



## CITY OF TACOMA SUSTAINABLE TACOMA COMMISSION MEETING NOTES

**Date:** October 11, 2016

**Commission Members Present:** Lowell Wyse, Chrissy Cooley, Sarah Chessman, Josh Jorgensen, Alexandra Brewer, Philip Coughlan, Alyssa Illich, Theda Braddock

**Commission Members Excused:** Alison Baur, Peter Hickman

**Others Present:** Kristin Lynett, Emily Campbell, Emmerly Ledin, Jim Parvey, Jeanne Walter, Patrick Babbitt, Clay Norris, Lisa Rennie, Bob Mack

▪ **Roll Call**

The meeting was called to order at 3:35pm.

▪ **Approval of September 13, 2016 Meeting Notes**

The September meeting notes were approved.

▪ **Review of September Agenda**

Review of the Commission's ST3 and I-732 letters was added to agenda after the presentations.

▪ **Tacoma Power Conservation Presentation**

- Clay Norris from Tacoma Power (TP) presented their energy resource portfolio, which is almost exclusively hydropower. One-third of TP customers are low income, and live in multi-family housing so they are very focused on the "triple bottom line", including social equity. They reach all neighborhoods with their programming.
- Their energy is 97% carbon free. Washington State's energy is 79% carbon free.
- A news article brought up concern regarding methane emissions from hydropower – a greenhouse gas that is worse than CO<sub>2</sub>. Water reservoirs necessary for hydropower emit some methane, with variability between reservoirs. Tacoma has cool water and cool air, which decreases methane emissions.
- TP has set aside resources for fish protection, habitat restoration, and fish passage through their reservoirs.
- Integrated resource planning was discussed. TP generally produces surplus energy, so their supplies are well-covered for future years. They are very focused on conservation. Because of this, they commissioned a study by the UW Climate Impacts Group. The study found that there will be more rain, less snow pack, and higher temperatures in future years. The evaluation doesn't show a major impact on their resources at this time.
- TP has some of the lowest rates in the country because of renewable power. They also invest a lot in conservation – 4.4% of revenue, and they have a history of exceeding I-937 conservation mandates. They offer conservation resources in the following areas: retail and distribution,

events, low income, commercial, residential, heating and weatherization, commercial lighting, custom retrofit, and new construction.

- Tacoma Power Community Solar and Evergreen options: They have built four 75-kilowatt community solar projects, and are also in support of roof top solar. Customers who purchased solar units receive annual payments.
- TP presented their contribution to the Environmental Action Plan. They are working to achieve cost-effective conservation, improve commercial building operations, improve streetlights and focus on low-income energy efficiency. They support local and state efforts to improve rental property conservation.
- Some communities have taken advantage of the LED street light deployment program, including the City of Tacoma's Public Works department. The cost of this project is \$7 million to replace 75% of street lights in Tacoma.
- TP is open to giving tours to get more residents involved in their programs.
- Commission members had questions/comments including the following:
  - Did Tacoma Power consider increased summer loads? One 2035 scenario did take summer loads into account. In most scenarios, there wasn't much of an effect.
  - How is Tacoma Power making their portfolio as green as possible? They make their electric portfolio as green as possible by using hydropower and conservation, and are placing emphasis on electrifying transportation. They own and operate 10 public charging stations (located at TPU offices and Old Town).
  - Is the Strategic Energy Manager at TPU similar to the city's future Resource Conservation Manager? Yes, but it is more of a training program for commercial customers.
  - There is \$4.8 million available for TPU to target homeowners, including low income households; TP is also looking at rental properties for conservation efforts.
  - How much does the discount rate program (bill assistance) get used? It's fairly sizeable and active, but it's been underutilized. TP will send more information.
  - If there was a position in the City of Tacoma permit office for codes and regulations, would that be a helpful contact for Tacoma Power? Yes, it would be helpful to connect with people who work on the building codes.
  - Thinking about natural systems, how many of Tacoma Power's restoration projects benefit people in Tacoma? TP restores property they own, but not necessarily in urban areas such as Tacoma.
  - Has TP used trees as insulation? Their situation is winter peaking, not summer peaking, so trees wouldn't assist them much.
  - Has TP presented their rate request yet? No. They have presented an overall budget and a discussion about rate pressures was included in that. The budget presentation will be made next Tuesday (10/18). The budget will be approved first, then the rates.
  - What is the timeline for the LED Light project? The RFP is starting first quarter, and they will start replacing lights in the second quarter. They will be careful in their development – the technology of LED lights has come a long way.

▪ **Council Committee Presentations on Sustainable Material Management Plan and Environmental Action Plan**

Jim Parvey gave an overview of items related to the Environmental Action Plan (EAP), Sustainable Materials Management Plan (SMMP), and the proposed City budget. Highlights included:

- Tacoma Public Utility EAP actions are budgeted and on track.
- City staff is being trained for green building advocacy issues.
- Regulations are in place for reporting, disclosure, and developing program policies with existing staff.
- 16,400 parking lot lights will be replaced and upgraded to LEDs.
- Staff plan to develop education programs and materials on electric vehicles and aim to focus on energy efficient vehicles. The City will also take on changing the timing of some traffic lights to improve traffic flow.
- The discussed budget funding comes from the general fund.

- The Office of Environmental Policy and Sustainability (OEPS) will work with other departments and community partners on EAP action implementation. An annual EAP progress report is due in April 2017. The STC formed sub committees to monitor implementation.
- The proposed City budget will be presented to City Council soon – there are at least two more upcoming public comment opportunities.

Commission members mentioned wanting additional funding for OEPS and EAP actions. They should give comment to the City's Infrastructure, Planning and Sustainability Committee (IPS). Commission members recommend that the City hires a green building advocate, or develops a program on this. It was noted that once Council approves the budget, then priorities can be set. Commission member Cooley would like to thank the City Manager for including urban forestry in the budget.

#### ▪ **Commission Letters Discussion**

Members talked briefly about their ST3 letter and where it should be distributed. Possible locations include the News Tribune and IPS.

Members talks about their I-732 letter. They said it should be a neutral statement on the issue, it will demonstrate that they are not silent on the issue, and it's important because this is an important issue that people should educate themselves about. Possible places to send the letter are the News Tribune, Tacoma Weekly, and Exit 133.

#### ▪ **Subcommittees Discussion**

Most commission subcommittees met sometime during the past month, and each subcommittee reported out to the group.

**Buildings and Energy:** The group focused on green building, LED lighting, environmental management plans for buildings, and incentivizing rental properties.

**Transportation:** The group requests a presentation from the City's Public Works department. They also focused on LED lights, traffic signals, and the green roads program. They identified electric vehicle education as a top priority. The group would like to assist in planning for the South Sound Sustainability Expo, specifically to get electric vehicles in Tollefson plaza.

**Materials Management:** The group discussed the level of funding/personnel that the City's Solid Waste department was going to allocate to the SMMP. They discussed pros and cons of using existing staff, and they discussed how effective using drivers and route supervisors would be for outreach and education. They concluded that Commission members may want to accompany truck drivers when they go out for commercial outreach.

**Natural Systems:** The group determined that the goals of natural systems are related to urban forestry and storm water; in Tacoma, urban forestry is more urgent. They also discussed how to improve tree canopy. Their 6-month goal is to have a meeting with Metro Parks to brainstorm about canopy cover, and then to submit this proposal to IPS. The hope is that there would be strong community involvement in this process.

**Climate Resiliency:** The group has not met yet.

All subcommittees agreed that if there are other citizen commissions working on these issues, they should contact them and work together.

#### ▪ **Staff Updates**

- The Commission is still looking to recruit a youth member. Interested applicants, age 16-18, are encouraged to apply.
- The National Food Day Proclamation about equitable and sustainable food systems will be on Tuesday, October 18<sup>th</sup> at the City Council Chambers.

- There will be a free showing of the film Just Eat It on Thursday, October 20<sup>th</sup> at the University of Washington Tacoma in the Carwein Auditorium. This is part of the City's Preventing Wasted Food campaign.
- The sustainability office is soliciting ideas for Tollefson plaza, which will be activated for the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the South Sound Sustainability Expo (March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2017).

▪ **Public Comment**

There were no public comments.

▪ **Objectives for Next Meeting**

- The commissioners brainstormed options for future STC meeting presentations. These ideas included the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency, the Metro Parks Sustainability Plan, school districts, guidelines for low impact development, green roads, Healthy Homes, Healthy Neighborhoods (Patrick Babbitt), and the Sustainable Materials Management Plan.
  - The commission and staff liaison, Kristi, will plan presentations for the next year of meetings.
- The commission will set a budget.
- The commission will set aside more time for subcommittees.

▪ **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 5:35 pm.

The next meeting of the Sustainable Tacoma Commission will be Tuesday, November 8, 2016, 3:30 to 5:30 p.m., Tacoma Municipal Building, 747 Market Street, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor Visibility Center.