

SPECIAL COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAM COMMITTEE (CSPC) MEETING  
MINUTES  
OCTOBER 14, 2020  
6:00 PM  
VIRTUAL ZOOM MEETING

**Committee Members Present:** Chair Sara Pesek, Rajesh Kapileshwari, Dane Kuppinger, Leah Lavin, Keyra Williams

**Committee Members Absent:** Lee Stackhouse Angela Young, Amber Baker, Stephanie Friede, Allison Bowling, Denise Terry

**Attendance of City Staff:** Helen Peplowski, Director of Operations Johnnie Taylor

Chair Sara Pesek calls the meeting to order at 6:02.

Roll Call.

Sara begins with a question about if newly elected Council Members would become active beginning in January and if returning Council Members could fill different roles in various council committees. Johnnie Taylor, Director of Operations, answers yes to both. Helen reminds committee members that there will only be two new Council Members - Council Member Mundy and Council Member Burke.

Sara starts the discussion based on comments made by Amber Baker at the previous meeting about being systematic in looking at which points to discuss. She wanted to start by looking at the verbiage around the equity related points from the resolution. Sara noted there were a couple different reactions from Council Members when they brought up equity and justice [at the September presentation to the Community Development/Housing/General Government (CDHGG) meeting] and asks members to weigh in on whether to keep those points or take it out.

Keyra asks if Sara wants feedback on just the green jobs or several points. Sara refers to the resolution document with highlighted sections. Leah says she would be in favor of keeping those points in the resolution and that other things could be cut out. Keyra agrees because those communities [mentioned in the document] are some of the most vulnerable communities who aren't able to take advantage of ways to reduce their emissions.

Sara asks Helen what part of the work done by the Office of Sustainability would those equity and justice points relate to and if not, does it line up with another department/division's work.

Helen says if they are talking just about the green jobs, there should be some distinction between whether that is a request within the community or specifically in the city government. If it is meant for within city government there may be pushback due to regulation in place from COVID and the pressures on the city's financial situation. In the community, we would have less control over providing jobs. That point would then be related to asking Council to encourage more businesses and economic growth from the green sector in the community.

Rajesh reminds participants that those points specifically were included because Council Member Scippio had asked how the resolution would assist the poorer communities. The other part to that point would be to get information on what the future green jobs would be and working with local high schools, colleges and universities on a future action plan for getting the jobs in the community.

Dane asks if what Helen is saying is to add the phrase "in Winston-Salem" to the point about green jobs and green job training so it is clear they aren't asking this from city employees. He also agrees with Keyra and others about leaving the social justice points in.

Leah adds that it is important to keep it in since the resolution is symbolic and as such they should tie justice to the climate since that doesn't always happen.

Sara suggests that this piece could also become part of a work plan since there is interest from committee members in addition to keeping it in the resolution.

Moving to the next sections, Sara asks if Helen had any additional comments to Council Member Besse's around removing the point related to the federal carbon tax. Helen says that she supports the Council Member's comments to remove that one.

Sara asks if anyone else has comments around taking out that point. Rajesh says he thinks the CCL (Citizen's Climate Lobby) would be sad about it since it just asks for support. Another point mentions 'encourage' which he thinks should be about education programs. But he is okay to remove that third point since it is related to the community and utility and doesn't affect anything about the city government.

Sara asks if there is any additional discussion about that point. She says she feels they can achieve encouragement no matter what, whether it is in the resolution or not. Sara asks if there is any opposition to striking numbers six and three from the document.

Dane doesn't oppose but comments that it would still be good to keep those items on future action plans that they can act on later.

Sara then moves to talking about the strategic energy plan point. They included this in to specifically attach numbers to the plan already created and to create more of a framework for

review of the work of the Office [of Sustainability] and what the city is doing. She asks how comfortable Helen is with attaching specific numbers and goals. Helen asks for Sara to clarify what she means.

Sara explains that she wants to help make sure there is political capital and potential funding for Helen and the sustainability staff and to see if the resolution could help advance the work of the Office of Sustainability.

Rajesh adds that the resolution could add targets to the plan [referencing the annual reports put together by the Office of Sustainability].

Helen explains what Rajesh referenced are annual reports only meant to review what the office has done that year. She separately created a sustainability plan for the internal operations of the city which does include specific numbers and is a five year plan. To his other points about figuring out costs, that is what the energy manager does.

Helen then responds to Sara's point about the funding and says maybe that could be something they [the committee] do and provide information on costs for various programs so then if the time comes where we do get money they have an idea of where that money could go. Doing research on projects/programs that aren't already being provided by the energy manager would be most helpful if they wanted to do that work.

Sara asks, as an example, if we have information from the energy manager on how much it would be to achieve any of the goals in the resolution.

Helen says that is the work being done. The energy manager hasn't looked at necessarily every scenario, but we do know general estimates including Returns on Investments (ROIs).

Rajesh asks if keeping that point in the resolution doesn't change anything that is already being done, is there a problem with leaving it in. If so, he asks how they should change it.

Helen responds that if it isn't changing work being done, a way to simplify the point but keep it in is to include the information referenced in that point in either the annual report done by the Office of Sustainability or in the annual report from the CSPC. Helen adds that she isn't sure what the original intent of that point was, so this may not be the best solution.

Rajesh explains that the point of including the plan in the resolution was to lay out the steps needed to meet goals that have been committed to by the Mayor.

Helen asks if the resolution itself isn't doing that.

Leah agrees with Helen. To simplify, Leah says they really need the first goal and the emphasis on justice paired with it and that is enough.

Dane summarizes that what he is hearing from Helen is that her office is already doing some of the things listed in the points, and then from Rajesh that he is not clear whether or not these actions are going to get us to the goal. The bottom line is that the annual report indicating whether the city is on track seems to be a key part, and that piece being added to the report Helen already does - the question being is that enough. The place for the committee could be to actually figure out if they are on track. If her office already has that information, then maybe that piece gets added to the report.

Helen adds that adding it into the CSPC annual report would also reiterate that point so Council hears it from both groups.

Sara shares that a worry she has is the city doesn't have the resources to meet the goals that have been set, and if that isn't communicated then the office is set up to not meet those goals. Sara doesn't want Helen to have to write a report that says we aren't on track.

Dane argues that that is the last point though, to include that information and you can't have one without the other.

Helen shares that after talking to her colleagues in Asheville who are already working on implementing a similar resolution, she has heard that it hasn't increased their funding and hasn't done what the committee is saying it should do. It is important to communicate that this is something we will need to press as important in the future but we have the resources to do what we need to do now.

Dane suggests that they remove the point about the Office of Sustainability establishing an action plan, since it is something that doesn't really fit with the aspirational aspect of the resolution.

Sara clarifies that he also intends to remove the sub-points related to the plan and keep the annual report and those subpoints. Rajesh and Helen support this change.

Sara moves to the last part of the resolution about targets. Sara asks Rajesh to share information on the meeting he and Johnnie had related to the topic.

Rajesh explains that Utilities is a difficult piece to address right away, so the 100% by 2050 could stay the same, but the intermediate targets won't include Utilities which leaves the buildings and the fleets, the 40% reduction and the 50% by 2030. Rajesh says 35% should be the absolute minimum but that 50% [by 2030] is preferred. Helen says that to absolutely make sure Utilities isn't included, she will confer with Johnnie but there will be phrasing to communicate that, possibly by saying 'general fund' since that is a different money pot than City/County Utilities.

Dane asks if she meant taking out buildings and fleets by saying 'general fund.' Helen says they would leave buildings and fleets but put 'general fund' in front of that phrase.

Helen then comments on the specific targets, and shares that based on planning scenarios she saw in a meeting with Duke Energy, it is clear certain goals are going to be harder to reach than previously thought. Because of that, adding the phrase 'strive to' makes it more clear that this is an aspirational document. Helen supports the 50% number with that phrasing because it would still push Duke as well as making it a bit more palatable as a goal we could make headway on.

Rajesh has done his own research on Duke which he found they say 20% by 2030 and 16% by 2025. In Texas, a power company is already at 17% and California is already at 40% from their utility company. This just shows how Duke compares to the rest of the country. Rajesh asks what other members think of the goal.

Dane sees the argument from Rajesh about pushing as hard as possible, but if this is the first crack at it, they need something that gets across that first point. It doesn't stop them from presenting another resolution that strengthens the commitment in the future. Leah agrees and says it gives them time to show progress.

The group clarifies that the support is for adding in 'strive to utilize 50%' and adding 'general fund.' Everyone supports these changes. Dane volunteers to send out the edited document.

Sara says they will vote by email since there isn't a quorum in the meeting. She asks when they need to have votes. Helen says the deadline is October 23 to submit documents [to the CDHGG committee] so there is plenty of time. Rajesh asks what they need for the presentation. Helen says it will be that same as last time, and asks Sara to give the presentation this time as the Chairperson of the CSPC.

Sara asks what was meant by 'Information Only' that was presented last time. Helen says that just means the committee is being presented information on a topic but there isn't a vote needed. Last time, we knew there would be discussion and questions. This time it will be submitted as a CARF, Council Action Request Form, which will ask them to vote one way or another. If it is voted through it will likely go to the January City Council meeting.

Sara tables the rest of the agenda for another meeting and asks if anyone has questions.

Rajesh asks if there are deadlines for either their annual report or work plan. Helen says to aim for January for those to be presented as information items.

Sara asks for suggestions for adding components to their plan to engage other people in the committee, for example the green jobs topics. Helen says that the green jobs topic is a good one that seems like other members had shown interest in.

Rajesh asks if they could buddy up with others to learn their interests, since he isn't sure if the Google Doc is engaging everyone.

Leah says she thinks if they start with a work plan that breaks out a couple of topics, they could see who is interested in what. But they should start with getting a work plan on paper.

Sara asks if they should start over with work plan engagement. Rajesh says he has seen some good examples of strategic action plans.

Leah reminded everyone that Helen mentioned members should be engaged, and asked if Helen could put together information on resources about where to find that information. Helen says she can share the link that provides details on all City Council and City Council Committee meetings to get started.

Sara adjourns meeting at 7:02.