

DRAFT MINUTES FOR THE CONSERVATION AND CLIMATE OUTREACH
COMMISSION

Wednesday, May 26, 2021; Held Electronically

1. Call to Order (item starts at approximately 00:55 on the video)

Chair Becc Walker called the meeting to order at 3:02 p.m. Commissioners Risa Buck, Larry Cooper, Marni Koopman, James McGinnis, Jamie Rosenthal, and Bryan Sohl were present. Staff liaison Stu Green was also present. Council Liaison Tonya Graham arrived later in the meeting.

2. Consent Agenda

2.1. April 28, 2021 Meeting Minutes (1:05)

Buck/Cooper moved/seconded to approve the minutes from the April meeting. Further discussion: none. Ayes: Buck, Cooper, Koopman, McGinnis, Rosenthal, Sohl, and Walker. Nays: none. Motion passed unanimously.

3. Announcements

3.1. Next Regular Meeting: June 23, 2021

3.2. Other Announcements from Commissioners (1:55)

Sohl will not be attending the June meeting.

Tonya Graham arrived at 3:03 p.m.

Rosenthal announced that Ashland's Green Debris Drop Off Day processed 160 cubic yards of green debris from 190 cars and the County's Household Hazardous Waste Event processed almost 52,000 pounds of hazardous waste from 568 cars. Buck asked when the can and bottle redemption would start again. Rosenthal did not know, but said the information or contacts could be found online.

Walker asked if she should start giving regular updates on Southern Oregon University's (SOU) progress to the Commission during this part of the agenda or as a separate agenda item. Buck suggested a separate agenda item so more time can be allocated as needed. Walker updated the Commission on the following items from SOU and agreed to give regular monthly updates:

- Walker will share a monthly student newsletter on sustainability and climate change.
- There is now an expanded recycling center on campus.
- Another solar array will be installed on the barn funded by an Oregon Department of Energy grant and student fees.
- Food produce from the farm goes to the Hawk Dining Center.
- Single use items are being eliminated from the Hawk Dining Center and the recreation center.
- SOU will be updating their climate action plan and look at different milestones relating to the City's Climate and Energy Action Plan (CEAP) actions to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and adaptation efforts like drought resistance landscaping.
- The university also renewed their tree and bee campus certifications and will create a pollinator habitat space.

McGinnis asked if the SOU's irrigation water from the Ashland canal has to be used or is lost. Walker stated that the University draws from Talent Irrigation District (TID) starting either in the middle of June or July, but is unsure if they lose it if not used. McGinnis also asked if SOU will

be a part of the community solar program. Walker stated that SOU is in discussion with the community solar group.

Sohl acknowledged that due to fire and water issues there is a list of trees and plants that cannot be planted now including some native plants. Cooper responded that the list pertains to what you can plant within 30 feet of a building or home to help create a defensible space against wildfires. The goal is to plant fire resilient plants which include some native shrubs and ground covers.

3.3. Reports from Members of Other Commissions

None

4. Public Forum

None

5. Reports/Presentations

5.1. Ashland Solar Cooperative (17:09)

Koopman gave an update on the Ashland Solar Cooperative. She shared the website she created for the group. The goal of the Cooperative is to develop a 20kW system with around 50 members co-owning the system and five additional low income members chosen by a lottery system. There are three ways to be a part of the Cooperative as long as you are an Ashland Electric customer: 1) buying power from Cooperative, 2) hosting a solar site, or 3) investing directly. The average membership will cost around \$7,350 with a return of around three to four percent in savings on electricity over a 25 year period. Saving scenarios include:

- Renters: around \$7,000 over 25 years for a renter who uses around 500 kW per month if 1.8 percent of the total system is purchased. This is a 3.5 percent return on investment.
- Low Income: around \$19,000 over 25 years depending on how much electricity is used. The low income memberships will be funded by other members payments put into an account that would cover the low income memberships.
- Homeowner: around \$15,000 over 25 years. This is a four percent return on investment.
- Businesses: around \$42,000 over 25 years depending on their electricity usage.

Reasons to become a member in addition to the cost savings include empowering individuals to own their source of electricity, increase local resilience by generating power and keeping the money locally, and the savings are credited directly on electric utility bills. Memberships can move to different households in Ashland using Ashland Electric as needed. The Cooperative is working opportunities on how to sell shares in case a member moves out of Ashland, passes away, or another major life change occurs.

Sohl has also been working with the group and shared their progress talking to City staff about working on getting the credits on the utility bills. Cooper asked if the zero interest financing could be used to help a homeowner or renter get solar installations. Green stated possibly, but the City would need a final proposal from the Cooperative before deciding. Buck asked if there would be a limit per household for how much electricity they could generate to reduce their cost. Koopman stated that members are asked to cover 90 percent of their electrical use for now similar to having your own installation, but installing multiple systems could help reduce that. McGinnis asked if the tax credit paid by the Federal Government would be distributed among all members or just to the host site owner. Koopman believed that the credit would only go to the host site owner. Buck asked to have Jim Hartman present to the Commission when the program launches.

5.2. Council Update (36:04)

Graham announced the new Social Equity and Racial Justice Commission that will be appointed in June. Discussion surrounded the new Commission, a process for Council creating work plans for Commissions and reporting to Council, and streamlining the Commission appointment process. Walker welcomed any direction from Council to be given to CCOC. Graham and Councilor Seffinger are looking to create a proposal to forward to all the Commission Chairs for feedback.

Sohl asked how climate action ranked as a priority for Council. Graham answered that there is a strong support from the whole Council, but other issues are currently more prevalent. Major projects and plans that come to Council are given climate considerations. Some larger specific climate projects like the USDA loan funding are coming forward for consideration.

5.3. Staff Update (46:08)

Green gave the following updates:

- A home energy update webinar will be held online tomorrow.
- An induction cooking incentive will be available soon and a commercial induction cooking incentive might also be available in the future. Cooper, Koopman, and Sohl volunteered to test a few induction cooktops that he plans to donate to the Jackson County Library of Things.
- New electric vehicle (EV) chargers at the Grove are now online. Green is working with Ashland Parks and Recreation on getting EV chargers installed in different parks.
- The EV and E-Bike incentives are going well. An expansion of the E-Bike incentive will include class two bikes.
- Green will be submitting a revised home energy loan program application to the USDA for funding.

McGinnis mentioned that Rogue Food Unites will be installing a new kitchen in town and was wondering if they would be able to take advantage of any induction cooking incentive. Green said that the organizers should contact him to discuss this. Sohl asked for the Commission to be notified when the USDA loan application will go to Council, so the Commission can voice their support as a Commission or individually. Green agreed having input from the two climate Commissions would be beneficial, but he will not be able to share the application with the Commission before Council approval due to the upcoming deadline.

Green also mentioned that Larry Giardina, Commercial and Solar Energy Analyst, will be retiring soon, so Green will be the point of contact for solar. Walker asked if there were plans to replace Giardina. Green did not know, but Graham stated that all vacant positions are being reviewed to see if they are necessary or can be combined with another position.

6. Business

6.1. Commission Monthly Column in Sneak Preview (54:57)

Sohl suggested to have the last sentence under the renew paragraph say, “for renters or those without appropriate roofs.” Walker asked that other articles on Adapt Your Home focus on one of the four sections since this and the previous article did a good job of listing the overview of the campaign. Cooper agreed and stated that the repetition of both articles would be good for exposure. McGinnis liked the bolding of the different sections and asked to italicize or underline

the key elements. Buck submitted her comments to Koopman and Cooper beforehand for inclusion and they will include those changes.

James McGinnis left at 4:04 p.m. and returned at 4:06 p.m.

Future planned articles include: Rethink Your Consumption for publication in August with a paragraph from Sohl regarding Water Conservation with links to two recent Water Conservation presentations and Electrification Steps in September.

Koopman/Sohl moved/seconded to approve the article with edits by Risa, Bryan, and James. Further discussion: none. Ayes: Buck, Cooper, Koopman, McGinnis, Rosenthal, Sohl, and Walker. Nays: none. Motion passed unanimously.

6.2. Update on Different Channels for Articles and Future Outreach (1:11:07)

None

6.3. CEAP Project Update

- Responsible Consumption and Single Use (1:11:35)

Walker mentioned that Bridgette Bottinelli, RARE Intern, added some single use information to the website.

James McGinnis left at 4:13 p.m. and returned to the meeting at 4:15 p.m.

- Climate Resilience (1:12:14)

Koopman stated that the group has been working with the Solar Cooperative to help have a more resilient energy grid and serve some low-income customers.

- Water Use and Conservation (1:12:40)

Cooper was concerned if the City went into curtailment that the communication would not be handled since the water conservation position is vacant. Graham responded that Julie Smitherman who was previously the City's water conservation analyst is still contracted to work with the City through her new position at the Medford Water Commission. The curtailment that occurred last year was largely in part of the Alameda Fire and the City is unlikely to do another mandatory curtailment unless there is another emergency situation that interrupts the Talent Ashland Phoenix Intertie (TAP) water supply. Council was updated on Ashland's water situation and Reeder Reservoir is currently around 100 percent capacity. Graham expressed interest in having the presentation to Council available for residents.

6.4. Chair and Vice Chair Nominations for June (1:18:25)

Walker/Buck nominated/seconded Koopman to serve as Chair and Sohl to serve as Vice Chair. Neither had objections to the nomination. Further discussion: Cooper thanked Walker for her serving as Chair and the organization she brought to the position. He hopes that the organization and processes in place will continue. Ayes: Buck, Cooper, Koopman, McGinnis, Rosenthal, Sohl, and Walker. Nays: none. Motion passed unanimously.

Sohl asked when in-person meetings will begin again. Staff estimated probably July depending on the State's COVID-19 risk assessment for Jackson County.

6.5. Review of Urban, Land Use, and Transportation Draft (1:23:27)

Sohl had many comments on the document including policies proposed and their impacts. He wanted to see the Commission provide written feedback especially around the outreach details. McGinnis asked what the timeline to get these policies out would be considering Council's

priorities. Graham responded that when the budget process is complete Council will have more time to determine priorities through strategic planning and she hopes that climate will be a top priority. Sohl wanted to know what the ask from CPC was and that there might not be enough time to get this done during the meeting. Walker responded that the initial request was to get feedback to help shape this with a joint statement from the Commission. Walker, Sohl, and Cooper volunteered to collect the comments and Koopman also said she would be available as needed. The Commission will email the volunteers their comments to be summarized. Staff emphasized not starting a discussion via email when sending the comments to avoid creating a serial meeting.

6.6. Coordinated Campaign (1:38:08)

Graham gave an overview of the proposed coordinated campaign between the Conservation and Climate Outreach, Climate Policy, Transportation, and Wildfire Safety Commissions. She will meet with the Chairs and Vice Chairs of each Commission to develop the details and bring those back to each Commission for feedback and approval.

6.7. Project Requests List (1:39:38)

Walker asked if there were any updates to the list and will provide the list to Koopman and Sohl to continue. Walker will update the list with the draft urban, land use, and transportation task from CPC. Green suggested to have a column showing when the next update on each project would be presented.

6.8. 20's Plenty Update (1:41:27)

Sohl has not received any communication from other members of the group. Walker said to keep this on the agenda in case there is an update next time.

7. (4:50) Wrap Up (1:42:04)

7.1. Items to be added to future agendas

- Solar Cooperative Presentation (TBD)

Sohl wanted to invite a local climate group to present on nuclear energy for a future agenda. Cooper wanted to revisit getting a high school student on the Commission. McGinnis asked if the draft urban, land use, and transportation plan could be distributed as a Word document to add comments. Walker said she would try to see if she had access to a Word document for the plan, but an alternative would be to make comments by sections or pages.

Chair Walker adjourned the meeting at 4:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Elizabeth Taylor