

MINUTES FOR THE CLIMATE & ENERGY ACTION PLAN ad hoc COMMITTEE
Wednesday, April 20, 2016
Siskiyou Room, 51 Winburn Way

1. Call to Order

Councilor Rich Rosenthal called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Committee members Louise Shawkat, Stuart Green, Bryan Sohl, Roxane Beigel-Coryell, Greg Jones, Cindy Bernard, Sarah Lasoff, Isaac Bevers, Marni Koopman, and Jim Hartman were present. Committee member James McGinnis arrived late. Committee member Claudia Alick was absent. Staff member Adam Hanks was present.

Rosenthal welcomed the newest member of the committee, Cindy Bernard, and gave background information on her.

2. Approval of minutes

The minutes of April 6, 2016 were approved as submitted.

3. Public Input

Huelz Gutchen: Gave the group a handout of information regarding carbon emissions and showed the group his CO₂ monitor. He gave the group information how carbons will continue to increase and asked the group to use the calculations on his handout to determine the costs for zero-net energy construction. He stated that if Council requests an exemption to the code, for zero-net building the community could make big progress. He encouraged members of the committee to write to Council to pass this exemption. He gave information regarding how the melting of glaciers has caused a wobble in the Earth's rotation which has moved magnetic North's location.

McGinnis arrived 5:40 p.m.

Ken Crocker: Stated that the committee needs to not forget the importance of time on the agenda for the group to either check-in with one another or to check-out at the end of the meeting to see what went well or what could be improved. He believes that the importance of improving communication and how to work together cannot be understated. Talking and getting to know one another helps the process.

Hannah Sohl: Thanked the group for their hard work.

Shawkat asked the group if they could implement Mr. Crocker's check-in idea by going around the table and stating one thing that has happened this week which made them happy. The group agreed to this proposal and did the around the table check-in.

4. Climate Plan Goals and Targets Discussion (continued)

Rosenthal reviewed the questions he proposed in the packet, and gave an overview of how he hopes they will focus the conversation.

Question 1: Have you seen a particular Climate & Energy Action Plan that you like and could be embraced by Ashlanders?

- Rosenthal: Portland and Cleveland stuck out. They are both well-designed with lots of visual representations of information (graphics, charts, etc.) to aid explaining to average Ashlander.
- Sohl: Cleveland, Portland, Eugene, and Corvallis all were good. It would be nice to be similar to Portland, Eugene & Corvallis so we have a “Northwest” feel. Liked that Portland has set defined goals with lots of actions that are in-progress or soon to be completed. Believes we should set more aggressive goals to reflect Ashland’s lack of ability to grow the population substantially.
- Koopman: Likes Eugene’s plan. It has a very strong focus on adaptation and not just mitigation. Also liked the strong, legally binding targets. Liked Cleveland’s clarity as it was easy to get an idea of what is expected. Cleveland also includes recommendations for other groups and individuals and how the City could support those efforts. Also, they were strong on equity issues and concerns. She also likes that Seattle’s plan was going for big targets.
- Green: All the plans have their virtues. He believes readability is important to inspire people. He liked Corvallis’ six action areas – they were useful divisions and liked that natural resources were separated out. Liked that Seattle’s plan had an emphasis on how people can assist with the plan. He favors aggressive targets, but wonders how consumption, which is mostly unmeasurable, can factor into how we succeed.
- Shawkat: Liked that the Cleveland plan was easy to read – it sucked her in. Eugene’s plan is also good, especially as they are a community fairly similar to Ashland. She reminded the group that Corvallis’ plan was a citizen-led plan, which is good but isn’t being used. She appreciated that both Eugene and Cleveland did a lot about vulnerable citizens and overall wellness. Also was concerned that Cleveland had a lot about natural gas, but that doesn’t go well with the spirit of what we’re doing here.
- McGinnis: Liked that Corvallis had objectives and actions with specific timeframes. Also liked that they included environmental, social, and greenhouse gas emissions in the plan. He also likes that they use percentages, not just numbers to be more readable. Likes that Seattle’s plan is strong and had indicators which are a good snapshot of what is being done and how to get the information across. He appreciated that they had early targets. Liked Portland’s use of co-benefits which were identified by symbols. Overall, he liked Portland’s the best and would also like to keep some continuity with a regional (Northwest) format.
- Hartman: Liked the targets in Seattle’s plan. Liked how Corvallis laid out information as to how it will help the economy. Also appreciated the revolving loan fund which was in the Cleveland plan.
- Lasoff: Likes that Eugene’s plan is legally binding – it means there is accountability.

- Bevers: Believes that information graphics are a powerful tool and an excellent way to communicate information and complicated data to the community. Likes plans where the general tone is positive with an emphasis on co-benefits. Believes that a plan would represent a new vision and new cultural identity for the community.
- Bernard: Appreciated Portland and Cleveland's clarity and the way they can capture attention to get the word out to the public. Would like a catchy final product.
- Jones: Is very impressed with the committee's work on reviewing these plans. He liked that Cleveland's plan is very easy to grasp with lots of information to hold on to.

Question 2: Generally, what should Ashland's goals and targets be?

Group discussed baseline and target options. Options mentioned included:

- Aggressive goals and targets, but start the process slowly – we want the community to see that small changes can make a big difference
- 2010 as baseline, rather than 1990, which many scientists still use
- Aggressive targets, but need to set the community up for a win
- Carbon neutral, through use of off-sets
- Look into 100% renewable energy – look at sourcing
- 80% reduction by 2050
- Use Portland as an example: 40% reduction by 2030 and 80% reduction by 2050
- Avoid using plans with older, less dire statistics – this will require us to be more aggressive to overcome the newer higher numbers
- 100% carbon-neutral
- Early higher reductions will have a greater cumulative effect (i.e. no slow build on the plan)
- The problem with ramping up projects (more aggressive goals later) is that it puts lots of pressure to achieve them both financial- and community resource-wise
- The only plans which have a goal of 100% neutrality are those that do not include consumption
- We would only be able to deal with consumption if we buy into the use of off-sets
- Offsets would cost much less than 10% of each person's annual income
- Offsets would only be attractive to lots of the community if they occurred locally – can we facilitate that?
- Other plan aren't ignoring consumption, and it should be part of our plan, but we need to acknowledge that fully tracking for target purposes is difficult, if not impossible
- City of Ashland itself should rapidly become carbon-neutral. They should be an example for the community
- No off-sets – too many have been or feel like scams
- If off-sets are used they need to be real and have proven success
- We need to rapidly detach ourselves from the fossil fuel industry (it will soon be too unstable)
- We need to be aggressive out of the gate – so we can avoid some of the drastic changes that have been predicted

- Should we consider per-person reduction measurements?
- Per-person reductions is concerning with regards to equity – should we really expect the same from all wealth levels?

Question 3: What would be the potential drawbacks/challenges/barriers/impacts that Ashland would need to address or overcome for its plan to be successful?

Group discussed the following considerations:

- Political – there is no big champion of change
- No one at the City to get the community excited/educated
- Overall political apathy
- Current costs are not reflections of future costs (i.e. stop kicking the can down the road)
- Articulating the “dark future” to the community is hard – how do we make the plan not all doom and gloom but still get the facts out?
- We need to transition away from thinking natural gas is good
- Setting policy is key to change. Community education is key to successful policy buy in.
- The business community is important to getting the word out/success of the plan but they are not always engaged
- Identifying groups/people with the greatest influence in the community (i.e. how do we identify and recruit our champions for change?)
- It’s an election year – we need to look for good influences and elect/support them
- Can the community (particularly the business community) tolerate decisions being made entirely based on climate change?
- It is important to get the Chamber and business community on-board early to help them embrace the plan

Question 5: How frequent do we want Ashland’s interim targets?

The group had the following responses:

- Would like to see us carbon neutral 100% by 2050 but worry that it’s not realistic
- The baseline year should be 2015 (as we have GHG Inventory numbers for that year and it is the lowest emmissions levels, which would mean more aggressive targets)
- Want to see 85% reduction of 2015 levels by 2050 but is not sold on including consumption as we have no real grasp on how to track it
- Want goals timeline to match the budget cycles, with a baseline start of 2015
- The typical lifecycle of a project is about five years, which means every five years is a good opportunity to check-in and revise to keep up with new technology
- Want to be completely carbon neutral, but that might be impossible how about a range of plus or minus 5 % of 100% of 2015 levels?
- 2022 should be the first set of targets with a goal of 45% reduction by 2030 and a 90% reduction by 2050 (of 2015 levels)
- Syncing with the budget cycle is important

- 100% reduction of 2015 levels is unrealistic. 90% is more reasonable. Agrees that 2020 is too soon for first set of targets, but 2022 or 2023 (which ever lines up with the budget cycle) should be the year
- Our intention is important – even if 100% is not realistic today. Not all carbon off-sets are bad so we should consider using them to achieve our goals
- We should be pushing for the most aggressive targets possible
- Whatever our goals we need the political will and buy-in for it to succeed
- How about a mixed goal: 100% reduction but have only 80% reduction be legally binding?
- We need to be aggressively realistic. Use 2015 as the baseline and make sure any targets are in sync with the budget cycles
- 2015 should be the baseline, and budget cycles are important
- We're a small community who has a real opportunity to go carbon neutral by 2050

5. Timeline/ Open House

Hanks stated that he wanted to let the group see the most recent timeline. We currently have the first open house slated for May 24th at 5:30 p.m. at the Historic Ashland Armory. Group discussed whether they should meet on May 4th. They determined it would be a good time to discuss the logistics of the open house, including public outreach.

6. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be May 4 at 3:30 p.m.

7. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 7:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Diana Shiplet, Executive Assistant