



City of Tacoma Sustainable Tacoma Commission Meeting Minutes

Date: February 18, 2021

Commission Members Present:

Matthew Benedict, Elly Claus-McGahan, Katin Kendrena, Nikie Walters, Ashley Sloan, Phil Coughlan, Evlondo Cooper, David Thompson (left 5:50pm), Gabe Moaalii (left 5:45pm), Lexi Brewer (joins 5:15pm), Tony Ivey (joins 5:15pm)

Commission Members Excused:

Emily Pinckney, Grace Hope

Commission Members Absent:

None

Others Present:

Commission Support Staff: Kristin Lynett, James Parvey, LaTasha Wortham, Leah Michaelson, Kyla Wilson, Patrick Babbitt

Public: None

Call to Order

This meeting was called to order by Commission Chair Lexi Brewer at 5:16 p.m. The Chair welcomed Commissioners, staff, and members of the public and shared virtual meeting practices and requirements.

Approval of February 18, 2021, Meeting Agenda

Motion: To adopt meeting agenda as written. Motion made by Elly Claus-McGahan.

Seconded by: Evlondo Cooper

Action: Voice vote was taken and carried. The motion we declared adopted.

Ayes: All

Nays: None

Abstained: None

Absent: Emily Pinckney, David Thompson

Approval of January 21, 2021, Meeting Minutes

Motion: To adopt meeting minutes as written. Motion made by Evlondo Cooper.

Seconded by: Matthew Benedict

Action: Voice vote was taken and carried. The motion we declared adopted.

Ayes: All

Nays: None

Abstained: None

Absent: Emily Pinckney, Grace Hope

Public Comment

No public comments were made during this agenda item.

Staff Updates

Patrick provided a brief refresher on the last Commission meeting's agenda topics, and directed Commissioners to hyperlinks where they can give input about Commission priorities, subcommittees, and opportunities to improve the Commission in the new year. He also asked Commissioners to help promote the Sustainability Small Grants program, which funds community-led sustainability projects that are vetted by staff and the Commission. He also noted the Planning Commission's March 3rd public hearing about the proposed Tideflats and Industrial Land Use Regulation Amendments, which the Commission has expressed interest in and written a recent letter of recommendation about. Finally, he announced that the 2021 Sustainability Expo event has been canceled and that staff are preparing virtual Earth Month activities. Responsible staff will visit the Commission in March to discuss Earth Month event planning.

Kristin, LaTasha, and James shared briefly about their staff presentation to Tacoma City Council on February 16 about Climate Action Planning. They noted that Council was generally very supportive about the planning process and interested to hear about its implementation in line with past policies, including the 2019 Climate Emergency Resolution and 2020 Anti-Racist Systems Transformation Resolution. Patrick will forward their presentation file to the Commission for their awareness.

Staff thanked Commissioners for their work outside meetings, including subcommittees.

Subcommittee Updates

Lexi reported that the Climate Action Planning subcommittee is meeting monthly to become more familiar with other communities' climate action plans. In addition, she reported interest in the Planning and Development Services Department providing their standardized Tideflats Subarea Planning process presentation to the Commission. Patrick confirmed that Steven Atkinson, who works in that department, will be presenting to the Commission in March on this topic. Related to climate and decarbonization, James noted that the Decarbonization Resolution (draft) will go to the Infrastructure, Planning, and Sustainability Committee in March and that staff are currently seeking the Mayor's support for the Resolution. So far, City Council feedback has been supportive.

Phil, Nikie, and Lexi reported the Planning Commission recently discussed the use of impact fees in Tacoma to help pay for different environmental impacts due to development pressures. The Commission is interested to track this conversation.

Patrick announced a waste prevention- and recycling-focused subcommittee will be convened in the first or second quarter of 2021.

Commission Business Items

Officer Nominations

Patrick introduced the annual nomination process for Commission Officers, meaning Chairpersons, Co-Chairpersons, or Vice-Chairpersons. He discussed time commitments, qualifications, duties, and the 1-year (renewable) length of term. Lexi discussed her interest in continuing as Chairperson with Commission support. Nikie and Evlondo asked Matthew whether he was interested in serving as a Chairperson.

Nomination of Chairpersons

Motion: To nominate Lexi Brewer to be considered for election, scheduled for the Commission's March meeting, to serve as Chairperson for the following 12 months. Motion made by Matthew Benedict.

Seconded by: Evlondo Cooper

Action: Voice vote was taken and carried. The motion we declared adopted.

Ayes: All

Nays: None

Abstained: Lexi Brewer

Absent: Emily Pinckney, Grace Hope

Motion: To nominate Matthew Benedict to be considered for election, scheduled for the Commission's March meeting, to serve as Vice-Chairperson for the following 12 months. Motion made by Lexi Brewer.

Seconded by: Nikie Walters

Action: Voice vote was taken and carried. The motion we declared adopted.

Ayes: All

Nays: None

Abstained: Matthew Benedict

Absent: Emily Pinckney, Grace Hope

Small Grants Program Update – Leah Michaelsen, Office of Environmental Policy and Sustainability (OEPS), City of Tacoma

Leah introduced new Commission members to the program, which the Commission makes funding recommendations for. The program funds community-led sustainability projects aligned with Environmental Services Department utility goals. Funds are reduced this year due to COVID-19-related budget cuts. Projects are awarded a maximum reimbursable amount of \$5,000. Applications are accepted quarterly, so Quarter 1, 2021 applications are due March 31. The Commission will work with staff to award and notify projects by April 30. Learn more at https://www.cityoftacoma.org/government/city_departments/environmentalservices/grants_and_sponsorships/sustainability_small_grant. Commissioners were asked to help spread information through their social networks to encourage participation.

Tideflats Subarea Planning and Non-Interim Regulations Letter of Recommendation Drafting

Lexi provided a draft letter outline, based on the Commission's January 2021 letter regarding the same topic. This letter serves as a follow-up letter to that one, based on additional information that has become available. The letter speaks to the draft non-interim Tideflats regulations. It urges Tacoma City Council to take action to preserve the possibility for a low-carbon future through stringent non-interim regulations. It expresses strong, general support for the non-interim regulations as drafted, with additional specific recommendations. Again, the Commission asks that City staff and City Council keep equity at the forefront of decision-making.

Finally, the letter repeated science and policy context relevant to decision-making, which was provided in the prior letter regarding the same topic. The letter was adopted with recommendations written, directing a subcommittee to collaborate with staff to fill in context and put it on letterhead for delivery to City Council.

Approval of Tideflats Subarea Planning and Non-Interim Regulations Letter of Recommendation

Motion: To adopt letter with recommendations as written, with a subcommittee and staff filling in missing context and preparing it in a letter format. Motion made by Elly Claus-McGahan.

Seconded by: Evlondo Cooper

Action: Voice vote was taken and carried. The motion was declared adopted.

Ayes: All

Nays: None

Abstained: None

Absent: Emily Pinckney, Grace Hope, Gabe Moaalii, David Thompson

Decarbonization Resolution – Kristin Lynett, Office of Environmental Policy and Sustainability (OEPS), City of Tacoma

Kristi shared an updated draft of the Resolution compared to the version the Commission had last seen. Staff, City Council Members, and others have been able to provide guidance and input to the draft Resolution at this stage. The Commission recommended that cooking decarbonization should be added to the impact assessment called for by the draft Resolution. The draft Resolution is headed to the Infrastructure, Planning, and Sustainability committee on March 3 and to City Council in April.

Climate Action Planning Update – Patrick Babbitt and Kristin Lynett, Office of Environmental Policy and Sustainability (OEPS), City of Tacoma

There being no time for this agenda item, it was determined that staff would deliver the update in an electronic file to Commissioners.

Public Comment

No public comments were made during this agenda item.

Objectives for or before the Next Meeting

- Climate Action Planning: Adaptation Strategy update
- Commission Officer elections
- Tideflats Subarea Planning update
- Earth Month events planning update

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:22 p.m. with a motion made by Matthew Benedict and seconded by Evlondo Cooper. The motion carried unanimously by present Commissioners. Emily Pinckney, David Thompson, Katin Kendrena, Ashley Sloan, Elly Claus-McGahan, and Tony Ivey were absent for this vote.

The next meeting of the Sustainable Tacoma Commission will be held virtually on Thursday, March 18, 2021, from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.

Lexi Brewer, Chair

Patrick Babbitt, Staff / Note Taker