

MINUTES FOR THE CLIMATE POLICY COMMISSION

Thursday, February 11, 2021; Held Electronically

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

Chair Rick Barth called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. Commissioners Bob Kaplan, Ray Mallette, Gary Shaff, and Jeff Wyatt along with staff members Bridgette Bottinelli and Stu Green were present. Commissioners Julian Bell and Chris Brown as well as Council Liaison Tonya Graham arrived shortly after the meeting began.

2. Consent Agenda

2.1. January 14, 2021 Minutes (00:18)

Kaplan/Wyatt moved/seconded to approve the consent agenda. Further discussion: none. Ayes: Barth, Kaplan, Mallette, Shaff, and Wyatt. Nays: none. Motion passed unanimously.

Julian Bell arrived at 4:02 p.m.

3. Announcements

3.1. Next Meeting: March 11, 2021

3.3 Staff Update (1:03)

This item was moved before the Council Update. Green and Bottinelli have been working on the new Climate and Energy Action Plan website and Adapt Your Home outreach campaign.

Bottinelli added that there is now an Ashland Climate and Energy Action Program Facebook page. Bottinelli stated that the Commission is welcome to write and approve articles to be posted on the Facebook page.

Tonya Graham arrived at 4:03 p.m.

3.2 Council Update (2:40)

Graham informed the Commission that Council is planning a workplan session to prioritize staff work for the next 12 to 18 months. Graham will include climate priorities on her list to bring to the session.

Chris Brown arrived at 4:05 p.m.

Graham announced that the Public works Department asked Council to decide on a new ultraviolet system for the Wastewater Treatment Plant. Council chose the system that saved the most energy.

3.4 Other Announcements from Commissioners

None

3.5 Reports from Representatives of Other Commissions

None

4. Public Forum (8:11)

Lorrie Kaplan from Southern Oregon Climate Action Now (SOCAN) addressed the memo she submitted for written testimony. This included the following items:

- A survey with Southern Oregon University's Office of Sustainability. An advisory panel of community members will be used to shape the survey with topics submitted from the general public. The survey will be held for most of the year ending in November.
- On March 11, SOCAN will hold an educational program on natural gas. Future programs will be held on renewable energy.

- A request to have the Commission ask the City Council to include knowledge of climate plan implementation in the City Manager recruitment.

5. Old Business

5.1. Action Items Volunteer (11:35)

Wyatt volunteered to keep the action items for this meeting. Brown volunteered to take the action items for next meeting.

5.2. Commissioner Recruitment (11:57)

Graham stated that there have been no applications so far, but she has been in contact with someone who was looking for opportunities for Native American high school students. Barth reminded any members of the public listening that there is still one voting member position open.

5.3. Chair Memo (13:14)

Barth asked for comments and consensus on the memo in the packet. Particularly he wanted to focus on how the agenda items for this meeting should be dealt with, if the priorities from last August are still relevant, and the limited timeframe for the Climate and Energy Action Plan (CEAP) update.

Kaplan stated that biking, walking, and public transportation should be added to the August priorities item three. Barth responded that Shaff has been keeping track of the alternative modes of transportation for that item.

Regarding the CEAP update, Mallette wanted to continue with item 2.2 from the memo regarding determining authors and pursue item three focusing on reviewing the outline to determine author expectations. Green thanked Barth for outlining what items would need to be discussed at the meeting.

5.4. Formal Planning (18:00)

Mallette gave an update on the following:

- The Economic Development Strategy was added to the tracking list. The update will depend on the development of the One Rogue Valley plan in partnership with Southern Oregon Regional Economic Development, Inc.
- The Capital Improvements Program will be before Council in March. Mallette had sent comments to the Public Works Director for inclusion.
- The status of the meeting with the Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission (APRC) representatives regarding the Daniel Meyer Pool. Bell informed the Commission about a meeting held the week before regarding the pool. Kaplan requested the Commission to meet with APRC Director Michael Black. Graham will make that request and Green will follow up on his initial request to Black.

5.5. Clean Fuels (29:05)

Green explained the memo regarding the allocation of the clean fuel credits including some items the City has already committed funds. Discussion included:

- How many other cities were participating in the program? Green stated the program is for electric utilities so not many other cities have access to the credits.
- Clarification that the money labeled for housing will be for home energy retrofit programs. Bell asked if retrofit programs could be increased now since future allocations might be restricted to transportation programs. Green said this could be done, but electrification efforts leading to an increase in electric vehicle purchases increases future clean fuel credits.

- Time frame of credits to be allocated. Some will be used for the current budget while some will go towards programs in the next budget.
- Funding for employees and how this relates to implementing the programs. Green wanted to find ways for the climate and energy analyst position to be partially funded. The funds will also cover Resource Assistant for Rural Environment intern who has helped with program development and outreach. No new employees are added with this allocation.
- If this would be a typical amount that the City will receive each year. Green stated this was the allocation for 2019, but future annual amounts might change based on market factors. The program is funded by the State through 2035.

The group agreed to support the allocation. Mallette asked if Council might use this money for other non-climate items. Green stated that the money would need to at least stay in the Electric Fund.

5.6. Energy Utility Plan - Wyatt (43:44)

Wyatt gave an update on the utility plan outline and identified major components that will need to be considered. The group is proposing to begin with an update to the Electric Planning Study which will be the foundation of the Energy Utility Plan. Wyatt intends to engage with Electric Utility Director, Tom McBartlett to ensure that the proposal aligns with staff work. Green stated that he, McBartlett, and City Manager Pro Tem Adam Hanks have discussed moving forward and plan to review the documents with input from the Climate Policy Commission (CPC) input. Further discussion included:

- Resiliency and microgrids for other utility systems like Water and Wastewater. Wyatt stated the group has discussed a microgrid system for basic City services, like Fire, Police, and medical services as a possible pilot program. Barth added that there are three different scenarios to consider: 1) regular operations with Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), 2) maintaining minimal functionality for if the grid goes offline, and 3) a complete disconnect from the grid by using solar and battery backups.
- If the scope would be expanded to include additional energy options including increasing electrification. Mallette answered that originally the plan was to create an Electric Master Plan and update the rate study with items that would modernize the electric distribution system. Kaplan followed up asking if this plan would include strategic work on electrification. Wyatt stated that the plan would focus on the Electric Utility and how to supply electricity at the market rate or better. This could lead into increasing fuel switching in transportation and other areas. Shaff agreed with Kaplan that planning for transportation and building electrification should be focused on including updating the Comprehensive Plan to help regulate the land use process.

Barth asked and received a majority consensus that the group could move forward on the current plan while eventually looking into furthering electrification efforts.

5.7. Light Weight Vehicles - Reducing Maximum Speed (56:21)

Shaff explained that the legislative item was introduced at the State level. Bell/Shaff moved/seconded that CPC recommend to the City Council that they request that the Southern Oregon legislative delegation support the passage of HB 3055. Further discussion: none. All ayes; motion passed unanimously.

5.8. Energy Retrofit Loan Program (58:14)

Kaplan presented an outline for expanding the existing home energy retrofit loan program at the previous meeting and added in suggestions from the Commission. Discussion included:

- Self-sustained funding - The proposal is asking for a larger budget to increase electrification efforts which will increase revenue for the Electric Fund. There is a possibility of extra financial tools including charging interest rates and selling loan participations.
- Outreach for the program – Currently, the program is promoted to residents through the City's energy consultations, but increased outreach could help more residents take advantage of the program.
- Carbon offset program - Bell was interested in creating a carbon offset program to help market and raise money for the program. Graham asked if the City already participates in an offset program. Green answered there is an offering for rate payers to buy offsets through BPA, but the program would have to be renewed. Graham wondered if the City creating its own program would allow the community to invest into the revolving loan fund. Green said that is a potential option, but prefers to offer incentives to reduce direct emissions. Bell suggested that Avista could purchase into the program to offset their emissions.
- Staffing for the program - Green stated that BPA offers funding for the current residential energy analyst position and some administrative support to run their incentive programs through the City.
- Equity including rental units and do-it-yourself installations – Kaplan mentioned the group looked to address increasing equity by allowing low-income homeowners to take advantage of both the cash incentive and the loan program.

Eligibility for the program does require a contractor to ensure quality control and meet the bond and insurance requirements. Shaff asked if a building permit would suffice those requirements and Green said he would talk further with Shaff offline.

Green also mentioned that rental units are not currently eligible, but the program has been extended to Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU). Shaff asked if other communities have offered incentives for rental properties. Graham explained that since landlords do not typically pay the utility costs, they usually choose low cost replacement options. Landlords who do make upgrades often pass the cost along to the renter after completion. Barth suggested the group look into the Rocky Mountain Institute's work on the split incentive problem. Green acknowledged their work and mentioned Boulder's program which is regulated by the City requiring staffing and compliance for rental energy codes.

Barth asked if this program would need to go to Council or to staff. Green stated that staff would handle the program change, but a vote of support from the Commission would be welcomed.

Wyatt/Bell moved and seconded the Commission endorse the plan the group has put forward this evening. Further discussion: none. All ayes; motion passed unanimously.

5.9. CEAP Update (1:20:45)

Barth wanted to start by creating a short document with each goals description to help with outreach for the plan. The descriptions would include sections of the rational section including history, motivations, and actions. Discussion on the CEAP update included:

- Designated editor - Wyatt emphasized the need for an editor and asked how to cross reference related sections in the plan. Barth would be the editor and can help connect the

related sections when needed. Barth plans to send edits back to authors when everyone is in agreement on how to move forward.

- Changing the overall goal - Barth wanted to know if the overall goal of reducing emissions by eight percent each year should be changed as the goal is not being met. The Commissioners discussed how a new goal would be calculated based on the emissions inventory and what can be implemented. Barth, Bell, Mallette, and Shaff were open to adjusting the goal based on current progress. Graham and Kaplan wanted to stick to the original goal that correlates to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's timeframe. All agreed that the implementation plan should be prioritized to help reduce emissions at a faster pace.
- Outline of the update – Barth suggested the update should be categorized by emission sources and to identify authors for each. Brown liked the adaptation and progress indicators section since not every action is quantified and this could track social impacts.

Barth stated that this should be discussed further. Kaplan wanted to make it clear that there was not a consensus to change the 2017 plan goals. Shaff suggested a motion to postpone the CEAP update for five years to help deal with the implementation plan first. Barth will put this on the agenda for the next meeting.

6. New Business

6.1. Avista Communication (1:44:45)

Mallette presented a draft letter to Avista stating the Commission's desire to phase out natural gas use. Barth indicated that the letter describes a policy to prevent new natural gas connections that the Commission has not formally approved. Wyatt asked if the Commission should formalize the policy first. Green reminded the Commission that Avista is a business partner of the City and any correspondence would need to be approved through Administration.

Bell questioned what benefit the letter would have if sent. Shaff agreed and was concerned the letter could make Avista defensive. Mallette explained the reasoning was to have Avista understand changes in other communities and to see if the company will adjust their offerings to reduce emissions. Shaff wanted to focus on moving forward with a natural gas phase out policy instead. Barth responded that he saw this as an opportunity to make Avista aware of what one of their customers/partners wanted and to build a positive relationship to achieve those goals. Green agreed it was important to have a communication with Avista, but suggested either toning down the letter or inviting Avista's representatives back to talk about a more specific topic. Wyatt asked if Avista might adopt the Commission's goal to stop new natural gas connections in the short term. Bell questioned why they would do this and Barth stated that Avista is required to provide service on an equal basis. Bell and Shaff decided to help revise the letter to present at the next meeting.

6.2. Natural Gas Emissions Reductions - Bell (1:54:17)

Bell stated that the goal is to phase out natural gas in Ashland, but that most residents might not be aware of the effects of methane on the climate. He suggested that the total natural gas consumption be published on the City's website homepage by making the recommendation to Council to direct staff to do so. Green stated that he receives the data on a quarterly basis and presents the information to Council every year which is his current bandwidth to do so. Green also suggested that the natural gas use should be converted from therms to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in any outreach to help the public know the effects.

Bell, Kaplan, and Graham agreed to work on Bell's outreach plan. Green encouraged the group to work with the Conservation and Climate Outreach Commission on this. Bell asked if this plan should be made to Council before the next CPC meeting to influence Council's planning session. Graham stated that she can include items on her priority list without formalization by the Commission.

6.3. Residential Construction Standards - PV Reservation - Brown (2:08:15)

Brown reviewed the solar photovoltaic (PV) standards for the City and presented links for solar modeling in the Rogue Valley to the Commission. Brown also proposed the following amendments to sub-section 18.4.8.050-B of the City's solar access code that were previously proposed to Council in 2015: 1) Design habitable structures so the primary living spaces, rather than less frequently used areas such as utility rooms, closets, or garages are located on the south side of buildings, and 2) Design habitable structures so that at least 30 percent of the roof area faces within 15 degrees of south in order to provide surface area for solar collection.

Barth asked if these amendments would be recommendations or requirements for developers. Brown clarified that they would be recommendations. Green asked if the Commission wanted to speak with Planning staff about advancing this to Council. Brown stated that Planning staff had previously expressed interest for the Planning Commission and Council to reconsider the amendments.

Malette asked if these requirements would be in conflict with the affordable housing efforts including high density developments. Brown stated that the study in the packet addresses this problem and he intends the Planning Commission to decide on these issues keeping both in mind. Mallette asked why the City Council rejected the amendments back in 2015. Brown was not positive but felt that the Council could have been concerned that the amendments gave the Planning Commission too much input on developments without quantitative benefits. Shaff questioned if the amendments should go to the Planning Commission first then they could advance the amendments to the City Council. With a yes response, Shaff/Bell moved/seconded to propose that we send a memo to Planning Department and Planning Commission to amend sub section 18.4.8.050-B to include the two items as suggested by Chris. Further discussion: none. All in favor; motion passed unanimously.

6.4. Housing Capacity Analysis - Brown (2:17:45)

Brown gave an update on housing projects and available buildable lands from the joint Study Session on January 28 with the Housing and Human Services Commission and the Planning Commission Housing Study group. The presentation also covered possible incentives and cost efficiencies for promoting more residential developments including density bonuses for multifamily housing and cluster residential developments.

Wyatt asked how revenue from larger developments would be integrated into the planning process for the City's budget. Brown stated that the revenue could help create incentives for allowing larger scale projects. Kaplan mentioned that the consultants at the Study Session acknowledged CEAP but did not specify actions implementing CEAP. Brown said the study allows for a conversation on CEAP implementation which could encompass what was discussed at this meeting and could include climate policy bonuses in addition to density bonuses for these projects.

7. Wrap Up

7.1. Topic Tracking and Potential Meeting Schedule (2:27:00)

Barth asked everyone to review the items listed for the March meeting and let him know for scheduling the next meeting agenda. Shaff added that he did not specify a member to write the memo on PV reservation and Brown volunteered to do so.

Barth adjourned the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Elizabeth Taylor



Ashland Community Climate Action 2021 Survey

FEBRUARY 3, 2021. [The SOU Office of Sustainability](#) and the [SOCAN-Ashland Climate Action Project](#) invite community members to help Ashland reach its climate goals by helping to create the 2021 Ashland Community Climate Action Survey. The survey will be designed to help us gather community views and increase our understanding of: 1) how we can work together to take action in the community, 2) where to focus on our efforts and 3) how Ashland can be a leader in climate action. Bringing this information together will help us to effectively deliver Ashland's climate goals.

Community members are invited to [apply to serve on the survey Advisory Panel by March 7](#) or [submit suggested topics for the survey by March 15](#). The project also offers opportunities for volunteers.

Ashland's Climate Goals

The City of Ashland, Oregon, approved a [Climate and Energy Action Plan](#) (CEAP) in 2017 establishing goals and targets to reduce Ashland's emissions of climate pollution and prepare the city for unavoidable impacts.

Attaining the goals and targets requires commitment from the Ashland community and the City government. The primary community goal of the CEAP is to reduce overall Ashland community greenhouse gas emissions by eight percent on average every year to 2050. The primary goals for City of Ashland operations are to attain carbon neutrality by 2030 and reduce fossil fuel consumption by 50% by 2030 and 100% by 2050.

The Ashland Community Climate Action 2021 Survey

SOCAN-Ashland and the [SOU Office of Sustainability](#) are partnering to sponsor the Ashland Community Climate 2021 Survey. The overall survey purpose is to continue to build effective, sustained climate action in Ashland.

We are committed to:

- Embracing our responsibility to address climate change with urgency, optimism, and care for all members of our community, our natural environment, and future generations
- Building momentum for effective community action and results aligned with the Ashland Climate and Energy Action Plan
- Bringing forth the voices of all members of our community, in all its diversity. [Send your survey suggestions to us by March 15](#).
- A thoughtful, professional, and transparent process
- Using best practice survey methodologies, engaging expertise and survey technology from SOU
- Learning from other cities, nongovernmental organizations, research/academic institutions and scholarly publications

Role of the Advisory Panel

The Advisory Panel will be a key resource to guide the project, serving for the duration of the project (through December 1). There will be active and relatively inactive phases of work for the panel.

The Panel is expected to meet weekly from April 1-May 30 to provide input on the goals, focus, and questions of the survey, as well as on strategies for community outreach. The expected time commitment during this design phase is expected to be 1-3 hours per week, with opportunities for greater participation for those who have the interest and time to contribute.

The other active phase for the Advisory Panel will be in October and November, when the Panel will review survey results and identify key findings, and advise on how best to disseminate the survey findings for maximum impact.

Members of the community and local organizations can [use this application](#) to be considered for the Advisory Panel or to serve as a project volunteer.

Key Dates

March 7: Deadline to propose survey scope (topics)--please use this form

March 7: Deadline to apply for the Community Survey Advisory Panel

August 1 - September 15: Data collection phase; survey open to the community

November 15: Publication of survey report

Who We Are

The [Ashland Climate Action Project of Southern Oregon Climate Action Now \(SOCAN-ACAP\)](#) is a community-based organization providing advocacy, education, and community organizing to support the full and timely implementation of the CEAP. In 2020, SOCAN-ACAP conducted a community survey entitled, "Lessons Learned from Recent COVID Restrictions: Imagining the Future of Ashland." Of the 225 survey respondents, 61% stated that they are extremely concerned about climate change, while 29% described themselves as "very" concerned. Nearly 86% have taken action to reduce their own climate impact. [Read the full survey report.](#)

[The SOU Office of Sustainability](#) leads the University's commitment to sustainable practices, environmental stewardship, and research that advances understanding of local, regional, and global environmental issues. Through this partnership, SOCAN-Ashland and SOU-Sustainability seek to build on the 2020 survey by expanding community engagement and response; enhancing the survey design and methodology, and ensuring that the focus of the survey is on priority information that will help advance achievement of the goals of the CEAP.

All correspondence related to this project should be sent to Lorrie Kaplan, Chair, SOCAN-Ashland Climate Action Project - lorrie@socan.eco, and Beccs Walker, SOU Sustainability and Recycling Manager, walkerr6@sou.edu.

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