

**Climate Impact Advisory Committee**  
Meeting Minutes



Date: November 5, 2020  
Location: Zoom

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

**1) Call to Order**

Meeting started at 5:37pm

**3) Review and approval of minutes from October Meeting**

Phil motioned to approve the minutes.

Sue Seconded

Motion passed

**4) Public Comment**

Atul brought up the Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) as something for us to consider in regards to our sections on land use, especially in the Natural Resources Group. He also mentioned that the planning commission has started reviewing the SMP.

**Public in attendance:**

Atul Deshmane, PUD

Carryn van de Griend, PSE

Eddy Ury, ReSources

David Hostetler

## **5) Introducing the new members of the Climate Impact Advisory Committee.**

Stevan Harrel  
Sue Gunn  
Hunter Hassig

## **6) Land Use and Natural Resources Working Group Update – Kaylee Galloway (land use), Treva Coe (water resources mgmt.), Katie Kissinger (ecosystems), and Chris Elder (agriculture, forestry)**

**Ellyn** asked if the Natural Resources group was developing an outline for their section of the Climate Action Plan?

**Kaylee** said yes, but said that they were not sure whether land use should be a separate category or instead included with specific sections to which they apply. She asked for input from the committee on that.

**Ellyn** said that we should consider moving the land use actions to other working groups or sections if they are very specific to the area impacted (e.g., transportation infrastructure, agriculture, buildings, etc.).

**Stevan** suggested we add clarification as to what climate change problems/ challenges we are trying to address with our strategies and actions

**Kaylee** clarified that Natural Resources is not focusing as much on the built environment

**Kaylee** said that the natural resources working group will develop a table for each overarching goal that has strategies, actions and benefits. The benefits need more refinement to illustrate how the strategies and actions are relevant to the climate plan.

**Ellyn** commented on how using that table format would really help clarify how the strategies and actions support the goal. Ellyn agreed with Kaylee's earlier point about refining the benefits section.

**Stevan** commented about adding what the main problem's or challenges that we are trying to address with our strategies and actions. He suggested a parallel structure between the built / natural environments sections.

**Kaylee** said that it would be hard to directly parallel the built environment section because some of the natural aspects of the section don't exactly line up.

**Stevan** said that at this point all of our environment has been impacted by humans.

**Ellyn** said that we should reference studies that back up our mitigation suggestions. She mentioned the drought contingency plan and Paula Harris as a good resource to run information by in the future. Ellyn also mentioned the slide about geothermal energy and asked if we had heard of any possible resources in Whatcom County?

**Phil** said that he may have heard of some early stage reports of geothermal resources in the Mt. Baker area.

**Ellyn** commented on the floodplain management and trying to eliminate flood damage. She had heard that the county wants to buy flood plain land as it becomes available and wondered if there was actual county funding for such a program (similar to the city of Bellingham program to buy land in the Lake Whatcom watershed). She thought Paula Harris would be a good person to go to in order to find information about programs like that.

**Treva** said that she knew Paula well, and has worked with her in the flood process. She said that with built structures there is FEMA funding available for repetitive loss. There is also a grant from Ecology that Paula uses to access floodplains for strategic management that helps balance the needs of agriculture as well as salmon recovery.

**Ellyn** said that in a previous meeting about her meeting with Exec. Sidhu that they were planning to hire a water expert to coordinate the water issues across the county.

**Chris** said that Exec. Sidhu requested the funds for a water expert position in the budget proposal for next year which still needs to be approved by the county council. He said it did not sound like there would be funding for a full time position.

**Treva** said that there have been talks about funding a mediator for the water issues in the county

**Stevan** pointed out that water usage was not addressed in the natural resources presentation and asked about why that was since water use is an important topic in regards to climate change.

**Treva** said that that is because water rights are a hot topic right now, and that there is an adjudication request to the state legislature, and that is the key to solving these water issues.

**Sue** had a question for Treva about how long an adjudication would take.

**Treva** said that there are amendments and new technologies available to help speed up the process. She suggested that it could take around 10-20 year time frame depending on how many folks dispute, which would be more streamlined than the Yakama adjudication

**Ellyn** said that water banks were a popular option that has been discussed in the county. But that would require metering to be effective.

**Treva** said that as long as unpermitted water use is occurring there is no incentive to create a water bank.

**Ellyn** asked what secondary forests and rural forestry zones are?

**Chris** said that had to do with zoning language.

**Ellyn** asked what the forest designations are?

**Chris** said they are split into commercial and rural.

**Stevan** asked about the difference between the commercial and rural zones

**Chris** said anything owned by large companies or DNR was automatically zoned to commercial, everything else was rural

**Ellyn** said she had asked the Forestry Advisory Committee about this and they said it had to do with size: a minimum of 20 acres for rural forestry, and a minimum of 40 acres for commercial.

**Sue** asked about prioritization of all our strategies and actions

**Katie** said that the Natural Resources group has been focusing on prioritization but that did not make it into the current draft of the presentation

**Sue** mentioned that the group should look into anaerobic digesters and consider biofuels as well.

**Stevan** said that there is exciting work being done with turning logging waste into biofuels. He also mentioned that digesters don't work for pasture grazing.

**Ellyn** mentioned that a staff member from the WA Dept of Commerce presented his study on biofuels to the Bellingham climate task force last year. The main issue was a consistent stream of source material.

**Atul** said the Dept of Commerce staff member Ellyn referred to was Peter Moulton. A local feed stock assessment has been done for Whatcom, Skagit, Snohomish counties and that there is sufficient biomass. But the problem is collecting and transporting the biomass for processing at a quantity and cost to support the scale of the market.

**Stevan** said that this is likely because subsidies largely still benefit fossil fuels

**Atul** said that we are behind other states like CA on our low carbon fuel standard

**Ellyn** asked about implementing long-term monitoring of climate trends and suggested a centralized database that the Natural Resources group could consider for measuring ecosystem health and other measurements

**Katie** agreed with Ellyn that a centralized database was a good suggestion

**Phil** stated that the transportation group would produce educational materials but that we need more data collection and analysis. And adding those into the list of recommendations.

**Dave** asked Treva about water supply solutions?

**Treva** said that the solution that has been discussed was piping water where it is needed

**Dave** asked about whether this would include water banking, not impounding water with a new dam? He said that we should clarify that we are not considering suggesting a new dam/reservoir.

**Treva** mentioned that streamflow, aquifer recharge, and wetland restoration projects to improve water storage.

**Ellyn** asked Chris to share an example about aquifer recharge.

**Chris** said that he is more in favor of natural solutions rather than engineered aquifer recharge. He mentioned historic floodplain reconnection as a water storage option.

**Ellyn** suggested that we consider including examples in this section of places where these methods have been used before with success and adding those examples to the report.

**Sue** was wondering about how effective tree planting for sequestration would be if the trees die from the changing climate?

**Chris** mentioned an example of assisted migration from the Cedar River Watershed in the greater Seattle area has been sourcing trees from the Sierra Nevada's so that as the trees grow up and our climate gets more intense the trees will still survive. He said that a similar solution could be considered for the Lake Whatcom Watershed.

**Ellyn** wrapped up this section by thanking the Natural Resources group for their presentation and all the excellent work they have done to date. She hoped the CIAC comments were constructive as they move forward in finalizing their section of the Climate Action Plan.

## **7) Working Group Reports**

**Ellyn** mentioned that Sue Gunn is going to take the lead on developing an Industry section for the climate action plan with help from John Yakawich and Eddy Ury.

**Transportation:** Phil said they are working on reducing the list of recommendations. He mentioned the cross-cutting issue of land use and the state energy strategy and the transportation section was heavily affected by land use. Pointing out that approximately 50% of the issues relating to transportation in that plan were related to land use. He said that their group is pulling out land use strategies into their own category.

**Natural Resources:** the general consensus is that they need to work on prioritizing the recommendations.

**Electricity & Buildings:** Finalizing strategies and actions working on graphics. Working on a writeup and referencing the state energy strategy. Ellyn mentioned that they will discuss the strategies and actions in the December meeting.

**Communication & Community Outreach:** Steve will be taking that group on, with Dave. Steve asked for people who are interested in joining the group to reach out. Ellyn suggested asking Kaylee to contribute to the group since her work previously involved community outreach in Whatcom County.

Kaylee asked about having a rep from each work group to contribute their portion for the outreach plan? Ellyn said yes, that makes sense

## **8) Review of CAP Schedule and Upcoming Meetings**

Ellyn mentioned that there will be a small meeting involving the leaders of the working groups to look at the cross-cutting issues and make sure the goals, strategies and actions for the climate action plan support our 2030 mitigation goals and/or build climate resilience through adaptation. We should be trying to meet the 45% reduction by 2030 which means almost 8% reduction per year. The meeting will be to see how strategies will help us reach this target. Also how the adaptation strategies demonstrate climate resilience.

Ellyn mentioned our target of trying to get some draft writeups in by January and then delivering a full draft to Exec. Sidhu in March.

Katie asked about reapplying to the committee for those who have terms ending this year?

Chris said that you need to reapply again and you can simply add on to your previous application package. It was suggested that we reapply in early December.

## **9) Adjourn**

Meeting ended at 7:23PM

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