

Climate Impact Advisory Committee
APPROVED Meeting Minutes



Date: December 3, 2020
Location: Zoom

QUORUM	Y
Members Present	
Kaylee Galloway	X
Treva Coe	X
Phil Thompson	X
Ellyn Murphy	X
John Yakawich	X
Katherine Kissinger	X
David Kershner	X
Cynthia Mitchell	X
Sue Gunn	X
Hunter Hassig	X
Stevan Harrell	X
STAFF Chris Elder	X

1) Call to Order

Meeting started at 5:30pm

2) Review and approval of minutes from November Meeting

Sue Motioned

Phil Seconded

Motion Passed

3) Public Comment

Public in attendance

Sonja Max, Co-Chair from the bicycle pedestrian advisory committee

Carryn Vande Griend, PSE

David Hostetler, public

Eddy Ury, ReSources

Atul Deshmane, PUD

George Boggs, Whatcom Conservation District

4) Electricity and Buildings Strategies and Actions – Cynthia Mitchell (with short introduction of Challenges in the Built Environment by Ellyn Murphy)

Intro. (slide 1)

Cynthia: Electricity, Renewables

Dave: Worked on the Community Research project. He wrote the renewable energy and buildings chapter for it. He has been helping with the buildings section for this working group.

Ellyn: graphics and editing

Slide 2

Built environment. We are approaching a tipping point in regards to CO2 emissions. Causing accelerated warming and disruption of ocean currents, permafrost melting.

Slide 3

State energy strategy calls for transformational change. Many of the points from the Energy and Buildings subgroup strategies have come from the WA State Energy Strategy. The second draft of the strategy just came out on 12/3/2020.

Slide 4

GHG emissions have been separated into four categories to match the categories from the state's report. This helps simplify the data as opposed to the graphic from Cascadia which split emissions into many more categories.

Slide 5

Turning the county's challenges into opportunities. We can use the solutions to our state/county's energy problems into economic growth for the county. Like transitioning the manufacturing workforce into clean fuel production. This will add jobs in renewable industries.

Slide 11

Communitywide strategies

1. County leadership: We need to make sure that county staff are working to meet the goals in the state energy strategy.
2. Infrastructure: specifically, the transmission and distribution systems throughout the county. Need to identify areas that can be expanded to accommodate more renewable energy. Areas that need to be resilient against climate and natural disasters.

Slide 12

3. DER's: Distributed Energy Resources. Expand use of DERs in the county to optimize the grid.
4. Energy Efficient Buildings: transition to Net Zero Carbon
5. Implementation: this will require support from the county by providing incentives for businesses, residents, and organizations throughout the county.

Slide 13

Strategies relating to Whatcom County Government Operations

6. County Buildings: become an example for the county in energy efficiency and conservation.
7. Demonstration Projects: develop innovative projects to secure state, federal, and private funding for Net Zero Carbon goals.

Slide 14

County Leadership Actions. County needs a senior climate advisor to help implement the plan.

Slide 16

Utility scale solar and wind storage in the Tri-Cities area. Partially funded by the Clean energy fund from the Dept. of Commerce. Sunny climate, cheap land, several PUDs in the area driving innovation, ample BPA transmission infrastructure along the Columbia River.

Slide 17

Detailing the cost effectiveness of renewable energy. Renewables + Storage market is growing and is competitive or cheaper than electricity from coal and gas plants.

Stevan Asked if this chart for renewables cost included the cost of construction?

Cynthia This shows the fuel and operating costs of electricity delivered from fossil-based plants relative to the total cost of renewables (includes construction). With renewables there are no fuels that you need to pay for, only the fixed costs of the materials and installation.

Stevan asked if there were operating costs for renewables?

Cynthia said that was already included in the costs on this graph. Operating costs for renewables are generally very low because they are mainly related to periodic maintenance.

Slide 18

Infrastructure Actions

Cynthia said PSE will provide some info in their IRP and the county should request a report of all the outages from the past 5 years to help determine the weaknesses in distribution so that DERs can be added.

Slide 19

Deploy DERs which are generally “behind the meter” resources that include 1) energy generation (solar panels, wind turbines, biomass boilers), 2) energy storage (EVs, batteries, fuel cells), and 3) controllable loads (smart meters, inverters, appliances, etc). Newly elected PUD Commissioner Christine Grant is going to be a great asset for the community. She ran on widespread broadband deployment, schools and businesses to get internet access. High-speed internet is a major enabler for DERs when using demand response to reduce peak loads. Biden’s Climate Plan, possible source for funding.

Slide 21

DERs help to balance peak demand. Microgrids can help to ensure resilience in power systems. Both Orcas Power and Light and Snohomish PUD are nearby examples of microgrids that serve multiple needs.

Phil asked about the duck curve how it could be used to shave peak demand?

Ellyn said that the Olympic Peninsula project run by PNNL over a decade ago showed that when customers could see the real-time cost of electricity, they would reduce the use of appliances (dishwashers, washer & dryers) during peak demand. Customers reduced their overall cost of electricity by not using high-priced electricity during peak hours.

Phil asked about the legality of time of use pricing in Washington state.

Cynthia said that there is no provision in the state law prohibiting a company like PSE from implementing time of use pricing, but that PSE has fought that strategy.

Slide 22

Energy Efficient Buildings Actions

Implementing the latest building codes into county buildings. Must be fully implemented by 2027. Replacing gas space and water heater systems at the end of their lifetime with high-efficiency heat pump electric units.

Slide 23

Net Zero Energy homes

Ted Clifton, an architect in Coupeville, WA, designs and sell plans for net zero homes. Over the last few decades, he has won numerous awards for his NZE home designs from the US Dept of Energy. His son owns TC Legend homes in Bellingham and builds net zero energy homes locally and across the state. The Seattle Bullitt Center, built in 2013, is a good example of an office building that produces more energy than it uses.

Slide 24

Implementation of the strategies

Focus on county staff support, and financial support.

It is suggested that the county should form a team of senior staff to report quarterly on progress of implementing the strategies we suggest. That team should also report back to the CIAC regularly.

Slide 26

County buildings

The county government should be setting an example for the rest of the county by showing leadership in energy efficiency and conservation in county operated buildings, and prioritizing Net Zero Carbon construction of new buildings.

Slide 27

Demonstration Projects

Development and implementation of projects to implement modern grid concepts.

Phil commented on the county leadership strategy and suggested that the strategies should be stronger. Calling for leadership to get involved directly with the WUTC. Due to the urgency of the situation at hand.

Ellyn said that the wording in the presentation was shortened for formatting, but welcomes help on using stronger language in the strategies that better conveys our message of urgency.

Cynthia clarified that the county should become directly engaged in compliance actions that PSE must abide by in conjunction with the areas and municipalities that are served by PSE. This would likely be the task of the proposed senior climate advisor.

Cynthia said that if PSE gets approval for gas generation from the regulatory bodies like WUTC, that it will be hard for us to get them off that path and it may even be impossible to overcome even with CETA and Demonstration Projects

Stevan after reviewing the State Energy Strategy and the King County Climate Action Plan, had a comment on the Implementation strategy. Specifically, the point about communicating economic, social, and environmental factors. He brought up that frontline communities and communities of color need to be included in this and that we should be making sure our actions and strategies are inclusive and work towards environmental justice and equity. He stated that this should be added into the next draft and that it further needs to be included throughout the report in every section.

Sue commented on the leadership strategy and the point about public power. She said that we should be currently expanding our renewables and public power and not wait for PSE to lower their fossil fuel use.

Cynthia said she is in agreement with Sue's point and that her presentation was oversimplified and that we should be pursuing the PUD route regardless of what PSE is doing. The PUD would lower costs and provide a much cleaner energy mix than PSE currently provides.

Sue asked if that could include buying energy generated by renewables from out of state?

Cynthia said yes that is an option, especially excess wind power that is available from Montana.

Kaylee thanked the group for a comprehensive presentation. She brought up how the category of land use could intersect with topics in the other work groups and with the subject of equity and environmental justice. Kaylee mentioned that the point around building and construction equipment and whether it should be included in buildings or transportation. She said she thought it seemed like a better fit for the buildings section as opposed to the transportation section where it is currently mentioned. She also brought up broadband and incorporating smart tech into the infrastructure conversation. Kaylee also brought up that the Natural Resources group briefly mentioned green roofing and that that could also be moved to the buildings section. As well as retrofitting buildings to be more energy efficient.

Ellyn said that the energy efficiency conversations they had in their group were mostly focused on existing buildings. Ellyn said that while we are aware of how land use intersects multiple areas, we have not figured out whether or not it should be a separate area of the plan. As far as increasing energy efficiency upgrades of existing buildings, Ellyn said the county should offer more support to non-profit organizations that provide energy efficiency and weatherization (for example, the Opportunity Council & the Community Energy Challenge).

Chris said that the county does have contracts with the Opportunity Council but he couldn't say whether there was specifically anything relating to energy efficiency and weatherization upgrades.

5) Community Engagement Discussion – Stevan Harrell

Stevan wanted to review the group's guiding principles

Several stages of community engagement.

Started with the Community Research Project

Work Groups have been meeting with community stakeholders to assist in developing a draft

Next step is a Public Comment Period.

Stevan suggested that after the report comes out that the work groups continue to keep in contact with the stakeholders.

Stevan proposed to schedule the public comment period in February

Before then we should be focused on stakeholder input throughout December and the end of January, including with the Community Engagement Working Group. This will ensure stakeholders have an input in how to engage the community. **Stevan** specifically mentioned reaching out to tribal leaders in the community to ask for their input.

Some examples for potential stakeholders have been suggested for the different working groups for people to contact for feedback.

Once the draft has been revised to include stakeholder input, we would publicize that we are having a public comment period.

Stevan suggested hosting a town hall style event in March. That would provide an opportunity for commenters to further engage in the process.

Dave asked if we will have outside support in editing our drafts.

Ellyn said a request was sent to the council for funds, but hasn't heard back yet. She mentioned that new funding should be available in January.

Chris said he was working on getting funding for the committee in the new year.

Ellyn said that these suggestions sound doable for the most part, but cautioned that an open house style event would require a capable facilitator.

Sue said that an open house public forum could potentially be a problem and suggested a written comment period

Treva said that splitting a public comment outreach should be focused around smaller groups, especially in a public session. Small group discussions rather than a large forum

Kaylee said that zoom allows for breakout rooms that could be utilized for people to comment on individual chapters

Sue expressed support for Kaylee and Treva's ideas, and also suggested that as we would be hosting this event that we could help keep control of the conversation by asking specific questions relating to feedback from commenters.

Phil asked if **Stevan** was thinking of an event that was more of a public comment session or a discussion and asked for clarification on what a conversation would look like.

Stevan said he was thinking of a discussion event but that in regards to an open house session that the plan for that is still up in the air on whether we will actually pursue organizing an event like this or not.

6) Review of CAP Schedule and Upcoming Meetings

Ellyn said that we will have to continue this discussion at a future meeting and said that our drafts should be ready to send out to stakeholders by mid-January.

Coming up next year **Ellyn** said we will be having a presentation by **Carryn** on the upcoming IRP report from PSE. **Ellyn** asked **Sue** if she would have any industry comments ready by January

Sue said she is working on topics relating to the point source emitters in the county

Atul commented about the public input and that we should push the county Executive on this topic since it is his plan. And that there are people in the county that have experience running such events.

Hunter commented that the Green Building Slam presentations are going to be made public and that he will send those out to the group later as they are made available.

Ellyn wished everyone a Happy Holidays and thanked everyone for a great year of work!

7) Adjourn

Meeting ended at 7:36pm

Next meeting scheduled for January 7, 2020

Recorded By: Katherine Kissinger

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