



Climate and Sustainability Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
Regular Meeting – February 23, 2023

Committee Members in Attendance: Kendra Smith – Chair, Janet Alderton, Vince Dauciunas, Jay Kimball, Barbara Marrett, Luke Fincher, Renee Koplan

Committee Liaisons in Attendance: Lynn Bahrych, Paul Andersson, Steve Bernheim, Heather Oaksen, Sandy Bishop

Ex-officio and County Staff: Cindy Wolf, Angela Broderick, Faith Van De Putte

Members of the public: Katherine Dietzman, Ande Finley, Henning Semsdorf, Ingrid Stuiver

Committee Members absent: Chris Greacen, Adrian Kilpatrick, Jerry Whitfield, Michael Shanks

Convene meeting

The meeting was called to order by Kendra Smith. She confirmed that a quorum was present and then opened the meeting with the Coast Salish Acknowledgment.

Public Comment

Ande Findley, Lopez Island - representing the members of Transition Lopez, which interested in supporting the development of public transit in the San Juan Islands. Here to listen and see how they can contribute.

Henning Semsdorf, Lopez Island – here to listen and learn about progress around transportation. A farmer of 52 years deeply interested in community sustainability, deeply concerned about ecological impacts of tourists.

Business Operations

- Approve Agenda – The Agenda was approved with the addition of discussing a possible subcommittee to address grants and funding opportunities.
- Approve December 15, 2022, Meeting Minutes – Janet moved, and Barbara seconded, to approve the minutes of the December 15, 2022 Meeting.

Staff Updates – Baseline Climate Assessment update

Angela Broderick referenced an update on the baseline climate assessment that was sent out from our consultants at Cascadia earlier in the day. Touched on the data request and collection process is ongoing and some of the data gaps that are appearing as this is the first time we are doing this. Noted that most measurements are not yet fully calculated but the data table does capture some preliminary results.

Help was requested to fill data gaps, particularly: marine and aviation, wood burning, municipal electricity, and blue carbon sequestration.

- Barbara offered to assist with vessel info.
- Vince recommended adding the wildfire emissions potential again. He said it's looking good and he's encouraged by how it is coming along.
- Jay said this is a really strong first shot. Noted importance of good in breakdown of vehicle types. Also noted LULUCF (Land Use, Land-Use Change, and Forestry) in capturing carbon sinks as well as carbon emissions. He also offered to help with some woodstove calculations he's done.
- Janet shared a new propeller design called turbo toroidal propellers which save energy and reduce noise, especially in marine applications.
- Barbara mentioned software that the Visitors Bureau uses to track credit card charges and where people are coming from. Kendra indicated she is aware and collaborating with VB.
- Cindy mentioned Washington Sea Grant might be a good place to look for blue carbon sequestration data.

Senate Bill 5203

Angela said she had sent the text of the bill to the committee, which is pertinent because it's going to be calling out some specific requirements for comprehensive plans that are going to intersect with our climate plan as it comes together.

- Vince said it was originally sponsored by our Representative Lovelett, and that he's read the bill and it's going to add an element to what we're doing. He signaled his support for what they're doing and doesn't think it's going to produce any work over and above what we're already anticipating doing.
- Lynne noted that we're required to have a climate element in our comprehensive plan by December the 31st 2024. Kendra and Cindy confirmed this will apply to the 2025 submission.

Member Updates - EV Council and Transportation WG

Jay shared an update on the EV Council, a new inter-agency electric vehicle coordinating council created as a result of the Move Ahead Washington transportation package passed last year so that state agencies can collaborate together on efforts to clean up transportation, the state's biggest single source of carbon emissions. The Council's responsibilities are to develop a statewide transportation electric electrification strategy, analyze how the state's target of 100% electric passenger light duty vehicle sales starting in 2030 is going to happen, identify and coordinate all state and federal electric vehicle related funding, and engage with local governments communities and environmental justice groups to ensure statewide transportation electrification strategy grant distribution, programs and activities associated with overburdened communities. The Council has a hand-selected advisory of 25 people and Jay is one of them. A big part of what the council is doing this year is developing the strategy and engaging with the public to collect feedback. He noted they made sure to have a diversity of viewpoints on the committee.

- Janet asked what Jay knows about overburdened communities as ours does not seem to fit any of the metrics. Jay noted that it's tricky - we have very high income as you know, and we also have very low wages. Vince mentioned that government agencies use screening tools for grants such as the EPA's EJ Screen and Washington's Environmental Health Disparities Map, which San Juan County does not pass on.

Jay also talked about his involvement as a board member for Island Rides and how that led to him to set up a meeting with Marianna Hanefeld from WA DOT to discuss public transportation and micro transit solutions. She has extensive knowledge of what's happening throughout the state. Members of the transportation working group, as well as Kendra, Angela, and Councilmember Jane Fuller met with her recently. They looked at San Juan County transportation, carbon footprint and tourist data, explored transparent public transportation solutions in other islands, and reviewed current potential future San Juan County public transportation solutions. She helped illuminate the need to prioritize not just decarbonization but access for all. Jay shared some of his presentation (which was also sent out to the committee) and touched on next steps to deepen the discussion and look at funding. He reviewed visitor numbers he had compiled from looking at credit card spending data.

- Kendra pointed out that in Jay's visitor graphs we have to consider that a lot of these visitors are our friends and family. Jay agreed that there is no one size fits all solution.
- Lynne asked how are we going to get the electricity for all of this and where's that fit into this overall conversation? Jay remarked that Opalco is working on grants for building up charger infrastructure.
- Vince said there's very little policy about carbon reduction of transportation in rural environments, which wind up with potentially people having to travel long distances, and our aging demographic also needs to be considered. Important to look to rural communities for solutions.

EV charging stations at short-term rentals

Janet discussed the challenge of getting electric vehicle charging stations installed at private residential housing, noting this is something that the county would have jurisdiction over, they could require that short term vacation rentals have an easy charger. Noted how hard it can be to convince businesses, even if offering them free chargers – making things optional and incentivizing has not been working. There is the Opalco rebate, and the cost of electricity is not that significant.

- Jay noted challenge of finding electricians to install them
- Barbara thinks one of the concerns is cost of electricity, but it could be a great use of lodging tax. Marketing this to lodgings as a way to attract visitors could help.
- Kendra talked about the need to be strategic and not overburden the system, and be sure chargers are not in high-turnover, higher-trafficked spots.
- Jay suggests we might reach out to the lodging industry to help get them onboard
- Cindy thinks this is a great job for the Visitors Bureau with their connections. She also suggested a campaign targeted at friends and family leaving cars behind. Barbara agreed about the VB being the perfect ones to get the message out.

Liaison Updates

Clean Water Advisory Committee

Lynn Bahrych reported that the Clean Water Advisory Committee discussed water rights at their last meeting and is working with the Department of Ecology to help inform residents, including putting together a two-page primer. She also shared that the groundwater recharge report by USGS will be brought to County Council on the 28th.

Kendra added that some discussion was also around the water quality impacts of climate, particularly harmful algal blooms, and the need to really pick up our pace and get open water areas shaded and managed, and the flows addressed in terms of the water rights situation. False Bay is a high target area.

They both noted the cyanobacteria that's been found at Lake Zylstra can kill livestock and pets.

Janet mentioned that adding biochar to agricultural soils will bind up the excess nutrients and prevent them from polluting the water and causing algal blooms.

Parks & Recreation Commission

Heather Oaksen shared that she'd sent on prioritization recommendations from Parks for Protect & Preserve Nature actions. They recently finished the ROSS Plan and that has taken most of the attention.

Clean Water Advisory Committee

Steve Bernheim wanted to highlight that private parties are taking measures to do what they can to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through agricultural tourism. He referenced Henning's program to incentivize tourists to attend his farm events without their gasoline cars. He noted the Ag Summit is next week topics will include kelp farming and the water management. His committee asked whether the inventory will not just capture present emissions, but will we have a mechanism to evaluate the savings resulting from changes that haven't yet taken place.

Kendra noted that we'd need help with identifying what the best practice is and how much of that practice would then be occurring. He asked how the consultants will maintain contact with the agricultural community to keep up to date with data changes. Faith Van De Putte clarified that we have data thanks to the Conservation District and the Voluntary Stewardship Program, and best practices are part of the reporting that they already do to the state and through NRCS it's quantifiable what those some of the greenhouse gas reductions that can happen from those best management practices, which has been submitted to the consultants. This is data that we can continue to work with into the future.

Janet noted we should create a system that fosters ongoing dynamic planning that is regularly reviewed and can be altered as new circumstances arise.

Committee Housekeeping - Elections and In-person retreat

Kendra said that according to what we laid out with Council, we will need to have for a new chair and possibly establish a vice chair at our next regular meeting. She asked whether or not folks wanted to do that as an in person meeting or retreat for April. Angela noted that the next meeting date is April 27th,

and added that the timeline for the greenhouse gas inventory is we're supposed to have a preliminary report done hopefully by end of April.

Kendra invited members to think about who they'd like to serve in these roles, a vote will occur at the next meeting. Angela said she will send out a call for nominations as well as poll for meeting dates.

Angela noted that we always need support around grants and funding, and suggested we might form a working group or just call for volunteers. She and Kendra said they'd really appreciate help in that area. Jay noted there's a lot of grants out there but put in a plug for the County to invest staffing resources to be able to be successful in pursuing grants. Lynn mentioned need for money for infrastructure for wood products that come out of overstocked forest to minimize catastrophic fire. Kendra requested folks contact Angela to create grant sub-committee; she noted that tracking these things is complex, and our group is small and spread pretty thin.

Luke shared that he feels it's very important to be thinking about how we get information out to the public. He suggested we should think about how we are showing people our progress and what we're kind of working towards in a way that is accessible by all age ranges and all people that live in San Juan County. His comments were supported by other committee members. Angela mentioned a new outreach platform called Engage San Juan County that is just being launched as a new platform for community education and engagement around projects.

Meeting adjourned at 7:30pm