



Item 1

**JOINT SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES**

**REGULAR MEETING
February 22, 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 6:17 pm.

Board Members in Attendance in Person:

David Carroll, Haris Qureshi, Heather Houser, Anna Scott, Rodrigo Leal, Christopher Campbell, Kaiba White, Frances Deviney, Yure Suarez

Board Members in Attendance Remotely:

Melissa Rothrock

Board Members Absent:

City Staff in Attendance:

Zach Baumer, Rohan Lilauwala, Amanda Mortl
Laura Dierenfeld, John Eastman, Ann DeSanctis, Nathan Wilkes

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

Cuauhtemoc Toren, Texas Campaign for the Environment presents on the Fossil Fuel Non Proliferation Treaty

- Modelled after nuclear non-proliferation treaty
- Building on Paris Climate Agreement
- Texas subsidizes fossil fuel expansion
- Austin’s leadership can provide pressure on other cities and then eventually the US government; only LA has signed on as a major US City

- Aligned with Austin Climate Equity Plan
- Three goals of proposed resolution
 - Show solidarity with global movement
 - Stand up to state’s plans to keep fossil fuel use expanding
 - Bolster the ongoing implementation of the Austin Climate Equity Plan

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE DECEMBER 14, 2022 MEETING OF THE JOINT SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE.

Anna Scott motions to approve, Christopher Campbell, passes unanimously.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE JANUARY 25, 2023 MEETING OF THE JOINT SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE.

Heather Houser motions to approve, Anna Scott, passes unanimously.

3. ATX WALK BIKE ROLL BRIEFING: UPDATE OF THE BIKEWAYS, URBAN TRAILS AND SIDEWALKS, PEDESTRIAN CROSSING AND SHARED STREETS PLANS – JOHN EASTMAN AND ANN DESANCTIS, PUBLIC WORKS; NATHAN WILKES AND LAURA DIERENFIELD, AUSTIN TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT (DISCUSSION AND/OR POSSIBLE ACTION).

Staff presented the draft Walk, Bike, Roll Plan Update.

Questions

Deviney: How do food deserts get factored in when identifying priority areas? Are there considerations in place for bikes that can hold cargo for subsidies/bikeshare?

Dierenfield: Work being done to study access to food stores; understand trips and proximity, how this plan will relate to food plan as a partner. Development perspective – if big grocery store goes in, it needs mobility access, secure bike parking, etc.

Wilkes: MetroBike bike share is limited; aggressive expansion recommended, especially around transit stations; those bikes have small racks. Priorities are destinations (grocery stores, corner stores), other destinations can be identified in partnership with other groups.

Scott: Lots of engagement to formulate the plan; are community members going to be engaged on ongoing basis?

Dierenfield: Neighborhood ambassadors embedded in communities, working on project-specific engagement.

DeSanctis: Geographic engagement will engage specific local ambassadors.

Wilkes: Considering best implementation for ambassadors/community relationships; one vs many different types of ambassador.

Carroll: Opportunity to leverage private development to build sidewalks. Sidewalk fee-in-lieu program is broken. Majority of projects are paying the fee and not building the sidewalk – fee disappears into a pot that is refunded if not used. Amount city pays contractor to build sidewalks is 3x private contractor rate. Needs simple code change – must have hardship to pay fee-in-lieu.

Eastman: Fee-in-lieu program is broken, recommendations made in 2016 to fix this – approval was rolled into CodeNext and then abandoned. ATXWBR update identified full planned sidewalk network (including side of the street) that can help with decisions around whether developers need to pay fee or build sidewalk. Fees are not refunded, millions have been spent, used to supplement bond/other funding sources. Political choice made to set fees at lowest possible level to not overcharge; range of costs to install sidewalk vary. Fees proposed to increase to reflect new costs, but are likely to be conservative to avoid unfairness (decision to be made by council). Sidewalks team to initiate process by fall. Processes to make technical changes are limited by legal, boards/commissions, other reviews needed, so timeline is unclear.

Houser: How are the groups assessing impact on equity, displacement, affordability etc?

Wilkes: If we don't build anything, those pressures will still remain. Underlying factors and what is needed to manage those issues is beyond scope of the plan – those need to be addressed to create equitable outcomes. Housing+transportation cost is important variable, improve modal access to reduce costs.

Eastman: No evidence that sidewalks are causing displacement. Larger transportation issues can address affordability: city pays for and provides 500k free parking spaces. Better choices can help suit people's preferences, economic needs, city's sustainability goals.

Wilkes: Parking de-densifies and increases cost of land and building stock. Elephant in the room, people area afraid, but big impacts on affordability and mobility

Dierenfield: Comparing large transit investments to small sidewalks is difficult from displacement perspective. How can this planning interface with affordable housing, Project Connect, etc.

White: Shade is good, but what about other functional green, GSI, etc?

Dierenfield: Exploring natural elements wherever possible – rain gardens, etc.

DeSanctis: Working with WPD, PARD to renaturalize waterways along trees. Take advantage of urban forestry fund

Wilkes: Connected ecological networks, rain harvesting for irrigation, more partnerships etc. need to be thought of creatively at a large scale.

Dierenfield: If you support the plan, please pass a resolution before it goes to council

4. JOINT SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE ACTION PLAN – JEN CREGAR, TERRA LUMINA CONSULTING (DISCUSSION AND/OR POSSIBLE ACTION).

Commissioners are enthusiastic about working groups

Campbell: plan does not lay out which strategies are higher impact

Cregar: ongoing prioritization might be needed to keep going over the years

Campbell: tips and tricks from experienced members would be helpful

Deviney: Do we have info about ACEP funding; identify projects that need funding

Baumer: Budget summary, dashboard, info from OoS staff

Scott: who is available to meet over next couple of week? (6-7 hands up)

Baumer: How do monthly meetings fit into this plan?

White: Some meetings presentations, some working group updates.

Leal: Do we need a standing item for working group report backs.

White: yes, but need to plan around staff presentations

Leal: How often should groups meet?

White: Depends on groups, but perhaps twice a month. Some with city staff, some without?

Baumer: (re: staff support) we have availability to answer question and provide info. Won't reshape office work plan but can respond to needs. Opportunity for community engagement, staff availability to attend working group meetings.

White: Budget working group is White, Scott, Leal, anyone else?

Sustainable Buildings: Carroll (termining out soon), Suarez

Transportation: Houser, Rothrock, Leal, Campbell0020

Food and Product Consumption + Natural Systems: Deviney, Scott

Flexible: Qureshi, White

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Leal: Fossil fuel non-proliferation treaty brought up earlier. Symbolic message connected to tangible city action. Draft resolution was circulated.

Leal motions to add to March agenda, White seconds.

Scott: will take the lead on writing a motion to support the Walk Bike Roll plan, motions to add it to March agenda. Houser seconds.

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

Meeting adjourns at 8:31 pm

ADJOURNMENT

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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 March 29, 2023 special called meeting on Commissioner Scott's motion, Commissioner Houser second on an 11-0 vote.