



Item 1

**JOINT SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES**

**REGULAR MEETING
January 25, 2023**

The Joint Sustainability Committee convened in a hybrid meeting via videoconferencing and at PDC.

Chair Kaiba White called the Board Meeting to order at 6:07 pm.

Board Members in Attendance:

Kaiba White, Karen Hadden, Diana Wheeler, Alberta Phillips, Haris Qureshi, Rodrigo Leal, Anna Scott, Melissa Rothrock, Heather Houser, Yureisly Suarez, David Carroll

Board Members Absent:

Fisayo Fadelu, Robert Schneider, Frances Deviney, Kirsha Haverlah

City Staff in Attendance:

Zach Baumer, Rohan Lilauwala

CALL TO ORDER

PUBLIC COMMUNICATION

The speakers who registered in advance for public comment have three minutes each to address items on the agenda at this time.

N/A

1. JOINT SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION

Joint Sustainability Committee 2023 Strategic Planning Session – Jen Cregar, Terra Lumina Consulting (facilitator). The session will help JSC members identify goals and priorities for 2023, and develop an action plan to meet those goals.

Exercise: What do you think the purpose of the JSC is?

- Phillips: Crosses every topic issue in government; wanted to make sure equity is at the forefront, given institutional racism in Austin.
- Wheeler: Cross-pollination; one rep from each commission to report back

- White: JSC makes policy/programmatic recommendations
- Campbell: Has there been success sending recommendations to council?
- White: Mixed, needs follow up from commission members
- Carroll: 70 boards with recommendations, council loses them without follow up

Austin Climate Equity Plan – What worked?

- JSC members were sent a brief survey in advance of the meeting, results included:
 - “...the JSC brings a unique opportunity for various disciplines to convene to develop broader perspective, and identify ways we can align our piece with the city’s broader goal of equitable sustainability”
 - “We have a good group of people serving on the commission.”
 - “We have received some good presentations.”
 - “Agenda topics are good discussions”
- Phillips: equity training + ambassadors have worked
- Leal: development of overarching framework to ensure strategies benefited underserved communities/avoided harm; used by every group. City staff as partners rather than as adversaries.
- Baumer: control over the plan is lost once plan is adopted and handed to departments for implementation; equity considerations are not consistent across city organizations
- White: working groups were effective
- Houser: steering committee/working groups actually got to co-create the plan
- Suarez: easy technical process/online tools

Austin Climate Equity Plan – What hasn’t worked?

- Survey results
 - “There are times JSC seems to lack focus...”
 - “...sometimes seems to be a commission in search of a purpose...Initially I understood the ‘mission’ to be ongoing review and revision of the Climate Plan, but I’m not sure if that’s still the primary purpose.”
 - “I would prefer if the JSC stuck to a specific, timed agenda and were able to do its business in just a couple hours.”
 - “We aren’t taking much action.”
 - “We aren’t digging into the city’s policies and programs and making recommendations for what to do next.”
 - “We should have more two-way flow of recommendations between the JSC and the various home commissions.”
 - “We also need more JSC members reaching out to the city council members who appointed them to urge them to take action when we make recommendations.”
 - “It is unclear if our recommendations are making an impact and if council is considering them”
- Phillips: Response from departments, council etc. has led to delays. How seriously has the ACEP been embraced? Lack of willingness to put money behind the plan. There might need to be a separate entity directing funding to the right place (ideas: council task force, external non profit)

- White: Budget recommendations process has not been effective

Mechanisms for action

- Campbell: what is the typical process for action? One commissioner brings a recommendation?
- White: can be organic, up to 9 can meet on the side (less than quorum). Previously, JSC had a working group
- Qureshi – lost momentum after the ACEP passed. Oversight is less exciting than implementation

Top priorities, identified by board members

- Help move Austin energy to carbon-free electricity ASAP
- Quantitatively assess plan progress, and focus on strategies with greatest emissions impact
- Create diverse working groups including city staff to support implementation

- Phillips: need a different approach that uses accountability, political influence, other tactical tools. Rather than go back to original approach
- Suarez: working group needed to assess and identify 1-2 key priorities

Next Steps

- Jen Cregar to send results of session to JSC and possibly present findings at Feb 22 meeting

Motion to adjourn (Houser), seconded (White).

Meeting adjourns at 9:07 pm

ADJOURNMENT

The City of Austin is committed to compliance with the American with Disabilities Act. Reasonable modifications and equal access to communications will be provided upon request. Meeting locations are planned with wheelchair access. If requiring Sign Language Interpreters or alternative formats, please give notice at least 2 days (48 hours) before the meeting date. Please call Zach Baumer with the Office of Sustainability at 512-974-2836, for additional information; TTY users route through Relay Texas at 711.

For more information on the Joint Sustainability Committee, please contact Zach Baumer at (zach.baumer@austintexas.gov or 512-974-2836).

The minutes were approved at the February 25, 2023 meeting on Commissioner Houser's motion, Commissioner Scott second on a 10-0 vote.