



City of Tacoma Sustainable Tacoma Commission Meeting Minutes

Date: September 16, 2021

Commission Members Present:

Matthew Benedict (Vice-Chair), Emily Pinckney (leaves 7:04pm), Margaret Schwertner, Katin Kendrena (leaves 7:04pm), Elly Claus-McGahan, Nikie Walters, Tony Ivey (leaves 7:04pm), Adam Reichenberger (joins 5:55pm)

Commission Members Excused:

Lexi Brewer (Chair), Evlondo Cooper, Ashley Sloan,

Commission Members Absent:

Gabe Moaalii

Others Present:

Commission Support Staff: Patrick Babbitt (Commission staff liaison), Kristin Lynett, James Parvey

Guest Presenters: Bonny Jo Peterson from Industrial Hemp Association of Washington; Michael Carey and Ryan Hebert from City of Tacoma Environmental Services Department

Members of the Public: DeeBee Cooper, Carol Ann Mangan, Desire Douglass, Lowell Wyse, Ricky Clousing, Deb Olsen, Barbara Church, John Carlton, Theresa Evans

Call to Order

This meeting was called to order by Commission Vice-Chairperson Matthew Benedict at 5:02pm, 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 September 16, 2021 Meeting Agenda

Motion: To adopt the agenda as written. Motion made by Nikie Walters.

Seconded by: Tony Ivey

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

Ayes: All

Nays: None

Abstained: None

Absent: Adam Reichenberger, Lexi Brewer (Chair), Evlondo Cooper, Ashley Sloan, Gabe Moaalii

Approval of July 15, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Motion: To adopt meeting minutes as written. Motion made by Margaret Schwertner.

Seconded by: Tony Ivey

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

Ayes: All

Nays: None

Abstained: None

Absent: Adam Reichenberger, Lexi Brewer (Chair), Evlondo Cooper, Ashley Sloan, Gabe Moalii

Public Comment

Lowell Wyse, a member of the public, communicated his support for strong City tree policies and that he hopes the City develops a clear goal to take charge of maintenance for Tacoma's street trees. No public comment was delivered in writing.

Staff Updates

Patrick Babbitt (Commission staff liaison) recounted the Sustainable Tacoma Commission's (STC) August meeting activities and then delivered new notices to the Commission. New notices included an update that the Sustainability Small Grants program is seeking quarterly applicants through September 30 and that the draft Climate Action Plan public comment period is being finalized soon for October, with virtual public meetings scheduled on October 9 and 14. Discussing other important news related to the Tacoma community, staff shared recent Health Department reporting that COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations remain high and then pointed meeting attendees to informational resources; also, staff shared that staff have been able to compare Sunrise Tacoma's Green New Deal proposal to the City's draft Climate Action Plan since the August Commission meeting; then, staff shared that Make A Splash Grants focused on stormwater projects are accepting applications for funding through October 31; finally, staff communicated opportunities to learn about Tacoma's watersheds and give input about an Urban Watershed Management Plan via www.TacomaUrbanWatersheds.com. At the Commission's request, Patrick will send documents that compare the Green New Deal proposal to the draft Climate Action Plan.

Jim Parvey communicated that staff will go to Tacoma City Council's Infrastructure, Planning, and Sustainability Committee to discuss the draft Climate Action Plan on September 22 and Commissioners are welcome, like other members of the public, to be there to listen or give comment.

Staff thanked Commissioners for quickly organizing a Tidelands Non-Interim Regulations-focused subcommittee to research and develop a draft letter of recommendation regarding the regulations.

Subcommittee Updates

Patrick Babbitt (Commission staff liaison) is sending a When2Meet poll to get Commissioner availability for a Waste Prevention and Recycling Subcommittee meeting.

Matthew Benedict (Vice-Chair) noted that the Tidelands Non-Interim Regulations subcommittee formed this week to research and develop a draft letter of recommendation to be considered for adoption this meeting. In addition, he reminded the Commission about previous discussions about forming a Green Economy-focused subcommittee or Climate Action Plan outreach-focused subcommittee. Patrick will support these subcommittees.

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

Commission Business Items

Hemp Industrial Uses Presentation – Bonny Jo Peterson, Industrial Hemp Association of Washington (IHEMPAWA)

Bonny Jo Peterson described her organization, hemp, its distinction from cannabis, its multiple uses, and industrial or other activities using hemp today in Washington State. Multiple universities in the state have researched hemp and its uses. Hemp can be used as a textile, paper, building material, industrial product, hygiene product, or food. It has agricultural and other benefits. She communicated that she hopes the Commission and staff recommend cultivation and production of hemp and hemp products as a strategy in the City's strategic plans and efforts to foster a green economy, reduce emissions, and support a healthier environment. In response to Commission questions, Bonny Jo communicated that hemp requires about 20% of the water demands of cotton or corn; in addition, she shared that, generally, hemp is considered a low-energy product when it is refined into consumer or industrial goods.

Proposed Tree Code Updates Presentation – Michael Carey and Ryan Hebert, Office of Environmental Policy and Sustainability (OEPS), City of Tacoma

Michael Carey and Ryan Hebert introduced proposed updates to Tacoma's Municipal Code sections related to trees with the purpose of clarifying Code, making Code consistent with industry standards, protecting and reducing barriers to planting trees, and clarifying authority for tree-related decisions. Chapters 9.18, 9.19, and 9.20 related to tree and shrub trimming and removal, planting, and view blockage were discussed. In particular, updates to the Code would remove a prohibition on food-producing trees in the right-of-way; clarify protections for trees in the right-of-way; and update outdated penalty structures for illegal pruning and removal. Staff will go to Tacoma City Council's Infrastructure, Planning, and Sustainability Committee on November 10 and to City Council in December. Commissioners asked staff about potential partnerships with Harvest Pierce County's gleaning program, with which staff already coordinates. In addition, Commissioners communicated an interest in the City improving financial support for low-income households to handle sidewalks damaged by street trees. Overall, the Commission emphasized it wishes for the City to plant and preserve many more trees, in line with its policy goals. Staff communicated that the Commission may want to consider drafting a letter of support for these Code updates as they approach City Council. Commissioner Tony Ivey will begin developing a draft.

Draft Climate Action Plan Recommendation Letter – Matthew Benedict (Vice-Chair) and Patrick Babbitt (Commission staff liaison), Office of Environmental Policy and Sustainability (OEPS), City of Tacoma

Lexi Brewer (Chair) and Matthew Benedict (Vice-Chair) met with staff to outline content for a letter of support for the draft Climate Action Plan. Matthew and Patrick Babbitt (Commission staff liaison) discussed section of the draft letter of support, including its primary recommendation to fully fund, fully staff, and fully implement the Climate Action Plan. In addition, in the letter the Commission asks the City to use the mid-biennial budget adjustment process to fund Decarbonization Studies called for in the Decarbonization Resolution and use federal recovery funding or other funds to immediately begin funding high priority CAP actions. Commissioners discussed the importance of emphasizing that climate action is more difficult and expensive after failing to fully implement the preceding Environmental Action Plan; if the City fails to fully implement the new Climate Action Plan, climate action will become even more

challenging and costly. Commissioners adopted the letter as written, with final formatting and edits to be made in line with the draft and in-meeting recommendations.

Draft Climate Action Plan Recommendation Letter

Motion: To approve the letter as written with general edits and formatting to be completed in line with Commission recommendations before delivery. Motion made by Nikie Walters.

Seconded by: Elly Claus-McGahan

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

Ayes: All

Nays: None

Abstained: None

Absent: Lexi Brewer (Chair), Evlondo Cooper, Ashley Sloan, Gabe Moaalii

Draft Tideflats Non-Interim Regulations Recommendation Letter – Matthew Benedict (Vice-Chair)

Matthew Benedict (Vice-Chair) quickly reviewed the contents of the draft letter of recommendation regarding the Tideflats Non-Interim Regulations. The draft builds on Commission letters completed in February and March 2021. The letter focuses recommendations on amendments to the Non-Interim Regulations that may be considered by Tacoma City Council. Generally, the Commission’s stance is that Council should adopt regulations that maintain a path for a low-carbon future for Tacoma by not allowing expansion of fossil fuel infrastructure.

Tideflats Non-Interim Regulations Recommendation Letter

Motion: To approve the letter as written with context added and edits and formatting to be completed in line with Commission recommendations before delivery. Motion made by Elly Claus-McGahan.

Seconded by: Tony Ivey

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

Ayes: All

Nays: None

Abstained: None

Absent: Lexi Brewer (Chair), Evlondo Cooper, Ashley Sloan, Gabe Moaalii

Public Comment

Community member Carol Ann Mangan communicated their support for hemp as a potential low-impact industry for Tacoma. Community member DeeBee Cooper encouraged the Commission to look into the South Tacoma Economic Green Zone moving through the Planning Commission in 2022-2023.

Community member Theresa Evans commented their support for fruit and nut trees in the right-of-way.

Community member Barbara Church asked for further clarification of technical terms appearing in Tideflats Non-Interim Regulations amendments. Staff for this Commission directed Barbara to City staff with technical knowledge of the regulations amendments.

Objectives for or before the Next Meeting

- Staff Updates
- Subcommittee Updates
- Sustainability Small Grants Applications – Review & Award

- Green Economy – Presentation
- Proposed Tree Code Updates – Letter of Support

Adjournment

There being no further business and following a loss of quorum at 7:04pm, the Vice-Chair declared the Commission adjourned at 7:20pm.

The next meeting of the Sustainable Tacoma Commission will be held virtually on Thursday, October 21, 2021, from 5:00 to 7:00pm.

Matthew Benedict, Vice-Chair

Patrick Babbitt, Staff / Note Taker