmental justice issues in Tacoma. Areas of low density housing have a negative impact on housing goals, transit goals, and environmental goals.

Commissioner Comments –

None

Guest Comments –

None

Public Comment –

There was a comment to suggest that the City should be better about using small/local businesses for its local projects. This Tacoma resident is disappointed that the City is going far away/corporate for services. Emily Pinckney commented that it's important to remember the systemic reasons that consulting looks the way it does, and that we should be thinking about how to create training and opportunities for those previously excluded from these fields. Mike Carey responded that he would like to consider more internship and training opportunities around Urban Forestry. He also noted that the City's choices are dependent on which firms submit proposals.

Melanie came to talk about protecting trees in Tacoma. She mentioned that she just completed the tree stewardship training through the Tacoma Tree Foundation. She moved to Tacoma three years ago, and she has seen a number of mature trees come down since then. She would like to see more protection of trees in Tacoma, including creating new code. She mentioned a desire to see trees prioritized over sidewalks, the food potential of allowing more fruit trees, and the inadequacy of planting one small tree to replace a mature tree.

Anne Taufen, who is a professor in the UW Tacoma Urban Studies department, came to share information about a community event that her students are hosting on June 6th. Students from the Master of Arts in Community Planning Studio will present their findings from independent research projects conducted over the past three months on "Urban Waterfronts and Planning for Industry." They will be touching on a few ideas surrounding what it means to be a "working waterfront." STC members were interested in knowing more, and Pat Babbitt will circulate a report that was done last year.

Objectives for the Next Meeting

1. Sustainable Materials Management Plan update.
2. TPU water conservation plan update.
3. Potential item: UWT students from Urban Planning/Community planning would like to come talk about their research on green storm water and a plastic recycling facility in Tacoma.
4. Commissioners will report back to the Commission about completed meetings with City Council.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:34 p.m.

The next meeting of the Sustainable Tacoma Commission will be Thursday, June 27th, 2019 from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m., Tacoma Municipal Building, 747 Market Street, Room 243.

Lexi Brewer, Chair

Elizabeth Purington, Staff