



Zero Waste Advisory Commission

Meeting Minutes

August 12th, 2020

The Monthly Meeting of the Zero Waste Advisory Commission convened through Video Conference on Wednesday, August 12th, 2020, due to COVID-19 Disaster Declaration for all Texas Counties. The following are the meeting highlights. For detailed information please visit: <https://austintx.new.swagit.com/videos/74612>

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Acuna called the Commission Meeting to order at 3:25 pm

Board Members in Attendance: Gerry Acuna, Lisa Barden, Amanda Massino, Ian Steyaert, Melissa Rothrock, Kaiba White

Board Members not in Attendance: Janis Bookout (Membership pending), Jonathan Barona, Cathy Gattuso

Staff in attendance via WebEx: Ken Snipes, Jaime Germany Terry, Tammie Williamson, Richard McHale, Dwight Scales, Donald Hardee, Amy Slagle, Ron Romero, and Natalie Betts

Staff in attendance over the phone: None

Chair Acuna opened with comments,

1. APPROVAL OF July 17th SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

Chair Acuna entertained a motion to approve the July 17th Special Meeting minutes. Commissioner Kaiba White made the first motion for approval of the minutes. A second motion was provided by Commissioner Ian Steyaert

Item passed Unanimously

2. NEW BUSINESS

2a Discussion and Action – Office of Sustainability Community Climate Plan 2020 Revision by Zach Baumer and Celine Rendon

Zach Baumer and Celine Rendon with the Office of Sustainability present the Community Climate Plan for 2020.

The first full draft of the presentation will not be released to the public for the public review for another seven to ten days. Commissioner Kaiba White mentioned that she prepared a document outlining the strategies and goals that fall under food and consumption. The Commission will probably want to review after the full draft is released.

The first Austin Community Climate Plan was adopted by City Council in 2015. The Office of Sustainability's been going through the process of doing a five-year update and revision to the plan. We are aiming for an October Council date for adoption. We are interested in your feedback. The planning effort started with direction from the joint sustainability committee last October. The direction was to focus on equity. No one could've anticipated a pandemic, economic devastation, job issues, social injustice, the Black Lives Matter Movement that's been growing and finally stacking climate change which is still happening. The consensus is to act now with bold steps related to climate change. The focus in the planning effort is to focus on jobs, job training, health, safety, community connections, and a clean environment.

In our research, we realized that aiming for the goal of eliminating fossil fuels for energy and transportation in our community as well as working to eliminate social injustice and disparities can be predicted by race. The condition of having climate change and racial inequities are unacceptable. We created an Equity tool with the group to make sure that we are addressing health, affordability, sensibility, cultural preservation, community capacity, and transition and accountability through all areas of this plan. In the local government in Austin, Texas in 2020, we're not proactively addressing equity and trying to distinctly design intentional programs to address these issues. If we will just be perpetuating injustice with business as usual, we have to proactively work to address that.

We know that we're changing the earth's climate. Humans have been burning billions and billions of pounds of coal, oil, and gas for the last hundred years. Greenhouse gas emissions are still happening. We are not globally reducing emissions fast enough to avoid climate change. More work needs to be done. We recognize that waste is only of captured as emissions associated with landfills. Emissions have slightly decreased over the last eight years because of renewable energy and using less fossil fuel for power generation. The goal is to be net-zero by 2050. The target was proposed by the steering committee. The goal is to propose this to City Council for adoption and to revise the target to be net-zero by 2024. After looking at the science and understanding the situation we are requesting a much deeper reduction curve. This is acknowledging that a city like Austin is a very high-income city compared to other cities across the world. We should have more ability to act in our emissions. We're advocating for much more aggression. Everything in this plan is set up around how do we bring emissions down. We created a full web-like interface calculator and dashboard where we can interactively change strategies and goals and see how they affect those numbers. The advisory groups asked what do we focus on? Each one of the advisory groups was three to five city staff plus ten to twenty community members who had knowledge or interest in these areas. We focused on sustainable:

- Sustainable Buildings
- Transportation Electrification
- Transportation and Land Use
- Natural Systems
- Food and Product Consumption.

We noticed that the tricky thing with this plan is that there are a lot of other planning efforts that are ongoing that were just adopted. We had to fit our planning effort within other planning efforts to make sure that we weren't overstepping into other bounds (i.e. not trying to dictate recycling policy or renewable energy policy).

We created an equity process for our advisory groups as they developed goals and strategies. The model was adapted from the Government Alliance on Race and Equity which is what the Equity Office uses as their Equity Assessment tool. The Climate Equity Workshop conducted in December of 2019 was facilitated by a Community Member Organization. The workshop was the foundation of the Community Climate Plan and understanding our history. All advisory groups looked at demographic data relevant for their advisory group topic to ensure their goals and strategies include equity and a climate component. The advisory group ran its goals and strategies through the Equity Assessment tool. It was helpful to find gaps or areas of opportunity to make strategies more equitable. One of the major components of the community engagement process was the development of the Community Climate

Ambassador Program. The concept was initially created from a joint sustainability committee. 12 community members were compensated to facilitate their conversations in their communities. This included an application process. We called this program a pilot program because committee members were directly compensated to complete the tasks they were assigned for engagement. We're hoping to hold a webinar and panel to showcase the ambassadors and the work they completed. We are happy to share our lessons learned and our reflections, as we partner at the implementation stage of the Community Climate Plan. Celine Rendon concludes the presentation

Chair Acuna asks, what can we do to keep this process moving forward?

Zach Baumer responds The Joint Sustainability committee will be meeting and adopting a resolution. Throughout the next few weeks, when the document is public, we would like any ideas or comments on the Food and Product Consumption section. We are also looking for your comments in the Sustainable Buildings section. We would also like your feedback on how to stay engaged and design a robust implementation planning process.

Commissioner Kaiba White comments, I will plan to bring that resolution, I encourage everyone to read the full plan once released as Zach suggested. I also want to take a little time to review where the draft stands in terms of what's most relevant to us.

Chair Acuna comments, perhaps staff could gather their thoughts on how we can be productive in this and present that in our next gathering, and what goals do are we pursuing.

Director Ken Snipes responds the main thing for us to continue to do is to work to align our work with the plan so that we both support constructively. We can have that discussion at our next meeting.

Commissioner Amanda Massino asks, could you address goals not mentioned specifically equity.

Zach Baumer responds, in a longer version of this presentation it's addressed. Some of the quantitative goals do not show up. We realized as we went through this process that equity kept showing up in the implementation so it's how you prioritize the program. It's how you design the outreach. That's where a lot of the equity focus has ended up. The question is how could we get there in low-income communities. The communities would probably first design a program that works for them and then leverage others work to help reach the overall target. So when you see full strategies you will see more information on this. A lot of it is about prioritizing incentives, prioritizing communication, centering communities of color in ongoing learning studies, prioritizing health benefits. Those types of goals can't be defined as a quantitative goal.

3. STAFF BRIEFINGS

Ken Snipes (ARR Director) Provided the ARR Director's Report and opened the platform to address questions and concerns.

Commissioners did not have any questions.

4. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- ❖ Office of Sustainability Austin Community Climate Plan Updates
- ❖ ARR Residential Customer Survey Presentation
- ❖ FY21 Budget Update

Chair Gerry Acuna entertained a motion for adjournment Commissioner Lisa Barden made the first motion for approval. A second motion was provided by Commissioner Ian Steyaert

This meeting was adjourned @ 4:07 pm August 12th, 2020

Approved