



City of Tacoma Sustainable Tacoma Commission Meeting Minutes

Date: August 19, 2021

Commission Members Present:

Matthew Benedict (Vice-Chair), Lexi Brewer (Chair), Margaret Schwertner, Katin Kendrena, Evlondo Cooper, Emily Pinckney, Gabe Moaalii, Nikie Walters, Tony Ivey (joins 5:07pm), Adam Reichenberger (joins 5:08pm)

Commission Members Excused:

Elly Claus-McGahan

Commission Members Absent:

Ashley Sloan

Others Present:

Commission Support Staff: Patrick Babbitt (Commission staff liaison),

Guest Presenters: Mike Carey from City of Tacoma Environmental Services Department, Beth Jarot from City of Tacoma Planning and Development Services Department

Members of the Public: Ben Fowlkes, Steve Nicholas, Elizabeth, Barb Church

Call to Order

This meeting was called to order by Commission Chairperson Lexi Brewer at 5:05pm, including an acknowledgement of the occupied indigenous lands this Commission conducts its business on. The Chair welcomed Commissioners, staff, and members of the public and shared virtual meeting practices and requirements.

Approval of August 19, 2021 Meeting Agenda

Motion: To adopt the agenda as written. Motion made by Matthew Benedict.

Seconded by: Katin Kendrena

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

Ayes: All

Nays: None

Abstained: None

Absent: Tony Ivey, Adam Reichenberger, Elly Claus-McGahan, Ashley Sloan

Approval of July 15, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Motion: To adopt meeting minutes as written. 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: None

Absent: Elly Claus-McGahan, Ashley Sloan

Public Comment

No public comment was delivered in writing or given in meeting at this time.

Staff Updates

Patrick Babbitt, the Commission's staff liaison, recounted the Sustainable Tacoma Commission's (STC) July meeting activities and then delivered new notices to the Commission. New notices included an update that the City's Planning Commission and Bicycle Pedestrian Technical Advisory Group are seeking applicants and that the Sustainability Small Grants program is seeking applicants. Discussing other important news related to the Tacoma community, staff shared recent Health Department reporting that COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations are high and increasing locally in Pierce County and then pointed meeting attendees to informational resources; also, staff shared that Sunrise Tacoma's Green New Deal proposal reached Tacoma City Council and staff, and that the Office of Sustainability is considering proposal contents as it reviews the draft Climate Action Plan.

Mike Carey introduced potential draft updates to Municipal Code related to trees. Proposed Code updates will relate to tree and shrub trimming and removal, planting, and view blockage. Updates will seek to remove prohibitions on food producing trees in the right-of-way; clarify and improve protections and related public safety for right-of-way trees; and modernize the penalty/fine structure related to removed or damaged trees.

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

Subcommittee Updates

Patrick updated the Commission that its Waste Prevention and Recycling Subcommittee initially scheduled to meet on Wednesday, June 23 is still in the process of being rescheduled based on staff and Commission availability following changes in Commissioner availability. Lexi reported that her position on Tacoma's Tideflats Advisory Committee, which she participates on as a local environmental leader, will be filled with Elly Claus-McGahan while Lexi takes temporary leave. Lexi asked that staff follow-up to support Commissioners, including Evlondo, Katin, and Emily, in coordinating a Climate Action Plan-focused outreach subcommittee. The Commission may activate a green economy-focused subcommittee soon, too.

No further updates were provided by Commissioners regarding other subcommittee activities.

Commission Business Items

Climate Action Planning – Climate Action Plan Draft Review, Patrick Babbitt, Office of Environmental Policy and Sustainability (OEPS), City of Tacoma

Patrick shared a working draft of Tacoma's community Climate Action Plan. He walked through Plan contents and climate actions. He pointed to elements that the Commission might be most interested in, including portions of the content that they contributed to. He updated Commissioners about the Plan development timeline, including a staff presentation on the draft

to Tacoma City Council's Infrastructure, Planning, and Sustainability Committee on September 22 and potential adoption by Tacoma City Council at their meeting in early November (with the date still to be determined). Public comment on the final draft will be taken in October.

Heat and Smoke Preparedness Recommendation Letter – Lexi Brewer, Sustainable Tacoma Commission; Patrick Babbitt, Office of Environmental Policy and Sustainability (OEPS), City of Tacoma

Lexi and Patrick introduced and provided context for a draft recommendation letter regarding Commission recommendations to improve Tacoma's preparedness for extreme heat and smoke. The letter communicates the Commission's concern with the large number of regional heat-related deaths during the late June 2021 heat wave; highlights Tacoma's vulnerabilities to extreme heat and smoke preparedness; and emphasizes the unique vulnerability of seniors, kids, pregnant women, low-income and BIPOC community members, outdoor workers, people with breathing or heart issues, and unhoused community members. Generally, the Commission recommends that the City improve internal and cross-organizational coordination to prepare for and respond to extreme weather, like heat and wildfire smoke; increase services available, particularly to vulnerable community members; and invest in long-term solutions to vulnerabilities, such as increasing housing for those who are unhoused and generally unable to avoid extreme weather. The Commission connects worsening and more frequent extreme weather to climate change and the need to implement Tacoma's next Climate Action Plan and Climate Adaptation Strategy.

Lexi will work with staff to finalize the letter and deliver it to Tacoma City Council's Infrastructure, Planning, and Sustainability Committee.

Heat and Smoke Preparedness Recommendation Letter

Motion: To approve the letter as written with final general edits and formatting to be completed before delivery. Motion made by Tony Ivey.

Seconded by: Margaret Schwertner

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

Ayes: All

Nays: None

Abstained: None

Absent: Elly Claus-McGahan, Ashley Sloan

Public Comment

Community member Barb Church gave public comments, reading a letter she will deliver to the Commission regarding the Tideflats Non-Interim Regulations being considered by Tacoma City Council's Infrastructure, Planning, and Sustainability Committee.

Objectives for or before the Next Meeting

- Staff Updates
- Subcommittee Updates
- Hemp Industrial Uses – Presentation
- Tacoma Tree Codes – Presentation
- Climate Action Plan – Letter of Support

Adjournment

There being no further business, the Commission adjourned at 6:49pm.

Adjournment of August 19, 2021 Meeting

Motion: To adjourn the meeting. Motion made by Evlondo Cooper.

Seconded by: Tony Ivey

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

Ayes: All

Nays: None

Abstained: None

Absent: Elly Claus-McGahan, Ashley Sloan

The next meeting of the Sustainable Tacoma Commission will be held virtually on Thursday, September 16, 2021, from 5:00 to 7:00pm.

Lexi Brewer, Chair

Patrick Babbitt, Staff / Note Taker