



CITY OF TACOMA SUSTAINABLE TACOMA COMMISSION MEETING NOTES

Date: October 13, 2015

Commission Members Present: Nick Cutting, Alyssa Illich, Sarah Chessman, Chrissy Cooley, Phil Coughlan, Felicity Devlin, Peter Hickman, Rus Higley, Ellen Moore, Agnes Pate

Commission Members Excused: Jeff Bessmer

Others Present: Kristin Lynett, Emily Campbell, Lowell Wyse, Ron Stuart, Lisa Rennie, Clay Norris, Bruce Carter

- **Roll Call**

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

- **Approval of September 8, 2015 Meeting Notes**

- The September meeting notes were approved with no changes.

- **Review of October Agenda**

- The October agenda was approved with no changes.

- **Community Solar Presentation — Tacoma Public Utilities**

- This is a low-cost opportunity for those who aren't positioned to install private residential solar. Other utilities have been doing this throughout the state. State legislation created a path for community solar through tax incentives. Those incentive rates are up to \$1.08 per kilowatt hour, but the incentive ends in 2020. This creates some urgency to install facilities to create the greatest benefit for investors.
- Centralized infrastructure creates more efficiency in the local solar power system through efficiency of scale. The installation will go on the power warehouse roof and go live in April (a few months earlier than expected) with an estimated cost of \$337,500. TPU is selling shares at \$100 per unit with a planned payout after four years. The energy produced is roughly equivalent to 7-8 houses. Initial customer responses show interest in purchasing from 1 to 50 units for a total of 5,259 units. The average number for the first 714 residents to express interest is 7.5 units each; this may be capped at 10 per customer. The program is not limited to customers within the city limits and businesses are eligible as well.
- TPU is motivated by the customer service benefits (offering a share of the tax incentives available to local residents), and by the opportunity to educate customers through solar demonstration.
- A second project is possible, and there's potential to go as high as 300 kWh but there is a cap of about \$1.6 million for all solar project incentives.
- Look for a more detailed FAQ on the TPU web page soon.

- **Environmental Action Plan Update**

- Kristi reviewed the flow chart of how the plan is being developed. It will supersede the 2008 Climate Action Plan and build on the over-arching Tacoma 2025 strategic plan. Council resolutions and comprehensive plan elements feed into existing goals, policies and strategies. Two other plans in development this year—the Sustainable Materials Management Plan and the Climate Change Risk Assessment—both feed directly into the EAP.
- The plan is highlighting the highest priority actions that the City should take over the next five years. Along with these actions are indicators and targets to measure and demonstrate progress. The consultants are developing two pieces: a written action plan and a template for yearly progress reporting.
- The Commission received copies of recent documents with prioritized lists of actions and targets developed by the stakeholder group. These stakeholder meetings have been productive and led to new insights.
- Some of these actions that don't make the cut may be reconsidered in a few years.
- Kristi will send the other spreadsheets with criteria in case any Commissioners would like to weigh in.
- Phil recommended exploring ways to make this document an opportunity for public interaction. The Sustainability Expo in the spring will be one such opportunity.
- Kristi will give a presentation to IPS on October 28th. Public meeting is December 7th. Then another IPS presentation January 23rd, hopefully with a final document.

- **Climate Conversation Brainstorming**

- This item was tabled, to be included in the Staff Update.

- **Subcommittee Report-Outs**

- Electric Vehicles Subcommittee

- The EV symposium took place on September 17th, with a better turnout than anticipated, including development, property management and state representatives. The breakout groups were forums for airing personal opinions, asking questions and building consensus. Maybe not full-fledged support, but increased willingness to go along with new City code to allow for constructing EV infrastructure.
 - The subcommittee met with OEPS to hash out next steps, including a draft letter to State Building Code Council and a request to Charge Point to gauge interest in on-street parking stations, and gather information on other ideas. Written comments are due next week. City Council adopted codes for commercial properties but not for multi-family.
 - A motion passed to approve the subcommittee's draft letter to the state with minor modifications.

- **November Agenda**

- Before leaving, Ellen requested to add oil trains and methanol to the November agenda. There is a presentation tonight from Sightline on these issues.
- Phil: The City is developing a position on the issue, and it may be favorable to the proposed methanol plant because it will drive business. Phil expressed interest in gathering information on the carbon balance of the proposed methanol plant.
- Rus asked a procedural question about the process for requesting information on issues such as this.

- **Subcommittee Report Outs (cont'd)**

- Outreach and Education Subcommittee

- Current efforts are related to responsible bags. The subcommittee is interested in a larger conversation about avenues for outreach, in addition to the neighborhood councils.
 - Nick: Outreach subcommittee could also present to business district meetings.

- Responsible Bags Subcommittee

- This subcommittee has been partnering with the outreach subcommittee to think about creating a fun way to raise awareness of the issue. They proposed the idea of attempting a Guinness record on January 24th, for making as many T-shirt bags as possible. Chrissy has been accepting donations of t-shirts from organizations and identifying stakeholders to host the t-shirt bag-making event. This may include a pledge to use reusable bags or take other action on the issue.
 - A Facebook page was created called "Plastic Ain't Tacoma's Bag."

Green Building Subcommittee

- There was no update from this subcommittee; but there is opportunity for action around the EAP, particularly inviting Planning staff and commissioners to STC meetings.

Comprehensive Plan Subcommittee

- A letter was drafted to send to the Comp Plan advisory group requesting more specific measurements and targets. They responded that ecosystem services are a high priority, but that they'll try to include targets in other plans through City departments.
- The next task is to go through final draft of the plan to determine whether to provide further comment.
- Phil noted that there were a number of density-related items in the new Comp Plan that the group did not comment on. There are discrepancies between land use designations and zoning that the new plan will eliminate in order to encourage density. Phil proposed that STC discuss the issue and consider coming out in favor of such pro-density measures, including a design-review process. Striking a balance between achieving density and providing a process for the community to provide feedback on design, between environmental values and social/cultural values. Phil proposed writing a letter that aims for balance.
- Felicity: The public hearing to Council is on October 27th. There may be a design review process put in place in response to recent public comments.

• **Calendar Updates**

- Not all Commissioners have been receiving notifications. They might need to subscribe to receive them.
- Request to add state code comment deadline to calendar; difficult to identify dates.
- Request to add plastic bag items.
- Lowell will post the draft letter and dates.
- Request to add dates for comment on Planning Commission and Council.

• **Staff Updates**

- The Mayor is planning to sign the Mayor's Climate Compact in response to President Obama's call to get 100 U.S. mayors signed-on before the Paris climate talks in December.
- Education and outreach ambassadors can help by spreading the word about the Climate Conversations series through emails and posters.

• **Public Comment**

- There was no public comment.

• **Objectives for Next Meeting**

- Environmental Action Plan Update
- Sustainable Materials Management Plan Update
- Disposable Bag Survey
- Outreach and EnviroChallengers (could be tabled)
- Tacoma Water (December or January)
- 2016 Work Plan
- Methanol and Oil Trains (could be tabled)

• **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 5:32 pm

The next meeting of the Sustainable Tacoma Commission will be Tuesday, November 10, 2015, 3:30 to 5:30 p.m., Tacoma Municipal Building, 747 Market Street, 9th Floor Visibility Center.