



CITY OF TACOMA SUSTAINABLE TACOMA COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING NOTES

Date: Tuesday, December 9, 2014

Commission Members Present: Ken Campbell, Sarah Chessman, Chrissy Cooley, Phil Coughlan, Nick Cutting, Karen Hamilton, Agnes Pate, Felicity Devlin, Alyssa Illich, Ellen Moore

Commission Member Excused: Holly Williams

Others Present: Jetta Antonakos, Jeanne Walter, Emily Campbell, Kristin Lynett, Jim Parvey, Lowell Wyse

▪ **Approval of November 18, 2014 Meeting Notes**

The November meeting notes were approved and adopted with the change of “public comments” to “Subcommittee Report-Outs.”

▪ **Review of December Agenda**

The December agenda was reviewed and approved with the addition of Subcommittee Report-Outs.

▪ **Review of Commission Duties, By-Laws and Decision-Making**

In light of recent confusion and inconsistencies in procedures at Commission meetings, Phil led a discussion touching on conduct of meetings, how to communicate with other groups and individuals, and member conduct and responsibilities. Main points of the discussion included:

- Accurate agendas should be set prior to meetings, and should be approved at the start of meetings so that members of the public are given adequate opportunity to comment on agenda items. Also, agenda items that were not on the publicly available agenda and which require a vote, should be tabled until the next meeting to ensure public has the opportunity to provide comment.
- Adequate time should be given for Commission members to review and edit letters and other correspondents prior to submission.
- STC members are encouraged to participate actively in meetings.

Commission members posed many questions about their duties, responsibilities and procedures. To provide accurate clarification on these and other questions, a subcommittee will be formed and will revisit and potentially rewrite the STC bylaws. A member suggested that an additional document be created alongside the by-laws, which provides more detail on member duties and responsibilities.

Questions and points related to this discussion included:

- How should STC, as a whole and as individuals, communicate with Council?
- When is it appropriate to communicate with IPS and with Council?
- What are the legal and ethical obligations regarding STC email communication?
- Can STC members communicate on a public blog connected to the City’s webpage?

- Clarification is needed of when STC can hold elections, as the group missed the prescribed election date in June.
 - How could the STC meetings be scheduled better?
 - What are the obligations around STC member disclosure and conflicts of interest, for example, can one be a Commission member and do business with the City?
 - Can the STC Chair excuse themselves from signing STC documents?
 - Can and should the Commission change the meeting dates and times to be more accommodating to potential Council involvement?
 - Ellen, Chrissy and Felicity volunteered to be on the by-laws subcommittee that will meet prior to the January STC meeting.
 - Staff will review current by-laws prior to sub-committee meeting and discuss potential changes and additions with attorney.
 - Staff will review other Commission by-laws
 - Staff will invite a City attorney to discuss the City's ethics rules and how they pertain to Commissioners
- **Review of Office of Environmental Policy and Sustainability Work Plan**
- James Parvey displayed (via projector) the draft work plan for the Office of Environmental Policy and Sustainability, including tasks, staff points of contact, allocated resources, funding status, hours per month for tasks, and other information. He noted that the next steps regarding the OEPS work plan will be to prioritize and get consensus from involved parties on the included items, in anticipation that not everything will be funded and priorities will need to be set. He also noted the interconnected nature of the numerous projects and programs, and the importance of focusing on operationalization of policy (actions) as well as policy development. He expects that OEPS will be ready to have this conversation about prioritization at the January STC meeting. Staff will share the work plan document electronically in the meantime for more thorough STC review.
 - The STC expressed appreciation for this work plan being shared with them. Phil noted that part of STC's responsibility is to hold OEPS accountable for their work plan, and to request support from Council for OEPS, if lack of funding or resources is an issue. Members asked how the work items are entered into the plan. Jim responded that it is based on resolutions, ordinances, action items on departmental policies, departmental programs, EnviroHouse activities, and programs on education and outreach. He also clarified that the Environmental Action Plan (as it is currently referred to) is a higher-level document than the OEPS work plan, looks further ahead, and involves more departments than just OEPS.
- **Commission Work Plan**
- Members discussed the unfinished and remaining elements of the 2014 STC work plan and had an initial discussion of elements of the 2015 STC work plan. Shared ideas relating to the 2015 work plan included:
- Ellen shared that UWT is likely to get a grant for a 'Biggest Loser' campaign (with the goal of losing 3 million lbs. of carbon on the UWT campus), and the University is eager for collaboration with the City.
 - An electric vehicle subcommittee member shared that she expects to be ready to have a daylong workshop with City staff and others from the community sometime before the end of second quarter of 2015. This workshop would address happenings around electric vehicle infrastructure and the benefits.
 - Jim shared that OEPS is now in charge of the Environmental Services sponsorship grant program.
 - Subcommittees should be addressed in early 2015
 - Reiteration that STC duties and responsibilities should be revisited and clarified.
 - Clarification desired on how the STC receives feedback on actions and performance.

STC members discussed concerns with subcommittees. Discussion points included:

- Purpose of subcommittees has been to have focused discussions on specific topics with the intent to look at specific potential actions and bring these ideas and suggestions back to the STC as a whole.
- Concern that subcommittee efforts (such as on electric vehicles and plastic bags) were not having traction or being heard.
- Issue that subcommittee report-outs were not being included on the agenda.
- Point was made that the role, duties and responsibilities of subcommittees should be clarified in the re-examination of by-laws

STC members discussed their role regarding outreach and education. Discussion points included:

- Feeling stifled regarding outreach and education.
- Question of what kind of outreach, education and presentations can be done.
- In the past, STC members strived to make biannual visits to neighborhood councils to report on special items such as the Sustainability Expo or STAR Communities, with priority being given to attending January-February meetings.
- It is often difficult to get on neighborhood council meeting agendas, and STC may have more legitimacy and success if the Commissioners were scheduled like City staff on the Neighborhood Council agendas.
- How else is the STC able to provide education and outreach to the community?

STC discussed ideas of how to measure Commission successes, and there was general consensus that it would be useful to identify specific and measurable outcomes with steps to achieve them. Ideas of what success looks like included:

- Number of ordinances passed by Council
- Number of letters written
- Having a clear understanding of why bottlenecks occur and what everyone's role is
- Having productive conversations with Council
- Communicating with the community, including being a conduit for Council communication with community
- Measuring behavior change as a result of STC education and outreach efforts
- A detailed STC work plan with specific steps (and progress on accomplishing those steps measured) could be valuable to gauge progress on items

Remaining discussion points and questions included:

- What can the STC, as a citizen oversight committee on sustainability, do besides making recommendations to Council
- What is Commission vs. staff roles?
- Concern that STC doesn't get much feedback from Council
- Suggestion that STC members semi-regularly attend IPS and Council meetings, such as once per quarter
- Frustration that the STC agenda doesn't have enough items and that not much seems to be getting accomplished
- Goal of coordinating the STC and OEPS work plans
- Frustration that STC progress is dependent on staff time and resources which are limited.
- OEPS activities need to be chosen strategically and must be concurrent with Council's priorities
- STC should remain aware of other sustainability campaigns, programs and incentives to be effective
- There is opportunity for STC involvement in the Healthy Homes, Healthy Neighborhoods program through canvassing
- The Environmental Action Plan may be solution to some frustrations on the "open feedback loop" because it represents agreement between Council and OEPS on sustainability priorities efforts and measures

▪ **Plastic Bag Ordinance**

- Jim presented the draft work plan for implementation of a plastic bag ordinance and asked for feedback on whether the STC would like staff to move forward with ordinance or to do so through the Sustainable Materials Management Plan, which will not be completed until late 2015. Following the timeline of the draft work plan, the ordinance could be ready for approval around June 2015.
- Ken reported that he sent an email to Council Member Mello, confirming he received the plastic bag ban letter. Ken mentioned concern that the bag ban will be deprioritized if it was incorporated into the Materials Management Plan.
- It was suggested that someone should be at the 4:30 IPS meeting tomorrow (12/10/15) to show support for the letter. Ken offered to attend the meeting.
- The topic of proper STC communication was revisited. For full disclosure and transparency, written communication between individual STC members and Council should go through the staff liaison.
- The bag ban topic has been a priority for a “long time,” and the sense from the STC members is that they would like the bag issue to be taken care of soon. Kristi noted that pushing this ordinance through would require a lot of staff time and would likely limit the capabilities for staff to work on other items. Jim summarized the STC’s position that the bag ordinance is high enough priority to bring forward in staff’s work plan independently, versus incorporating it into the Sustainable Materials Management Plan document. Actual prioritization of bag ordinance would depend on Council’s direction and staff resources. STC members briefly discussed what makes something a priority, with the question of “do-ability” vs. “impact on environment”. Jim explained that the Environmental Action Plan document will address processes for assigning priorities.
- STC showed their appreciation for Kristi by presenting her with a gift.

▪ **Staff Updates**

Jeanne explained that part of the Materials Management Plan involves a study of the quality of Tacoma’s waste stream to see if there is a market for our waste. A consultant is working on this; it is a long process with a sizable budget. Samples need to be taken during each season, which drives the timeframe. Organics will be sampled for the first time, providing data on the food waste component of waste stream.

Staff

- Staff will be at IPS and will report out to STC on the meeting.
- A meeting to plan for the Kids Activities at the 2015 Sustainability Expo will be held on Thursday (12/11/14) at 3pm in Kristi’s office; STC members are welcome.

▪ **Objectives for Next Meeting**

STC action items before next meeting include:

- Review and provide input on the Environmental Action Plan scope and roles.
- STC select 2 members for steering subcommittee. Steering subcommittee expected to meet 8-10 times at ~2 hours per meeting. Email can be used to review documents, because it is a subcommittee. Those whose terms expire in 2015 and who do not plan on re-upping, and who plan to be involved in the steering committee should talk with Kristi.
- STC members are encouraged to review the enabling resolution and refining resolution as “homework.”
- Brainstorming list of potential outcomes for Commission activities.
- STC members should sign up to attend neighborhood council meetings in February

▪ **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 5:45 pm.

The next meeting of the Sustainable Tacoma Commission will be Tuesday, January 13, 2014, 3:30 to 5:30 pm, Tacoma Municipal Building North, 733 Market Street, Room 16.