

ASHLAND CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING AGENDA

Tuesday, September 7, 2021

Held Electronically; View on Channel 9 or Channels 180 and 181 (Charter Communications) or live stream via rvtv.sou.edu select RVTV Prime.

Written and oral testimony will be accepted for public input. For written testimony, email public-testimony@ashland.or.us using the subject line: Ashland City Council Public Testimony.

For oral testimony, fill out a Speaker Request Form at ashland.or.us/speakerrequest and return to the City Recorder. The deadline for submitting written testimony or speaker request forms will be on Tuesday, September 7 at 10 a.m. and must comply with Council Rules to be accepted.

Note: Items on the Agenda not considered due to time constraints are automatically continued to the next regularly scheduled Council meeting [AMC 2.04.030.E.]

6:00 PM REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Akins called the Business Meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Councilor Jensen lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. ROLL CALL

Councilors' Hyatt, Graham, Moran, DuQuenne, Seffinger and Jensen were present.

IV. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Study Session of August 16, 2021
2. Business Meeting of August 17, 2021

Hyatt/Moran moved to approve the Minutes. Discussion: None. All Ayes. Motion passed unanimously.

VI. SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS & AWARDS

1. Proclamation Recognizing the Almeda Fire Anniversary
Mayor Akins read the proclamation into the record (*see attached*).
2. Annual Report by the Climate Policy Commission

Climate Police Commission Chair Rick Barth presented Council with the annual report (*see attached*).

VII. MINUTES OF BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, AND COMMITTEES

Airport	Budget	Conservation & Climate Outreach
Historic	Housing and Human Svcs.	Parks & Recreation
Forest Lands	Climate Policy	Community Center & Pioneer Hall Ad Hoc

[Planning](#)
[Transportation](#)

[Public Arts](#)
[Tree](#)

[Social Equity & Racial Justice](#)
[Wildfire Safety](#)

VIII. **PUBLIC FORUM** Business from the audience not included on the agenda. The Mayor will set time limits to enable all people wishing to speak to complete their testimony. [15 minutes maximum]

Pamela Joy –Ashland – Spoke to the health issues of cell tower and not allow. Has health issues. Not near her house. Support to stop the tower. Lowers property values.

Kelly Marcutulli –Ashland -Spoke regarding the health effects regarding radiation. She spoke that any new cell towers be stopped.

Ivy Ross – Ashland – Spoke that she is a member of Oregon for Safer Technology. She spoke in frustration regarding the health authority report.

She spoke regarding 3 specifics asks:

- What date will the Telecom Ordinance be on the Look Ahead.
- Who is the Citizen contact on Council for this subject.
- Who on Council is making this decision to handle this.

IX. **CITY MANAGER REPORT**

City Manager Pro Tem Gary Milliman gave the City Manager report.

Items discussed were:

- Upcoming Study Sessions.
- Executive Assistant Elizabeth Taylor’s last day is Friday. City Staff will work on filling the duties until the position is hired and Administration will look at redefining the role of the position.
- Discussions with the Chamber regarding Special Event Permits.
- COVID precautions.

Council discussed the Study Session schedule.

Council discussed Public engagement efforts and timeline.

Council discussed the survey, listening sessions, process and cost.

Council requested Staff to bring back timeframe on these requests.

Councilor Moran spoke regarding City Finances and emails submitted into the record.

Jensen spoke regarding the follow up of the APRC Joint Meeting agenda item; he spoke in concern that it does not include the full participation of the elected Parks Commissioners. Mayor Akins spoke that this will be put on an Agenda.

X. CONSENT AGENDA

1. [Appointment of Anya Moore to the Conservation and Climate Outreach Commission](#)
2. [Appointment of John Owen to the Forest Lands Commission](#)
3. [Appointment of Ken Engelund to the Public Arts Commission](#)
4. [Appointment of Joel Frank to the Public Arts Commission](#)

Hyatt/Moran moved to approve the Minutes. Discussion: None. All Ayes. Motion passed unanimously.

XI. PUBLIC HEARINGS

Persons wishing to speak are to submit a “speaker request form” prior to the commencement of the public hearing. Public hearings conclude at 8:00 p.m. and are continued to a future date to be set by the Council, unless the Council, by a two-thirds vote of those present, extends the hearing(s) until up to 9:30 p.m. at which time the Council shall set a date for continuance and shall proceed with the balance of the agenda.

XII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

XIII. NEW AND MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

1. [Almeda Fire Anniversary Recognition](#)

Hyatt gave a Staff report. She spoke to the importance of recognizing our First Responders and continued recovery.

DuQuenne suggested to create a hashtag to show our appreciation as City.

Council discussed options on ways to thank the First Responders.

Seffinger spoke that this is was more a Phoenix/Talent situation and we need to come together but we are not the primary City that was involved. She spoke that she likes the idea of a message of all of us coming together. Moran spoke in agreement with Seffinger.

Graham spoke that although the fire was not primarily in Ashland; however our first responders in Fire, Police and Public Works were involved.

DuQuenne spoke in recognition of people in uniform and out of uniform.

Seffinger spoke to the importance of standing together with our neighbors.

Council directed Staff to develop a banner to be put up this year. And set up a process with Engage Ashland to solicit and gather messages to our first responders and hometown heroes.

Council suggested to look into a hashtag to add to social media.

2. **Nuclear Free Zone Ordinance Discussion**

Graham gave a brief staff report.

Council gave consensus to direct this item back to Staff and bring back to Council for further review.

XIV. ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS AND CONTRACTS

XV. OTHER BUSINESS FROM COUNCIL MEMBERS/REPORTS FROM COUNCIL LIAISONS

XVI. ADJOURNMENT OF BUSINESS MEETING

Moran/Hyatt moved to adjourn the Business Meeting: Discussion: None. All Ayes 8:01 PM

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact the City Manager's office at (541) 488-6002 (TTY phone number 1-800-735-2900). Notification 72 hours prior to the meeting will enable the City to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to the meeting (28 CFR 35.102-35.104 ADA Title I).

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, on September 8, 2020 the Rogue Valley, specifically the communities of Talent, Phoenix, and Northern Ashland were gravely impacted by the Almeda Fire; and

WHEREAS, three people lost their lives; and

WHEREAS, the Almeda Fire destroyed over 2,600 residences and businesses; and

WHEREAS, our first responders and other hometown heroes stepped forward to answer the call and aid our community both during the event and in the weeks and months that followed; and

WHEREAS, many residents have been impacted by this experience and carry the combined memory and trauma of the Almeda Fire, as informed by our individual experiences; and

WHEREAS, the experience of the Almeda Fire brought forward the unity of our collective Rogue Valley communities expressed by strength, selfless volunteerism, and a genuine outpouring of support for our deeply impacted neighbors.

NOW, THEREFORE, the City Council and Mayor request that all citizens of Ashland join together in support of community members recovering from this traumatic event, and in gratitude to our first responders and hometown heroes who responded in a time of great need. We commemorate the first anniversary of the Almeda Fire, and understand that though time has passed, healing occurs across a continuum of both time and enduring community support. We continue to stand with our neighbors across all impacted communities as recovery and rebuilding unfolds.

Julie Akins, Mayor

Melissa Huhtala, City Recorder



Thank you Mayor Akins and Councilors for the time today. It is appreciated as we are living through difficult times with many simultaneous emergencies making major demands on mayor, council, and staff. One of those emergencies is the existential climate change emergency. I'm here tonight representing the council established climate policy commission that addresses that emergency. Tonight's agenda has a link to CPC's annual progress and plan report. The 16 pages of that report is only a summary of CPC's work. I have some prepared remarks. Please pose any questions or comments you might have during the presentation. Also happy to discuss CPC's work after the remarks are complete.

Outline

- Key Points
- Report Summary
- City Council Support

In the small amount of time available tonight I will only be able to address a few key points, summarize the summary report, and address needed changes to CPC and council interaction.

CPC will be bringing substantially more detailed policy background, alternatives, and recommendations to council between now and the end of CPC's work year in May of 2022. CPC will also continue working with staff implementing council's previous policy direction, most notably the Climate and Energy Action Plan adopted in 2017.

Key Points

Some key points:

Continuing to burn fossil
natural gas and gasoline
continues business as
usual but ...

We need to change what
we're doing.



For those not Wile E. Coyote fans, he's poking an enormous boulder stack over his head trying to get them to fall.

Key Points

- Mitigate Emissions
- Adapt to New Reality
- Address Inequities
- Find Funds
- Provide Council Attention

First, CPC wants to emphasize Stu Green's statement that "Ashland is falling behind on its goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions". As a community and through council leadership we need to dramatically reduce our emissions.

Second, last year's Alameda fire and many year's of historic heat, drought, and smoke conditions make obvious that Ashland's climate has deteriorated. So, in addition to mitigating emissions, Ashland must also adapt to our new reality. Luckily, through council action the most immediate existential threat to Ashland is being addressed by the Wild Fire Safety Commission. We must do more.

Third, the direct and indirect effects of emissions fall most heavily on those who cannot afford to sufficiently protect themselves. For example, breathing the direct emissions from cooking with methane, the principal substance in natural gas, is associated with poor health outcomes, such as increased asthma. Renters and low-income homeowners frequently do not have the means to replace their gas stoves with electric induction stoves, even though induction stoves cook better. These same people have difficulty avoiding the indirect effects of emissions because:

the homes in which they live tend to leak which allows smoke to enter

they may not be able to afford air filters and

their homes tend to be poorly insulated, so even if they have air conditioning they may not be able to afford the utility bills to keep their homes at a reasonable temperature. This is particularly true during climate change induced heat waves.

We need to find a way to address these climate change inequities.

Fourth, CPC needs funds for its work. Whether those funds come from the general fund, enterprise funds, or other sources is an issue that needs to be worked through. The funds are needed to, at minimum, update the climate and energy action plan, the emissions inventory, the vulnerability assessment, and the water climate study. An example of the need is the water climate study. It will update our expectations of the water that will be available from all of Ashland's water sources. Given the large expense and long time frames to upgrade our water source capability it behooves us to plan well ahead starting with rain and snow predictions for all sources.

Fifth, CPC's work is entangled with every aspect of Ashland's government and community. It is impossible for CPC to be effective if the interaction with council is limited to an annual 10 minute presentation. For example, council could schedule council study sessions for each of the 5 initiatives detailed later to provide CPC an opportunity to share background and gather initial policy direction from council. These study sessions would be preparatory to CPC bringing fully formed policy proposals to later council business meetings.

Report Summary

Now let me summarize the summary report.



Initiatives

- Formal Planning
- Clean Buildings
- The Path Off Fossil Gas
- Energy Efficient Transportation
- Sustainable Electricity

The council adopted climate plan classifies strategies and actions into discrete focus areas, many of which share connections across fossil gas, electricity, transportation and the built environment. To avoid confusion with the terminology in the adopted climate plan, CPC has decided to use the word "initiative" to describe its work partitions as these partitions cover multiple climate plan focus areas.

The commission agreed to focus efforts on five priority initiatives designed to have maximum impact on Ashland's GHG emissions at the same time it is addressing equitable adaptation: Formal Planning, Clean Buildings, The Path Off Fossil Gas, Energy Efficient Transportation, and Sustainable Electricity.

Formal Planning

- climate plan integration – provided comments on the Water Master Plan, the TAP Master Plan, the Water Management and Conservation Plan, the Storm Drain Master Plan, and the Capital Improvement Plan
- Monitoring state and municipal level climate change activity
- CPC will propose integration of a “Carbon Note” into the Council communication template
- CPC will review the Energy, Air and Water Conservation element of the Comprehensive Plan

The City has many formal planning processes that ultimately shape specific decisions that affect our community. Over the past year CPC has helped integrate the council adopted climate plan strategies and actions into those formal plans. This is one of the most efficient ways for CPC to affect the future because the climate plan goals are then integrated into the process of running the city. CPC can then take a background role monitoring the specific decisions rather than needing to advocate for climate policy at every turn.

The formal planning initiative not only addresses the targets of opportunity that arise through existing formal planning processes but also looks for methods to build climate mitigation and adaptation into basic city processes. CPC will be bringing to council the concept of Carbon Notes which is successfully being used in other cities, such as Seattle.

Clean Buildings

- CPC supported USDA on-bill financing loan application and will work with city staff to address the needs of low income and rental housing.
- CPC will
 - develop a Home Energy Score modeled on Milwaukie's program
 - Prepare an amendment to address solar readiness in new construction
 - Prepare a proposal for land use planning to address electric vehicle readiness and charging
 - Recommend a change to density bonus calculations to address GHG emissions.

Presuming no wild fire disaster most of Ashland's buildings that will exist in 2050 are already here. However, the climate in which they exist has already and will continue to change so that what was once adequate no longer will be. In addition to hardening buildings against wild fire it is important to mitigate the direct and indirect emissions, to adapt them to heat and smoke, and to ensure adequate housing so that the entire community has access to clean, temperature controlled air. So clean doesn't just mean lack of GHG emissions, it also means providing breathable air.

CPC applauds council's approval of the USDA on-bill financing loan. These types of programs have been used successfully in other cities, particularly for people who are not in the position to pay up front for home improvements but must pay over time and who may not have credit scores which give them access to standard bank loans at reasonable rates. Should the USDA loan be approved CPC will be happy to provide any additional background council might require to understand the major benefits of this program.

The Path Off Fossil Gas

- Work with other commissions and community groups to engage and raise the awareness of the residents of Ashland to the urgent need to transition off fossil gas.
- Explore legal options (including franchise agreements, fees, moratoriums and ordinances) at the city and state level to reduce fossil gas use.
- Complete a fossil gas inventory
- Draft an outline of a revised gas franchise agreement
- Propose a moratorium on new fossil gas connections

So called natural gas is primarily methane. Burning methane inherently generates green house gas emissions. A substantial portion of Ashland's green house gas emissions come from heating our buildings and water with methane. When used for cooking methane combustion produces by-products which can exacerbate health issues such as asthma. It is essential for Ashland to change its use of methane.

The Avista gas franchise agreement expires in 2025. CPC will be bringing to council policy background and options both for franchise agreement renewal and for action in advance of that renewal.

Energy Efficient Transportation

- Drafted and will continue work on an integrated urban, land use and transportation implementation plan with CCOC and TC
- Collaborated with CCOC and TC regarding reduced maximum speed limits benefits
- Will seek to create a functional, practical, safe, efficient, and convenient bicycle and pedestrian transportation system from anywhere to everywhere within the city

Aside from fossil gas the largest source of Ashland's direct emissions comes from transportation through the use of fossil fuel vehicles. While Ashland is to be applauded for its high rate of EV adoption we still have a long way to go. There are two principle methods for mitigating transportation emissions: electrification and mode shift.

Electrification does not just mean replacing our internal combustion engine private vehicles with battery electric private vehicles. It also means products such as electric bikes, busses, and scooters.

Mode shift means finding other ways to get ourselves from where we are to where we want to be such as walking, biking, and mass transit.

CPC will seek to incorporate the council adopted climate plan goals, policies, and actions into the Transportation System Plan which will create a functional, practical, safe, efficient, and convenient bicycle and pedestrian transportation system from anywhere to everywhere within the city.

Sustainable Electricity

- Work with Ashland's Electric utility to develop an Electricity Master Plan beginning with a 10-year planning study
- Track regional power supply and purchase trends.
- Evaluate the impact of vehicle and building electrification on the local electricity grid.
- Evaluate the feasibility of a 1 MW solar project

Ashland is already highly dependent on always-on electricity to maintain lives, property, and livelihoods. Even if fossil gas is being used as the principal energy source to keep our homes warm we still rely on electricity to power our gas furnaces. During the summer we rely on electricity to protect us from heat and smoke. This electricity dependence will grow as our buildings and transportation become more reliant upon it.

The current schedule for BPA contract renewal projects that contracts will be signed in 2025 for implementation in 2028. This is a challenging schedule for such a complex topic due to the major changes in electricity technology, markets, and requirements. Council will have significant policy decisions to make prior to 2025. CPC is working with staff to provide Council with the necessary background and policy options.

Happily, the technological trends are in favor of the electric supply achieving low green house gas emissions and greater resiliency at lower cost than our present system. The difficulty lays in navigating the path from our present situation to that future.

Projects

- Develop a high-level climate change adaptation roadmap showing how individual issues are allocated to various city functions and commissions.
- Identify gaps in the adaptation roadmap
- Continue work on gas powered lawn and garden equipment emissions reduction.
- Coordinate with other commissions and community organizations.

In addition to the major initiatives previously summarized CPC will be spending some time on smaller projects such as reviewing the existing vulnerability assessment to create an outline of adaptation issues not currently being addressed, working to reduce small engine emissions from equipment such as leaf blowers, and participating in commission and community climate coordination efforts.

City Council Support

Now let me address the critical need for city council support.

City Council Support

- Decisive action at the local level is needed to address climate change and adaptation.
- The Climate Policy Commission will work with City staff and other commissions to bring a series of policies, plans and ordinances to the City Council for approval.
- Tradeoffs and difficult choices will be necessary to meet Ashland's climate plan goals in the coming years.

As mentioned earlier, it is impossible for CPC to fulfill its mandate given by council without significant interaction between CPC and council. Repeating the prior example, council could schedule study sessions for each of the 5 initiatives to provide CPC an opportunity to share background and gather initial council policy direction. These study sessions would be preparatory to CPC bringing fully formed policy proposals to later council business meetings.

What more is there to say?



Again, for those not Wile E. Coyote fans, he's trapped in a tunnel as a train roars towards him. Wonderful ambiguity. Wile E. Coyote is both pleading not to be run over by the climate change train and exhorting us all to stop what we are doing and take a new direction.

Thank you for your attention. At this point I'm happy to answer any further questions or discuss the path forward.