

Climate Impact Advisory Committee



Meeting Minutes

Date: August 5th 2021

Location: Zoom

QUORUM	Y
Members Present	
William Bethel	x
Ginny Broadhurst	
Kaylee Galloway	x
Sue Gunn	x
Steve Harrell	x
David Kershner	x
Katherine Kissinger	x
Ellyn Murphy	x
Imran Sheikh	x
Phil Thompson	x
Eddy Ury	x
STAFF Chris Elder	x

1) Call to Order/Roll Call

Meeting started at 5:32pm

2) Review and approval of Minutes from July

No Changes suggested to the July Minutes. **Ellyn** Suggested adding page numbers to future minutes.

William Motioned to Approve the Minutes

Dave seconded

Motion passed

3) Public Comment

John Oesting, Retired CPA. Has worked with geothermal renewable energy and education

Ellyn asked for **John's** contact info so she could learn more about Geothermal energy

Jack Wellman, PSE

Wendy Courtemanche, Citizen interested in learning about the Climate Action Plan

4) Summary of 30-Day Public Review Process – Dave, William and Eddy

(Slide 1) Breakdown by support

The majority of the public comments were in support of the plan.

112 General Support

12 Qualified Support

10 Suggested Revisions

4 Support, for or against, was not indicated by reviewer

(Slide 2) Breakdown by section

The majority of the comments also had to do with the Office of Climate Action

Around 20 for Natural Environment

17 for the Built environment

Public Health and Heat extremes

15 other

(Slide 3) notable comments

These would include comments from 4 relevant local corporations. Puget Sound Energy, Whatcom Million Trees Foundation, Re-Sources, and the North Cascades Audubon

Notably the Re-Sources Form letter included responses from 87 individuals.

(Slide 4) The Next Steps

Working on getting responses to commenters as well as forwarding relevant comments to the respective chapter authors.

Also considering including the public comments in the CAP possibly as an addendum.

Ellyn requested for **William** to send her the slides from his presentation with the numbers added on it

Steve said that the Re-Sources comments were very thorough. And some comments from that would be worth including.

Steve also asked **Dave** about a form letter comment that he received but wasn't sure if it was the same one as the Re-Sources form letter or not.

Dave said that it was from "350 Bellingham" which is an international climate organization.

Steve said that we should determine how many people responded using a form letter as opposed to individual suggestions

Dave said that with the "350" commenters they each wrote their own email responses so it was not just a standard form letter like Re-Sources.

Phil asked about how relevant comments were determined.

William said that they were going to send thank yous to the form letter respondents.

Dave said comments that included questions and contained specific information would be considered relevant

Phil asked what the protocol for responding to commenters whose suggestions we would not be implementing would be. And if we would be telling people if their suggestions were not being included.

Dave said that we may explain to them why their comments were not included

Phil says he thinks that is unnecessary and not common amongst other agencies

Ellyn said that since this is an advisory document that we are not required to provide an explanation because this is not a regulatory document

Sue said she was curious about the 4 comments that were not supportive of the CAP

Dave said that there was one commenter that compared the emissions of Whatcom County to those from China and that they weren't going to have a discernable benefit to our community

Dave also mentioned some forestry commenters that didn't want rural forestry zones rezoned into commercial

Ellyn suggested that **Chris** talk about that response

Chris said that he doesn't have a full response yet but met with Foresters recently and will be following up with them to figure out a way to keep our forest lands sustainable.

Ellyn asked about the goal of rezoning to reduce new development in those areas and if existing buildings in those areas would be grandfathered into the zoning?

Chris said that yes, they would be and that rather than completely rezoning those areas we could also pursue redefining the zoning from one building per 20 acres to 40 acres. This would decrease the number of homes that would be able to be built in that zone.

5) Feedback from July 28th meeting with Executive Sidhu and Senior County Staff – Ellyn & Chris

The Exec was supportive of the plan and wanted to support the Office of Climate action with a budget of 250k per year.

Chris confirmed that Exec. Sidhu plans to ask for funding for an acting Climate action director for the rest of the year. Exec. Sidhu said that he would not recommend the office to be directly under him and suggested moving it to another existing department possibly in public works.

Chris said that any existing department would be apprehensive about creating a whole new office in their department because the county staff are already stretched pretty thin.

Ellyn said that the implementation section authors should discuss possibilities for the office and where it should be housed, and inquired about placing it in administrative works

Chris suggested meeting with **Ellyn** and **Steve** to further discuss the options

Sue asked about Exec. Sidhu's response to not housing the office directly under him and asked for further clarification

Chris said that there is some benefit to having the Office located in departments that will be doing the majority of the work.

Ellyn mentioned that the timing of this meeting was shorter than she anticipated and that Natural Resources section wasn't really covered very much

Chris said that Exec. Sidhu was under the impression that this office may be collaborative effort with the City of Bellingham and that he has already reached out to the city of Bellingham and that Mayor Fleetwood has already replied

Steve asked if Mayor Fleetwood was supportive of that.

Chris said yes

Steve suggested that having a joint effort for the office would be beneficial particularly from a funding standpoint and potentially allow for an office with more staff. To apply for grants and get more projects done.

(JCAT) Joint Climate Action Team, **Chris** said that a cross jurisdictional coordination effort has already been used to help implement C-PACER in the County

Sue asked about the 250k budget

Chris said that it's roughly 100k per employee

Phil said that an important goal of this office would be to ensure someone is exclusively focused on issues. And said that what we should avoid is splitting up some existing county staff's focus to these issues part time

6) Organization of Draft Climate Action Plan – Ellyn

a) Comments on Executive Summary

Many people thought that it would be beneficial to add the strategy, action, benefit tables into the actual sections rather than having them in the appendices.

Sue, Steve, and **Dave** all agreed with moving the tables to the relevant sections.

David Kershner (he/him) in Zoom Chat: I concur with Sue and Steve's comments. Many readers will only be interested in one issue and the tables are going to have more prominence in the chapter versus the appendices.

Phil said putting the tables at the end of the chapters would be preferred.

Ellyn said that a glossary for terms that many of the public are unfamiliar with would be good to add

Phil asked about timelines

Ellyn said that 3-year timelines are at the end of the chapters and that there is a longer timeline that will remain in the appendix.

Ellyn also asked about the indigenous land acknowledgement that Kaylee and Steve have been working on

Kaylee said that she and Steve haven't heard back from either the Lummi or Nooksack tribes about the acknowledgement they wrote. And that we could add in the version she wrote as a placeholder until the tribes respond

b) Is Land Use placed correctly in the report?

Phil said that he thinks Land use should remain in the Built environment because the term land use implies that humans are using or possibly building something on the land.

c) Do we need a more complete discussion on cross-cutting ideas, and if so, where?

Phil said that some of the cross-cutting ideas are similar and that they don't necessarily need their own section but that they should be included in the introduction. He said that it might do well to shorten the section that is in the executive summary which discusses them

Steve mentioned the Re-Sources response letter and that they described our report as "siloes" and in his opinion was that a lot of the subjects touched many sections.

Ellyn said that the siloing had to do with how emissions are categorized by IPCC and things were split up based on that.

Katie asked about if some of the natural resources cross cutting ideas should be discussed about in the Ecosystems section.

Ellyn said that certain ecosystems have been siloed into separate sections for ease of discussion

Kaylee asked for clarification on the cross-cutting issues section compared to a suggestion from a commenter that we develop a matrix to help illustrate how things overlap.

Ellyn said that the introduction of the built environment section there is some discussion of interconnectedness and that there is also a similar discussion in the introduction to the natural resources section

Dave asked if we should develop a master matrix for the cross-cutting issues

Phil said that it sounds like it might be useful but seems like a tough ask because of the number of suggestions that we have

Ellyn said that the matrix would probably be for the cross-cutting issues not the proposed actions. And that if anyone wanted to try to develop one, they are more than welcome to.

Phil said that one thing that may be helpful to add would be links to other sections in the report for cross-cutting issues.

Steve suggested a graphic to help illustrate the bridge between the cross-cutting issues.

Dave said that a discussion of how land use bridges between the built and natural environments and perhaps a simplified graphic for just land use

Steve said that he would try to come up with something

7) Old or New Business

The County Council Meeting. We are 4th on the schedule and there are 3 large topics before us. Our slot is listed as a discussion.

Chris suggested preparing a presentation

Ellyn said that she had one prepared based on the organization of the plan. She suggested that she and Chris lead the presentation

Ellyn said that the meeting starts at 2:00pm and that we will likely not be presenting until after 3:00pm

Phil asked about the section authors and how many slides they will need to provide

Ellyn said that she already has 2 slides for each section. and that she will send the slides out to everyone. She also said that if chapter authors would like to attend the meeting that she may defer to them if the council has questions about those specific sections.

Chris said this is likely the last time we will be able to get feedback from Council on the Plan.

Steve volunteered to draft a piece for the Salish Current about the CAP. He also suggested preparing a press release for local news outlets for September when the Council votes on the plan

Ellyn suggested drafting a resolution for the plan that Council will vote on.

Chris said that the public works department will bring the resolution forward for the council to vote on.

8) Adjourn

Meeting ended at 6:55pm

Next meeting scheduled for September 2nd, 2021

Recorded By: Katherine Kissinger, contact kissinger.katherine@gmail.com for edits to the draft.

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