



City of Tacoma Sustainable Tacoma Commission Meeting Notes

Date: January 10, 2017

Commission Members Present: Alexandra Brewer, Josh Jorgensen, Lowell Wyse, Christine Cooley
Alison Baur, Theda Braddock

Commission Members Excused: Sarah Chessman, Philip Coughlan, Peter Hickman, Alyssa Illich

Others Present: Kristin Lynett, Emily Campbell, Emily Watts, Emma Keese, Erica Tucci, Jetta Antonakos, Zachary Christin

- **Roll Call**

The meeting was called to order at 3:30pm.

- **Approval of December 13th Meeting Notes**

The December meeting notes were approved with no changes.

- **Review of January Agenda**

- **Metro Parks Tacoma Sustainability Plan – Emily Watts**

Emily is the Sustainability Coordinator at Metro Parks Tacoma (MPT). She gave an overview of their Sustainability Plan. They began coordination for a Sustainability Plan starting in 2006 and in 2008 had an outside group give an audit. The project started in earnest after a 2011 Johnson Controls energy audit. MPT updated 24 facilities in 2011 and 2012. In 2015 they completed a new three year Environmental Sustainability Plan. This plan focuses on four main sections and draws its baselines from 2010-2014. All of the targets are set to be completed by December 2018. The four main categories are: engagement and education, parks and outdoor areas, facilities and buildings, and transportation and fuels. Since MPT is growing, adding new community centers, pools and parks, it would be difficult to reduce overall consumption. Therefore, in order to normalize this growth, applicable sustainability targets are calculated per area.

- A Commissioner asked how many facilities Metro Parks has total. Emily answered that they have around 40, with a wide range of facilities.

For the first category, engagement and education, MPT is working with employees. All employees are being given sustainability training and they do engagement campaigns every quarter. They want employees to have someone they feel they can go to if they have ideas, which is the Sustainability Coordinator. Departments are very diverse so Emily feels this is also a great way to highlight what employees are working on. Parks and outdoor areas are a large area of concern

for MPT. They would like to reduce water use by 9% over three years. Another environmental issue they are focusing on is pesticides in parks. They currently have four pesticide free parks and want to increase that number to eight by 2018.

- A Commissioner asked what the greatest difficulty they've faced going pesticide free was. Emily answered that going pesticide free can be hard to accomplish at the large scale of some of MPT parks.
- A Commissioner asked if they could go to safer pesticides where they can't go pesticide free. Emily said that they do that when possible.

MPT would like to reduce consumption at their facilities. They would like to reduce electricity by 3% over three years. They are also targeting specific facilities to reduce. Point Defiance Zoo and Aquarium is one natural target because it uses a huge percentage of MPT's natural gas consumption. However, based on per square foot it is not far above average. It is also difficult because some things are difficult to decrease, for example they keep a large elephant area heated by natural gas. There is currently a large focus on reduction of natural gas since it accounts for 82% of total emissions. A lot of that consumption comes from heated pools, which they are looking into ways to decrease. Transportation and fuels is especially important because MPT has over 100 fleet vehicles and 100 equipment pieces using fuel. Therefore fuel efficiency is an important target because there is high use. Currently only 60 MPT employees use Pierce Trips, a web based platform for tracking travel modes. Next engagement campaign, Emily is thinking they will try to partner with Pierce Transit to increase this number. One difficulty is how spread out the MPT facilities are.

MPT's carbon footprint was calculated using Seattle Climate Partnership's Carbon Footprint Calculator from 2010. They chose to continue using the 2010 calculator because then it is the same source each year. This includes not only electricity but other forms of energy as well. Kristi asked about the new People's Community Center pool and whether it's more efficient since it's newer. Emily Watts will research and find answer.

Emily gave a basic overview of her position and goals MPT has already met. The permanent Sustainability Coordinator (currently Emily Watts, formerly Jana Fischback) spends a lot of time updating information on energy usage. They are hoping to move to Portfolio Manager so that TPU can automatically download data when the meter is read. Currently it takes about 1.5 months to get data which makes it more difficult to identify short term issues or immediate actions that can be taken. MPT does partner with TPU to identify areas of concern as soon as possible though.

Several 2016 goals have been met. Sustainability is now a part of all new hire training (both permanent and temporary positions). The number of parks using sophisticated irrigation systems has increased. This was the first full year that MPT has tracked mileage reimbursements. They want to make fleet vehicles easier to utilize. In the next few weeks they will get total natural gas, water, and electricity consumption data from last year which they will use to calculate their carbon footprint. All of these resources are on their website. If people have any questions they can email sustainability@metroparks.com.

- A Commissioner asked if there was a plan to look at challenges, for example will hotter summers impact water use. Emily answered that the years 2010-2014 were used for baseline. Commissioner asked if there is a longer term discussion for challenges and goals. Emily didn't know what the longer term plan might look like yet.
- A Commissioner asked if there's anything in the plan to increase habitat at the parks. Emily didn't think so. She does know that they plant native plants when their natural habitat is present. However she doesn't know if there are attempts to restore habitats that are currently compromised to their natural states so that native plants could be returned.

Kristi spoke about a new sea level rise grant. The people who are planning structural changes at Owen beach asked her for latest information on sea level rise so that could be taken into account as part of a long term plan.

Emily mentioned that MPT also has schools doing great environmental work and are green ribbon awards recipients.

- A Commissioner asked if there was anything the STC can do to support Metro Parks. Emily said, not at this time.
- A Commissioner informed MPT about the Natural Resource management program which does audits on lands and then provides some resources to help you make changes. Additional incentive money can come if you show the positive changes you made and results.
- A Commissioner commented whether planting 30 trees per year is enough since more than 30 are often lost due to weather alone. This number is based on wanting to have 63% canopy cover.

Kristi asked whether MPT has an urban forestry plan. Emily Watts will check.

- A Commissioner asked who the urban forester at MPT is. Emily was not sure.

A member of the public, Zachary, asked whether there were any new metrics or big targets that will be added going forward. Zachary asked how the plan was created. MPT had a committee. Zachary asked whether there was a public process. Emily will research that.

The education arm at the Zoo is rebranding and focusing on conservation. They will be emphasizing conservation education at the Zoo, at other MPT facilities, and in the community.

- **Bring Your own Bag Implementation Update – Emily Campbell**

Emily is a Project Specialist at the City of Tacoma in the Office of Environmental Policy and Sustainability (OEPS). She presented on the implementation plan for the Bring Your Own Bag (BYOB) ordinance. It will go into effect July 12th, 2017. Single use plastic bags will no longer be distributed and single use paper bags must be at least 40% recycled content and have a 5¢ minimum fee. A loophole was closed based on feedback from other communities that people were thickening the plastic bags and continuing to use them. This was closed by having a minimum 5¢ fee for reusable bags distributed at the checkout stand. They are working with a local Tacoma artist to make cool reusable bags to distribute for free, focused on low income communities. Two bags were shown, one a woven, stand up bag and one t-shirt style. They are hoping that the design will be finalized in February, and they will give them out at community events in June-July and upon request from residents. They are working with the Point Defiance Zoo and Aquarium which has an exhibit launching on Earth Day called Washed Ashore which is focused on reducing single use plastics in the ocean. It's a traveling exhibit with large animal sculptures made from trash found on actual beaches. They'll be working with them once the bag design is finalized, including co-branding outreach materials. They want to complement each other's outreach on single use items. One thing they told the artist was to maybe include Commencement Bay animals like seals in the design. They want it to be hip/cool Tacoma so people will want to actually carry the bags. Kristi would love feedback from the STC on the designs once they have possibilities from the artist.

- A Commissioner asked if they worked with the Arts Commission. They got a list of names of local artists from City Arts Department staff that they contacted and encouraged to apply for the design contract. The Commissioner would love the Arts Commission to be looped in on this.

Commissioners discussed the t-shirt bag vs the hard bag. They stressed that BYOB was a prompt to lead to more actions.

- A Commissioner asked whether this included info on further steps people could take. They are adding to the website language on what plastics can be recycled. They decided it was more important for the bags to be attractive to people so they will actually want to use them.
- A Commissioner suggested a small recyclable insert in each bag about recycling. Kristi said they will be creating a door hang reminder to bring your own bag and distributing that with bags.
- A Commissioner suggested creating a paper with four things you can do to reduce waste and one empty fill in the blank spot. Another Commissioner suggested something stuck to the dash of a car reminding you to get your bags. They will be exploring shopping cart corral signs out in the parking lot that remind you to bring your reusable bag with you.

They will also provide something to businesses explaining that it's a City law so that businesses can show that it is a new City ordinance, not a new store policy.

Jetta Antonakos suggested signs just outside a grocery store, reminding you to bring your bags with you.

- A Commissioner said that based on a social media seminar she attended, corrals were more effective than something at the door. The link to that survey will be sent to Emily Campbell.
- A Commissioner asked to be sent Facebook promotions for BYOB.

Kristi explained their plans for outreach. Collateral will include posters up in stores, point of sale signs, FAQ's for businesses, a shopping list with the City's Preventing Wasted Food project, and possibly a corral sign. They have also put FAQs for residents up on the city website. They will have meeting for businesses, materials for residents at community events and more information on the website. They will also give talks to Neighborhood Councils and distribute informational materials.

- A Commissioner asked if there was any plan to have a follow up on what the impact of BYOB is. Emily answered that businesses have to submit data about how many paper bags they distribute. They don't have any pre baseline data to compare it too. A waste characterization study is done every 5 years, so some changes might be seen in that. There is very little data on effectiveness but some other communities did pre and post surveys, looking at number of bags out on riverbanks etc. They did find a significant decrease there. We can expect a similar decrease in Tacoma but without a baseline to compare to it will be difficult to note changes.

The biggest message of BYOB was to prompt more action from people (bringing their own shopping bags) and they also want to decrease plastic entering the waste stream. There are approximately 96 million bags distributed annually in Tacoma. The recycling center the City uses would save a significant amount from not having to deal with plastic bags because they do a lot of damage to their machines. And we would expect less litter.

- A Commissioner mentioned that the San Antonio study found no impact on litter. However, it was noted that they did not close the loophole by charging 5¢ for reusable. So what people did was create thicker plastic bags and call them reusable.

Kristi noted that feedback on how to make this case stronger is welcome.

A member of the public, Zachary, said that there was a basic calculation on the impact on families, especially low and middle income. He said he saw calculations that it could be a financial burden, up to \$1,000 per family per household.

Kristi responded that the main goal is a behavior change, to get people to switch over to reusable bags. They will be providing people who are low income with reusable bags. The fee is meant as a deterrent, but she is hoping that people don't pay the fee because they don't use plastic bags. Also people with benefit cards (SNAP, FAP, TANF, WIC) don't have to pay when they receive recycled content paper bags at the checkout stand.

A Commissioner suggested giving bags out in schools and having students bring them home. At community events it was suggested to both hand out bags and also create build your own t-shirt bags.

- A Commissioner asked if the City might be able to support groups who could give out reusable bags in front of major grocery stores during the first week the ordinance is in effect. Kristi answered that they are trying to target low income people for the bag give-away because the budget doesn't allow for everyone. So they will be targeting DSHS offices, food pantries and the like to distribute.
- A Commissioner asked how many bags they were going to give away and sell. They are thinking 5,000 to give away for free and none will be for sale. 8,000 were distributed in the lead up to this already. They also discussed having bag exchange sites (Share-a-Bag), where people can leave extra bags they don't need and other people can pick them up to use. They'll also post resources online where people can buy bags.

- **Subcommittees Discussion**

Transportation: The subcommittee provided a general update: Alyssa has professional commitments pulling her in many different directions so she's stepping down from the Commission so someone with more time can fill the role. So there will be an open seat soon and they will be looking for someone to fill it.

Climate Resiliency: Phil and Lexi met and agreed to do email updates. Lexi feels that hasn't been as effective and was thinking it might be a good idea to reinstate regular in person meetings.

Buildings and Energy: The subcommittee will be receiving a Green Roads Presentation in February.

Materials Management: They spoke about strategies going forward since a Resource Conservation Manager (RCM) wasn't funded. They discussed ways to be proactive and ready. Alison agreed to do some research on benefits and accomplishments of RCMs. She asked for an electronic copy of what Kristi put together on this.

Air and Local Food: The subcommittee had a meeting with Dean Jackson and planted the seed of figuring out action A7 in the City's Environmental Action Plan (EAP), to pilot a small urban farm. First, action A5 has to happen. They need to figure out what would need to happen for that. Kristi noted that she is working on a grant that would support this effort. Primarily action A3, funding a reporting system to hear from those suffering from food insecurity.

Natural Systems: Lowell shared that the Tacoma Needs Trees event was well attended. It was a 90th birthday for Tacoma's tree codes. A meeting is coming up this Friday for other ideas for what the Tacoma Needs Trees group will do.

Education and Outreach: They followed up with TPU, and had a productive meeting with Keith Blocker who will bring more information for low income outreach and budgeting. He is grateful for the work here and may have further requests.

Kristi asked whether everyone was on the Planning Commission's Listserv and if anyone was on the Transportation Commission Listserv? Lowell and Chrissy requested to be added. Lowell will be resigning in March because he has been offered a job teaching English in Peru.

- A Commissioner gave a correction: Update from a Commissioner was on Lincoln Revitalization not Link rail.

Draft plan for presentations for 2017 was reviewed.

- Kristi gave an EAP progress report to Infrastructure, Planning and Sustainability (IPS) committee. She will need feedback in February and again in March. The upcoming progress report in April will help the STC see where progress has happened or hasn't.
 - Public Works: an employee is happy to come in and update the STC about what they're doing with street lights.
 - Urban forestry: There are several opportunities for Mike Carey to come speak to the STC. They could look over tree preservation codes before the end of the year, no specific time but earlier is better.
 - Kristi said she can summarize the scope of her work on the sea level rise grant, and send updates to the STC.
 - There will be a meeting on Friday at 8:30 to discuss the South Sound Sustainability Expo.
 - There will be a meeting on the 20th to talk about speaker series presentations. One of them will be on climate change and Kristi would like feedback on that and how to communicate climate change local impacts effectively.
 - A plan needs to be developed for EV outreach. Kristi will be working in 2017 with TPU on this.
 - A Commissioner asked when the next update for overall GHG emissions will be. Kristi said that it will be this year. Don't want it to fall through the cracks since it's what motivates the whole plan but isn't part of a specific sub-committee. Commissioners discussed adding it specifically to the climate subcommittee.
 - A Commissioner asked whether the sea level rise grant had a known timeline of when it begins and what opportunities for outside engagement there are. Kristi will update them.
- **Staff Updates**
 - The STC has two open seats that they are working to fill. One is the youth seat which they had two applicants for. They are trying to find a time to meet with them. They will start official recruitment for the other seat within a week or two.
 - Another AmeriCorps member, Adrienne Chaney, will be starting with OEPS on January 17th. She'll be working on multiple projects including: urban forestry, BYOB, the Sustainability Expo.
 - There will be a meeting on Friday about Tollefson which Alison will be joining by phone.
 - Kristi told the STC that if they want a table at the Expo they should think now content and activities. She suggested they can always promote the listserv and Facebook page and work on recruitment for new members. They could also have the large EAP signs that were used last year. Lowell is planning to have Tacoma Need Trees information either at the STC table or at a separate booth.
 - A Commissioner asked if there were any other meetings or events coming up they should know about. Kristi said she would be attending an IPS meeting. She also said that Steve is planning to speak tomorrow about the public engagement process. Kristi said that these two, as well as others not mentioned, should be on google calendars.

- Kristi said that the new Active Transportation Coordinator, Meredith, will be starting in 2 weeks.
- Another upcoming meeting, this January 18th Friends of the Co-Op are holding a meeting to discuss directions for their new Tacoma Co-Op. Chrissy asked that people who are interested share the Facebook event.
- Chrissy also noted that there will be a fundraiser for the Code Innovation Database Project which provides green building case studies on their website. The purpose of the project is to save time and money for people pursuing green building. This is possible because the website can provide, for example, an existing engineering study so they do not have to commission a whole new study.

- **Public Comment**

None.

- **Objectives for Next Meeting**

No objectives were set.

- **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 4:53 pm.

The next meeting of the Sustainable Tacoma Commission will be Tuesday February 14th from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m., Tacoma Municipal Building, 747 Market Street, 9th Floor Visibility Center.