

Climate Impact Advisory Committee
DRAFT Meeting Minutes



Date: November 7th 2019

Location: RE Store, 2309 Meridian St, Bellingham

QUORUM	Y
Members Present	
Seth Fleetwood	X
Casey Harman	X
Tim Miller	X
Treva Coe	X
Eric Grossman	
Ellyn Murphy	X
John Yakawich	
Sharon Shewmake	
David Kershner	X
Gabriel Westergreen	X
Alex Ramel	X
STAFF Chris Elder	X

1) Meeting Began at 5:37 PM

Guests: On the phone Emily Wright

2) Minutes

- a. Several edits were shared, which were incorporated into the minutes.
- b. Alex made a motion to approve the minutes as revised. David seconded the motion and it passed with none opposed.
- c. Alex recommended that comments on draft minutes be sent to Casey a few days before the meeting to give him time to incorporate edits.

3) Climate Vulnerability Assessment Focus Areas

Emily Wright with Cascadia Consulting Group presented on Whatcom County's Climate Action Plan and Vulnerability assessment. She talked through a power point on the current status of the project.

Cascadia has been making progress on the greenhouse gas inventory and they have generated the draft of a climate science summary. They are working with Chris to determine focus areas of the vulnerability assessment, which was presented later in the meeting. Emily mentioned that they will present a draft greenhouse gas inventory in January, and will not have much to say in December so they will not attend the December meeting.

Britain is working with Chris on data collection for the GHG inventory. Once data is collected the data will be analyzed and provided in a report, the draft of which will be provided in January.

Ellyn asked if there were any issues with getting data? Emily responded that she didn't know of any issues. Chris interjected that Britain is doing the non-municipal data, and he (Chris) was getting data within the county, which has been easier with his new position in public works.

Emily then changed the topic to the Vulnerability assessment. Chris and Ellyn had conferred and recommended the assessment should highlight the following four Focus Areas: Ecosystems and Critical Areas, Land Use and Agriculture, Water, Transportation. Emily stressed that all four categories will include an emphasis on equality and climate justice.

There was some lively discussion on the details of what the focus groups should cover. Below are the results of the discussion:

Ecosystems and Critical Areas	Working Forests, Wildlife (Salmon, Shellfish, etc.)
Land Use and Agriculture	Wild and Urban Interface, Development, Agriculture, Industry, Commerce; Dynamics between development and economic impact.
Fresh Water	Service Water Quality, Water Supply (both residential, agriculture and industry), Habitat (low summertime stream flows, stormwater, higher wintertime flows and flooding)
Transportation	Personal Transit, Mass Transit

Salmon and shellfish were added, and there was some discussion as to why those two were singled out. The determination was those species were singled out because they are culturally and economically important, as well as especially vulnerable to climate change. Alex suggested that the "water" focus be defined as "Fresh Water," with the understanding that sea level rise is an implicit impact in multiple categories. Casey asked about infrastructure and how it was represented. Chris responded that the county did not maintain sewers, power or gas, so a lot of infrastructure is outside the purview of the county.

Casey moved to approve the 4 focus areas provided as amended in the discussion. Alex Seconded. No discussion, non-opposed, motion carries.

Emily then provided a summary of the "Climate Trends and Projected Impacts." The six main areas presented were Temperature, Precipitation, Hydrology, Sea Level Rise, and Storm Surge, Wildfire and Air Quality.

She talked about how global climate models are at a pretty low resolution, and there is downscaling to understand local effects. When the models are downscaled, there is a tendency to lose accuracy but it is also quite costly. Because of this, it is rare to have climate projections at city and county level. Because of previous research, there are downscaled model results at the Puget Sound regional scale (all the watersheds that drain into Puget Sound). There is some downscaled data for Whatcom County, Bellingham and the Nooksack Drainage. Emily then summarized the different effects.

Regarding temperature, for all cases there is an overall increase for both the low and high greenhouse gas projection. The daily maximum temps show an increase, and perhaps more concerning, the temperature mins will also increase. Heat index also rises in all projections.

Precipitation effects include decreasing summer precipitation, increased fall and wintertime precipitation and less snowfall. Mixed rain/snow basins will transition to rain only basins. The lack of a snowpack significantly changes streamflow characteristics.

The anticipated sea level rise at a 50% confidence factor shows 1.5 – 2 ft of sea level rise across the county in 2100. This concept of different confidence factors between the low and high GHG projections provided some discussion points.

Alex spoke up and said he would like more detail on Wildfire and Air Quality, as they have significant impact. Emily responded that it is hard to get the numbers, especially with the few number of wildfires in Whatcom County. It is hard enough to get relevant data for topic areas that are more refined. Not aware of more specific data, can give another search for the data.

Ellyn thought that there might be projections on asthma, and respiratory issues. Treva mentioned that we could add air quality indices for the past years for illustrative purposes. Emily responded that they will try to get more data. With regard to the respiratory effect, she said they draw a line between impact summary versus vulnerability assessment. Direct human impacts like respiratory issues are more appropriate in the vulnerability assessment.

Chris asked a question about the charts on page 24 of the document. He wondered why they picked 50% sea level rise, rather than highlighting the extreme sea level rise case. Alex interjected that the high emission scenario is business as usual, not necessarily low likelihood. Emily agreed that yes, the high emissions case is business as usual. She stressed that this plot was unusual in that there were both the low GHG emission and high GHG emission cases, but also a confident factor in %. The % confidence factor can be thought of as the probability that that at the particular GHG case the effects will be greater than what is predicted. She stressed that they feel their job is to present unbiased information, and not try to influence decision makers in a particular direction. Treva commented that for floodplain management, 1% confidence scenario planning is common, which is a similar situation. Seth asked if that 1% value was controversial and where it came from. Treva answered that those guidelines are from FEMA.

Dave had a question on the sources used. He asked whether the Climate Synthesis Report in 2014 was the most recent report for our area? Emily responded that yes, it is the most recent report that is available at the level that we use. That document provides some of the foundational guidance that is used such as low and high GHG scenarios. Specific impacts predicted for Whatcom County come from other, more local documents that are more current.

To wrap up the discussion, Chris said he will provide the climate science draft to the committee in a Word format. Emily would like to receive comments within two weeks, but she doesn't have a firm timeline. Chris confirmed that two weeks is a good goal and asked that comments be submitted to him by November 22nd. Chris asked Emily if the report was ready for committee input, and she responded that yes, it is and they are waiting to further work on it until the committee provides feedback. Chris told the committee to provide any feedback to him via email, and Emily offered that a sharepoint document could be created. Chris asked Emily if she could get the final summary by the December 5th. Emily said it depended on the number and extent of the comments received, but assured the committee that if they could not deliver it by the 5th, it will be within two weeks of that date.

Seth said that the climate action plan, once updated, will be a huge task to implement. He said we may want to think about staff needs for implementation as part of the biennial budget.

Proposal for the Development of Work Groups to Further Climate Action Plan update

The next topic was brought forward by Chris and Ellyn. Chris said they thought it would be wise to leverage the specific expertise of the group by creating working groups to work on specific categories based on the ordinance that created the committee. The working group responsibilities are based on the ordinance that created the CIAC. The categories are:

CIAC Working Group	Committee Responsibilities*	Potential CIAC Members	Addition Community Members
GHG Mitigation: Energy	A,B,D,F,G	Alex, Casey, Sharon	
Land Use, Ecosystems and Adaptation	D,E,F,G	Treva, Eric	
GHG Mitigation – Transportation	A,B,E,G		
Communication	C,G,I	Seth, Ellyn	

*References the difference sections of the ordinance.

Alex wondered why the groups did not include buildings. Ellyn thought it would be under energy. Seth pointed out that due to change in his work position (elected to be Mayor of Bellingham), he will not be able to join a working group or continue on the committee.

The group consensus was to move forward on the working groups and the committee members will let Chris know which committee they are interested in serving on before the next meeting. Some members in the audience expressed interest in joining the working groups as community members.

Seth thought a large role for the committee will be to determine staff needs in order to implement the new climate action plan.

Old and New Business:

The big new business on the table was that Seth, the CIAC chair is resigning since he was elected as the Mayor of Bellingham. This meeting is his last, since he has a conflict with the December meeting. The next CIAC meeting will need to include selecting a new chair and vice chair. Seth asked whether Alex would be interested in being chair, but he declined due to his schedule. Several committee members suggested that Ellyn would be a good fit. She responded that she needed to think about it.

Update on Wind Energy Ordinance

Alex gave a brief update on the wind energy ordinance. The working group met, and they continue to work on it. There is a lot of research but it is still moving forward.

Public Comment

Eddy Ury provided some comments. He thought it was a good idea to create the working groups, but had concerns on the four categories and how they are broken out. He also mentioned that he knows a number of people in the community who would be useful both on the working groups and to fill vacancies on the CIAC. He also said he would be interested in possibly joining one of the working groups.

Judy Hopkinson urged the committee that when considering the report from Cascadia Consulting, to be sure to look at projections of future growth. She believes that there will be climate refugees creating additional growth in the county. She also suggested to include in each focus area the economic impacts. She also appreciated the 1% risk comment from Treva. The decision makers need to know overall range of the risks, not just the 50% level.

Jacob Peterson then added some comments. He said as a student, he has his ear to the ground on student issues. One issue for students is with public transportation to and from satellite cities such as Ferndale. Students are now living further out due to housing prices within the city of

Bellingham, and because of this the transportation working group should consider a high frequency, high capacity transportation system from Bellingham to satellite cities.

Adrienne Hegedus from the Port of Bellingham talked about the Port and how she has been given direction to develop a climate plan. She looks forward to working with the committee as the port develops its plan. She manages sustainable efforts at the port (which is a large land manager and building manager with 96 buildings). She also works in Environmental Compliance. Alex asked whether the port was leaning toward mitigation and/or adaptation? Adrienne said that she is awaiting direction from the port leaders, but her preference is both.

Clare then mentioned a few things regarding the Bellingham Climate Task force. The presentation by the task force on the final report will not be on November 18th, but December 9th. A flier that was circulated by the BIAWC showed costs from the task force recommendations up to \$82K for a Bellingham homeowner. Charles Barnhart from the task force did his own calculations based on his recent installation of solar on his home built in 1906 and came up with much lower numbers. The revised flier he made can be sent out to the committee. At the last meeting they were preparing the presentation for council, which will likely take it under advisement and look for staff recommendations on how to implement it.

Clare also mentioned that some of the proposals in city task force report may transfer to the county, but some will not, since a lot of the suggestions are due to population density. The category that is most relevant is the energy supply category to expedite transfer to clean energy strategies by utilities.

Ellyn asked if Clare could present at the next meeting. Clare was concerned since the next CIAC meeting is before the council meeting. It was also pointed out that there will be a link to the council presentation on the city's website after the meeting, and having a specific presentation was not necessary.

4) **Next meeting**

The topics will include:

- Chair and Vice Chair Selection
- Discuss Presentation to County Council
- Review workgroup proposal
- Introduction to Climate action outline.

The next meeting will be December 5th, 2019 at the ReStore Facility at 5:30.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:42 PM.