

MINUTES FOR THE CLIMATE POLICY COMMISSION

Thursday, December 10, 2020; Held Electronically

1. Call to Order (*item starts at 00:03 on the video*)

Chair Rick Barth called the meeting to order at 4 p.m. Commissioners Bob Kaplan, Ray Mallette, Gary Shaff, and Jeff Wyatt along with staff liaison Stu Green were present. Commissioners Julian Bell, Chris Brown, and Council liaison Tonya Graham were absent.

2. Consent Agenda (00:13)

2.1. November 12, 2020 Minutes

Barth stated that his comment on Natural Gas power plants providing power to electric heat pumps at residences was stated as if the heat pumps were incorporated into the Natural Gas power plant instead of separate. Shaff/Wyatt moved/seconded approval of the minutes. Further discussion: none. All ayes; motion passed unanimously.

3. Announcements

3.1. Next Meeting: January 14, 2021

3.2. Staff Update (2:07)

Green gave a staff update on the following items:

- Green has been meeting with Commissioners on various projects including the energy retrofit program with Kaplan, electric master planning with Wyatt, light vehicles and bike share with Shaff.
- The new zero emissions incentive programs are now available for electric vehicles and bikes.
- The Rogue to Go reusable to go container pilot program is being continued and expanded by a local non-profit.
- There is a potential for a City loan program for employees to invest in electric transportation methods.
- A new climate website will be launched soon.
- Green has been collaborating on clean fuel credit rules with Oregon Department of Environmental Quality.
- Green participated in a transportation electrification study with Oregon Department of Transportation.
- Green has continued to advocate for stronger building codes.

3.3. Other Announcements from Commissioners (5:50)

Mallette announced that Southern Oregon Climate Action Now (SOCAN) will be holding their master climate protector course again in February 2021. The course covers ten weeks and will meet for three hours each week. Mallette can send out information if anyone is interested.

Shaff stated that the Department of Land Conservation and Development is creating a climate friendly and equitable communities' rule. This will focus on the activities on metropolitan planning organization boundaries including the Rogue Valley. He will write a brief for the next meeting.

Barth announced that the Conservation and Climate Outreach Commission has reached out to him and he will follow up with them.

Wyatt viewed the Oregon Department of Energy's presentation on the state of energy in Oregon. The summaries of the report are a good brief of the presentation. Wyatt can send out the report if desired. Mallette asked if the goals from the Governor's executive order are not being met by the State organizations. Wyatt stated that the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) and Oregon Department of Energy (ODOE) have released statements that their current work complies with the executive order.

3.4. Reports from Representatives of Other Commissions

None

4. Public Forum

No public forum was submitted for this meeting.

5. Old Business

5.1. Action Items (11:45)

Mallette volunteered to keep track of action items during the meeting.

5.2. Commissioner Recruitment (13:58)

Barth asked about a prospective student position and Green stated that Graham might have a new prospect.

5.3. Staff Availability (15:27)

Green emphasized planning ahead and checking in on each of these projects. He asked that the Commission's projects align with his current work.

Adam Hanks, Interim City Administrator, joined the discussion at 4:21 p.m.

Barth asked for a general approach on how staff should be involved in implementing policy and the process for interaction with Council and staff. Hanks stated that some Commission projects will align with staff work. Other new projects will need to take into consideration current staff work load and be prioritized accordingly. Prioritizing projects that are already in place or align with current staff work is helpful. Often, projects that appear to be quick and simple do still require staff time to give feedback. All projects going to Council will need staff to be involved.

Barth moved agenda item 5.8 Council Communication ahead of 5.5 Bike Loan.

5.4. Comprehensive, Master, Capital Planning (27:48)

Mallette mentioned four items to discuss:

- Capital Improvements Plan (CIP)

Mallette suggested adding a reference to climate considerations to the document. Hanks mentioned that Scott Fleury, Public Works Director, is looking into carbon calculations for future capital improvement projects. Mallette agreed that was an action that would be requested with the climate considerations and will follow up with Fleury on adding a reference to climate in the beginning of the document.

- Electric Utility Master Plan

Mallette, Wyatt, Barth met with Green, Hanks, and Tom McBartlett, Electric Utility Director regarding the Electric Utility Master Plan request for proposal (RFP). Green and Wyatt are going to work together on the RFP's scope of work.

- Daniel Meyer Pool

Mallette updated that there was an Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission (APRC) public meeting on energy design options for the pool. APRC is interested in having a meeting with the Climate Policy Commission (CPC) to go over the pool design which will be available soon.

- Comprehensive Plan

An action item from the last meeting included getting a schedule for the Comprehensive Plan element updates. This will help with the discussion of how to incorporate the Climate and Energy Action Plan (CEAP) into the Comprehensive Plan. Current options include incorporating CEAP into all relevant Comprehensive Plan elements and updating them all at once, incorporating CEAP into elements as they are needed to be updated, or placing CEAP as a reference document to the Comprehensive Plan.

Barth read an email from Graham about her and Bill Molnar, Community Development Director discussing incorporating CEAP into the Comprehensive Plan. Molnar offered to attend a future meeting to discuss the Comprehensive Plan and correct any assumptions about the plan's role. Hanks stated that he and Green met with Molnar and that there is no schedule of updates to the Comprehensive Plan elements. Updates are done on an as needed basis as a result of regulatory changes, funding availability, or goal setting changes. Hanks suggested that the Energy, Air, and Water Conservation element be updated along with the creation of the Electric Utility Master Plan. Molnar agreed that Community Development staff would help with the noticing and planning process for the update. Green and other Conservation or Electric staff would be responsible for the actual update of the element. Mallette agreed and wanted to still have CEAP as a separate document while incorporating high level policy from CEAP into the Comprehensive Plan elements as updates are made.

Shaff and Barth expressed interest in looking at other elements that would affect built environment policy. Hanks stated that when the Electric Utility Master Plan is created, a list of built environment policies left out could be considered for incorporation into the Comprehensive Plan. Hanks also emphasized that due to the time needed to update elements prioritization is necessary. He also asked if incorporating CEAP into the Comprehensive Plan is a higher priority over updates to the building code; both which will demand Community Development staff time.

Mallette summarized that the consensus was to keep CEAP as a separate document while scheduling the Energy, Air, and Water Conservation Comprehensive Plan Element for update in 2022. The 2022 timeline is based on the fact that the Electric Utility Master Plan creation, CEAP update, and the Transportation System Plan update will all occur in 2021. Shaff agreed, but also wanted to continue to explore other elements of the Comprehensive Plan that needs to be updated.

5.8. Council Communication (59:57)

Barth created an outline of what was previously discussed items to present to Council including four areas: background, present work, policy recommendations, and budget recommendations. Barth asked if the memo should be sent to Council first with the plan to request Council time later. He also wanted to discuss if the broad outline was the format the Commission wanted to use. Kaplan wanted to add why mitigation and adaptation within the city should occur despite Ashland's small population. Shaff asked the timeline for reviewing this memo. Barth stated that a review would be done at this meeting with a final version would be brought back for approval

in January or February. Hanks stated that going to Council in February would be best since January is full of onboarding for Council.

Regarding the Present Work section, Barth asked if a budget request needed to be made for the Electric Utility Master Plan and Hanks stated no. Barth also asked if the topic list in this section needed to be included. Kaplan suggested using the priorities set in August focusing on planning and electrification with a few paragraphs explaining each instead. Further details can be added in as an appendix. Mallette asked a third item to be included to discuss the upcoming CEAP update.

Regarding the Policy Recommendation section, Barth stated that any policies should be fully developed with staff input before sending them onto Council. Barth asked if any of these items are at that point and should be included in the memo. Shaff would like to see the carbon note policy similar to Seattle's policy be included. Kaplan asked if this was an item that the City Manager could implement instead. Hanks stated CEAP has a similar action, but the carbon notes would take this further. This could be taken on by the City Manager if there is no large effect on staffing resources to implement. Hanks would ask CPC to work on a program for him to discuss this with the Department Heads who either write or review each Council Communication. Shaff and Wyatt were in favor of keeping this item in the Council memo and the other members were in favor of working with staff on implementation. A suggestion was made to keep the item in as informational only. Hanks reminded the need for staff input before enacting the item. All members were in favor of keeping the item in as informational.

The following items listed under the Policy Recommendation section were removed:

- Staff training; as this is an action in CEAP and can be taken on by the City Manager and Department Heads.

Hanks left the meeting at 5:33 p.m.

- Prioritize CEAP and climate knowledge in hiring decisions. Shaff wanted a link to carbon notes with hiring decisions.
- Pool
- Identify City-owned solar sites. Kaplan stated that a report has already been done by the Conservation Division.
- Comprehensive Plan Update
- Photovoltaic (PV) Solar Reserves

Regarding the Budget recommendations section, Barth wanted to identify specific budget needs. Green asked for more time to discuss the budget list as there are projects and programs that should be added to the list. Kaplan suggested presenting principals to Council as a request to allocate resources. Those principals could be leverage and impact on Greenhouse Gas (GHG) reductions and the City as a leader on climate action projects. Barth proposed that someone volunteer to write this section up with those principals. Shaff asked if Green could outline what project and budget requests CPC should advance to Council. Green agreed to work on this, and Kaplan volunteered to help. Green also asked that the Commission discuss prioritization of the outline as the full request will most likely not be funded. Barth asked for volunteers for other items in the memo. Wyatt volunteered to write the electric utility and built environment items. Shaff volunteered to write the draft for the carbon notes.

5.5. Bike Loan (1:52:45)

Shaff stated that progress is being made, but no update is needed from the last meeting.

5.6. Light Weight Vehicles - Reducing Maximum Speed (1:53:06)

Shaff requested time on the January agenda to discuss the benefits paper from the 20's Plenty group. This item will ideally go to Council in February as a recommendation from the Transportation Commission.

5.7. Gas Powered Lawn and Garden Equipment Emissions Reduction (1:56:07)

Shaff wanted permission from the Commission to reach out to City Department and other organizations regarding the strategy plan. This would include APRC, CCOC, Southern Oregon University (SOU), and Ashland School District. Green mentioned that there is an SOU representative on CCOC and that could be a good place to start. General consensus was given for Shaff to move forward on reaching out in regard to the strategy.

6. New Business

6.1. Housing Capacity Analysis Appointment (2:03:54)

Barth stated that the Housing Capacity Analysis group reached out to see if a member of CPC would join. As there was not time to discuss this with the Commission before the group met, Barth asked a few Commissioners if they would like to participate as a member of CPC. Brown volunteered and no members at this meeting objected to him being a part of the group.

6.2. Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission Pool Plans (2:04:40)

Kaplan and Mallette listened to the pool presentation presented to the Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission (APRC). Natural gas was the least cost option for capital and life-cycle costs. Only one electric option was looked at and did not include a ground coupled heat pump or water to water loop heat pump. Solar was also considered for heating the pool but would require a large area needed for the panels.

Michael Black, APRC Director, stated that meeting with CPC on the matter was part of the future schedule. Green will reach out to Black to see when APRC is interested in meeting with CPC and when they would like written comments from the Commission.

6.3. Student Voting Rules (2:11:15)

Barth included his discussion with the Legal Division in the packet. He did not want to take up revising the code of this Commission at this time.

7. Wrap Up

7.1. Topic Tracking and Potential Meeting Schedule (2:12:20)

Barth asked everyone to review the document on their own and to let him know the status and timeline for items to be scheduled.

He specifically wanted to discuss the natural gas appliance phase out. Kaplan stated that there were two ways to implement the phase out (can be concurrent): creating an ordinance requiring the phase out and providing resources to encourage residents to replace their natural gas appliances with electric. Green stated that this work could coincide with the energy retrofit project he and Kaplan are working on. Green strongly advised against putting an ordinance forward at this time. Barth wanted to find a way to reach those who make and influence the purchase decisions. Green suggested another option would be similar to the wood stove code changes that do not allow new wood stoves to be installed. Shaff suggested that this task on

outreach to purchase makers and influencers be taken on by CCOC and for this Commission to focus on the policy decisions. Barth agreed and also stated that requiring permits for new natural gas appliances could help the City retrieve data on the purchasing decisions.

Mallette wanted to know if there are incentives in place or if the Commission should look at developing one. Green stated that there will be an incentive for upgrading electric water heaters in January and he is working on an incentive to switch natural gas appliances to electric. Wyatt asked about raising the prices for natural gas through taxation or fees. Barth stated that members working on the electric utilities master plan will continue that discussion. Green stated that the Public Utilities Commission sets rates for Avista and the City does not have control over raising those rates.

7.2. Topic Prioritization (2:23:37)

Barth wanted to discuss the bandwidth for Council to take on these policy items and for citizens being willing to accept them. He emphasized that having one major policy moving forward at a time would help citizens adjust to the possible effects on their day to day activities and financial situation. Wyatt stated that on social media many seem to dislike spending money on projects that they think they won't use like the pool. Kaplan agreed, but also emphasized that social media is difficult to gauge if many or a few are against a project. Through Southern Oregon Climate Action Now's (SOCAN) recent survey, there are groups and members of the community who are wanting to move forward on climate issues.

Mallette stressed the need for integrating goals for next year with CCOC. Shaff suggested that coordination with other Commissions beyond CCOC should also be considered. Barth wanted members of the Commission to also reach out to various community organizations as well.

Chair Barth adjourned the meeting at 6:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Elizabeth Taylor