

COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAM COMMITTEE (CSPC) MEETING MINUTES

MAY 21, 2020

5:00 PM

VIRTUAL ZOOM MEETING

- Committee Members Present:** Chair Sara Pesek, Leah Lavin, Rajesh Kapileshwari, Dane Kuppinger, Allison Bowling, Stephanie Friede, Amber Baker (joined at 5:18)
- Committee Members Absent:** Angela Young, Denise Terry, Lee Stackhouse, Keyra Williams
- Attendance of City Staff:** Helen Peplowski, Jennifer Chrysson, Council Member Elect Kevin Mundy

Meeting called to order by Chair Sara Pesek at 5:06 p.m.

Roll call was taken.

December minutes were adopted. Moved by Leah, seconded by Dane.

February minutes were adopted. Moved to adopt by Stephanie, seconded by Dane.

Jennifer Chrysson, Assistant to the Director of Operations, presented updates for Bee City USA about National Pollinator week during the third week of June. Last year we put together a story map about local pollinator updates through ESRI and held a Pollinator Party at the Fairgrounds Farmers Market. This year, we are putting together informational videos to include in the updated story map that is iPad and mobile friendly. There will be six videos about different topics. The first video is “To Meet a Beekeeper” with the Forsyth Beekeeper association. The next video is “Planning for Monarchs” with Gateway Nature Preserve, who we are also working with on a virtual tour of the half-acre pollinator garden which is now in the ground. Another video is working with the Forsyth County Cooperative Extension on “Why Plant Natives” with Leslie Peck giving information about what to plant in the fall and spring. The final video is on Quarry Park about the upgrades they are making for soil amendments and pollinator garden using the \$125,000 Centennial Grant money from the Winston-Salem Foundation.

Kevin Mundy asked about the plan to communicate this work. Jennifer answers that it will be mainly focused on a social media roll out as well as an interview with Mary Jac Brennan and the WS Journal. The City’s Marketing department will highlight one video a day during that week.

Sarah asks if after the June rollout, the videos get shared with teachers to use as a resource in schools.

Jennifer invites the CSPC to share any other ideas for Bee City and Pollinator Week.

Dane Kuppinger comments that it could be interesting to share how many beekeepers there are across Winston-Salem. The ESRI platform could be used to show locations of beekeepers in the county. People might not want to share their location but many people are just not aware that there are likely beekeepers near most people. Jennifer says that at a state level, she believes this exists. She adds that this could be something added to the story map.

Allison Bowling adds that there is a voluntary initiative where people can share the location of their hive if they want to. It was meant to help prevent use of pesticides and use other harmful agricultural practices. This is also a statewide effort.

Dane mentions that the other place to look is the beekeepers society itself, since they have a directory of their members and where they live. Allison says this group might then be willing to share that information.

Rajesh Kapileshwari shares that for more outreach, it could be valuable to share it with Sierra Club and Piedmont Environmental Alliance who can share with their members. Possibly also the Audubon Society and Gateway Nature Preserve could do the same.

Leah Lavin mentions that those groups may also share the content through their social media accounts.

Kevin mentions that an additional group to contact may be Kaleidium.

Sara introduces the next topic of the resolution discussion. Helen shares that there have been changes economically with the city due to COVID19 that significantly impact what we may be able to request from council. Additionally, since the CSPC wanted to do a presentation with the resolution, Johnnie Taylor, Operations Director, thought it might be more effective if this presentation is done in person. Because of that however, it means the resolution won't be sent to the General Government Committee until in-person meetings resume, which currently we do not know when that will be.

Rajesh shares that he worked a lot on the resolution and met with the main group from the Sierra Club about the trepidation the city has with the budget and costs. While priorities have shifted recently due to COVID19, nothing for the environment has changed so he believes they shouldn't ease up. Europe has tied the bailout money to emissions reduction, which he thinks is

an interesting solution. He feels that if we have projects and targets that are ambitious, we would be well-positioned to use funds as they come down the pipe. He feels the conversations he has had with elected officials, there is interest in recommitting to these goals. Rajesh shares that he thinks if we are able to make some iconic building renewable, that would be the ideal project for the CSPC, since he is aware there isn't money to go the full 80% renewable by 2030 as proposed by the resolution.

Helen explains more about the budget that there have been cuts even to Capital Improvement Projects, which means that grants would be the best chance for funding for this resolution.

Rajesh adds that one change he made to the original resolution is adding more energy efficiency goals to make renewable energy easier to accomplish, and the reaffirming of climate goals that have already been made.

Rajesh, going back to his mention of upgrading iconic buildings, shares more information about how this might be done in the city and that it would send a strong message to the public.

The review of the resolution document begins with comments from Rajesh about a review of where the specific targets mentioned came from and the benefits of having specific targets.

Helen reminds CSPC members that the sustainability plan that she has written includes a specific reduction goal but is 15% by 2025 from 2008 levels.

Rajesh says that if we put the resolution in front of the council, the Council will fund more projects.

Kevin shares that as a new Council Member, he believes in "what gets measured gets done." He would like to see realistic goals but specific goals.

Sara says that she agrees with Kevin, and that the resolution should be aspirational and that it could happen with enough support. The CSPC needs to be ready to take advantage of the possible funding since this resolution could help provide new jobs and other benefits.

Stephanie Friede agrees with Sara about the resolution is meant to be aspirational. If things are going to change drastically, then there is the opportunity to make more change. The measurement aspect is important.

Kevin asks about this resolution compared to the County resolution. Helen shares that the biggest difference is that the County kept the specific targets, but with the language about "striving towards" those goals rather than a hard commitment. Kevin follows up with asking where we are

now. Helen explains that the numbers the city has right now are the carbon emissions from internal operations at the city, which we have back to 2008. This would be our baseline, so any reduction we made would be compared to 2008. Kevin asks what our current reduction is. Helen says that currently we are at about a 1% reduction from the previous year, but is unsure what the reduction is from the 2008 baseline. Kevin then goes on to say that it seems we are discussing a reduction versus a utilization rate. Helen agrees with that and says that our utilization rate of renewables is only what is provided by Duke Energy since the city doesn't have any systems itself. Kevin asks if this number also includes transportation and general fossil fuel use.

Rajesh agrees that the city is only able to claim the amount of renewable energy that Duke Energy provides. We would be able to claim more from hybrid buses or solar panels with we were actively utilizing those systems. Kevin then says that we are starting from zero and would need to reach the 80% by 2030 goal in nine years, which he says is more than aspirational.

Rajesh emphasizes that the word "Strive" is important for that reason. He also adds that Duke Energy has already committed to using more renewables which naturally will impact what counts in the city. Part of going beyond that is where the idea of updated buildings comes into play.

Kevin believes the city needs a win in this area since the County already passed this resolution. A win could help establish more momentum.

Rajesh then moves on to explain the additional points added by CSPC members based on what they saw in resolutions passed in Asheville, California and Oregon. Point number seven is what is more focused on the energy efficiency reductions. All of the points in seven should also create more jobs and includes equity concerns.

Helen interjects that the details of number seven are far fetched. Specifically she points to letter "e" which relates to tree canopy growth that we cannot currently measure as we don't have a tree canopy assessment to establish a baseline. Letter "a" also sounds very similar to the Cities Initiative, which is a collection of municipalities across the state put together to unify our voices and have more pull with Duke Energy and other entities like that. That group is more effective with all of us together rather than just Winston-Salem and Forsyth County asking for assistance from Duke Energy.

Rajesh says about the tree canopy that while he doesn't know how one might create a tree canopy assessment, he does notice anecdotally that trees in his neighborhood are torn down all the time to develop new homes. He offers that putting a tree ordinance that is stronger would also help with that, even though he understands how big of an undertaking that would be.

Helen asks for any other comments or questions related to the resolution.

Dane shares he is also in favor of details to give City Council an idea of what to expect. If we name the specific goals, then we can more easily measure progress. He asks if there is a way to have a more pared down resolution but still have details in the back of the mind. Helen answers that that could be the CSPC's work plan, where the members are working on the details but still not necessarily including those in the resolution brought to council.

Rajesh adds that that is the point of the annual evaluation, so adjustments can be made.

Kevin also adds that he likes number 11 about annual evaluations for accountability purposes. He also asks if the document is the strategies and goals and the details are kept in another document to help keep the primary document short.

Dane wants to leave the specific details of the first couple of items in there because he believes it is important for the public and City Council to know what they are asking the city to work towards. He would like at least that first number to be kept in if nothing else.

Rajesh asks if anyone on the CSPC would be able to pare down the document to make it a bit shorter. Stephanie said she would be able to do so with someone else to try to get the document to one page.

Leah, on behalf of Sara who had technical difficulties, suggested the next step was to vote.

Helen, on behalf of Denise Terry who could not attend, shared that the priorities Denise is interested in were number 3, 4 and 5 from the resolution which were more focused on increased jobs and equity considerations.

Sara, via phone, called for a vote of CSPC members present. Rajesh moved to approve a vote and Dane seconded. Helen clarified that what they were voting on is the document as is, without changes. The resolution passed with unanimous support from CSPC members present.

With the resolution passed, Sara asks what the next step is. Helen responds that her team will create and submit the Council Action Request Form (CARF) which is done through a specific city software. She asks if the CSPC still wants to do a presentation as well. The CSPC members present supports that plan. The presentation will also need to be submitted with the CARF. Since the presentation will be more effective face to face with the appropriate City Council committee, we won't be able to fit it into the June 9 General Government Committee meeting since the timeline is too tight.

Rajesh asks what format is best for the presentation. Jennifer answers that the committee where they will be presenting has four Council members, a PowerPoint with visuals and that lasts 5-7 minutes is a good framework for a presentation. Rajesh says he is willing to create the presentation with any assistance, which Leah and Stephanie offer to help with. Jennifer reminds them that the presentation would fall to the Chair, who can then designate someone else or do it with another member.

Jennifer adds that the CARF and presentation get submitted 2-3 weeks in advance so City Council Members have time to review everything. Sara asks what the schedule is for when CARFs are due ahead of the future Council meetings. Jennifer agrees to share that schedule, and reminds the CSPC to wait until in-person meetings resume, which could end up being September.

Sara has to leave the meeting, Helen offers to officially adjourn the meeting.

Helen asks if anyone has any other business.

Stephanie asks about the next CSPC meetings and if they will get a chance to practice. Helen says that the next meeting will be on June 4 and the following one will be the first Thursday in August. We will be taking July off to match Council meetings.

Rajesh motions to adjourn and Leah seconds. Meeting adjourns at 6:09.