



**JOINT SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES**

**REGULAR MEETING
May 24, 2023**

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

Acting Chair Kaiba White called the Board Meeting to order at 6:12 pm.

Board Members in Attendance in Person: Anna Scott, Kaiba White, Charlotte Davis, Rick Brimer, Chris Maxwell-Gaines, Yure Suarez

Board Members in Attendance Remotely: Alice Woods, Jon Salinas, Melissa Rothrock, Rodrigo Leal, Heather Houser, Chris Campbell, Diana Wheeler

Board Members Absent: Kelsey Hitchingham, Frances Deviney,

City Staff in Attendance:

Zach Baumer, Rohan Lilauwala, Sydnee Landree

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.

• **Scott Johnson**

- Air quality and climate are intertwined. Find ways to implement air quality plan. Scott can be a resource.
- JSC made a recommendation to hire a full-time employee on sustainable purchasing – Scott supports this.
- Need JSC support to make this position successful and expand their reach across the city.

1. Approval of minutes from the April 26th meeting of the Joint Sustainability Committee.

- Scott motions to approve, Houser seconds, all in favor (13-0)
- Passes 12-0 with Woods abstaining.

2. JSC Officer Elections for the 2023-2024 Term (Discussion and/or Possible Action).

- Wheeler nominates White for Chair, Campbell seconds.
- White nominates Wheeler for Vice-Chair, Scott seconds.
 - Both pass unanimously (13-0)

3. Creation of JSC working groups to help advance implementation of the Austin Climate Equity Plan and updates from previously informal working groups (Discussion and/or Possible Action).

- Groups have been meeting informally, and are unofficial to date – Transportation, Buildings, Consumption + Natural Systems. Existing members been meeting unofficially, new members welcome.
- Goal – bring momentum to plan implementation, identify priorities and push them forward.
- Buildings – Salinas, Maxwell-Gaines
- White motions to formally create groups; Houser seconds
 - Passes unanimously (13-0)
- Updates from groups
 - Buildings – interest in moving forward building codes (2024 IECC, Passive House, etc.) some already happening with AEGB, how do we build on that work?
 - Consumption + Natural Systems – difficult to go through the plan and strategically rank actions. Consider implementation difficulty – will require outside outreach. Consumption section does not include as many policy changes, needs more money. Composting, green infrastructure, carbon neutrality for public lands – high impact + high equity potential
 - Transportation – electrifying transportation will have greatest impact based on data from office of Sustainability. Looking for more information from city to identify bottlenecks
 - Leal: we should set aside time at each JSC meeting for city staff to identify an action or two that are high equity + GHG and discuss challenges
 - Baumer: impact of goals quantified, but strategies aren't. Strategies necessarily add up to a goal. More focused on driving equity benefits.
 - Some analysis in house is possible, but staff capacity is limited
 - White: let's make sure we have goal by goal data
 - Leal: looking for city perspective of low hanging fruit vs hard to implement stuff
 - Scott: do we have equity data?
 - Baumer: we had an EDF climate corps fellow last summer on this, we have another one this summer.

4. Updates on the Inflation Reduction Act Coordinated Grant Approach – Rohan Lilauwala, Office of Sustainability (Discussion and/or Possible Action).

Rohan Lilauwala from the Office of Sustainability provides an update on coordinated pursuit of Inflation Reduction Act and other federal climate-related funding.

- Rothrock – is there resilience funding/projects?
- Lilauwala – resilience a theme in many programs. Also in IJJA. More details to come as notices of funding released

- Houser – can you talk about veto points? How can working groups support?
- Lilauwala – not many vetos, but every person that needs to approve could potentially say no. Working groups should continue to prioritize actions for city.
- White – many people working on solar. Davis, other RMC members
- Leal – Would workshop help identify external parties? When will outputs be ready?
- Lilauwala – Yes, beneficial to identify external parties. CBO workshop could align with regional CPRG planning.
- Baumer – Outputs will be public. Future plan to bring external CBOs to a different workshop.

5. Climate Ambassadors Overview, Projects, and Lessons Learned – Sydnee Landry, Office of Sustainability (Discussion and/or Possible Action).

Sydnee Landree from the Office of Sustainability provides an update on and lessons learned from the Climate Ambassadors program.

- Rothrock – is this a permanent program? How long is the program?
- Baumer – council likes it, office likes it, we want to keep going. Could be bigger with more resources
- Landree – 9-10 months
- Rothrock – would love for them to talk to JSC, could support/mentor
- Suarez – do you tweak projects to guide towards certain ideas?
- Landree – ideas formed over several meetings, Climate Equity Plan as the starting point
- Suarez – projects could bridge gaps identified by office or JSC.
- Landree – considered that in the past, but we need projects that ambassadors think are important; a little more direction could be helpful in the future. Conceptualizing projects was hard for ambassadors.
- Scott – can we do less with them? Plug in and support existing work rather than start from scratch?
- Landree – ambassadors with strong connections to organizations had an easier time getting projects off the ground. Options – support the more, or focus on introducing individuals to work and building capacity.
- Brimer – would like to have Landree present at environmental commission (contact Elizabeth Funk and get on agenda)

6. City of Austin Support for Energy Innovation and the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty (Discussion and/or Possible Action).

- Leal: symbolic gesture + local actions we can take
- Baumer – CM Fuentes sponsoring a resolution for this to be on June 8 council meeting
- White – Council version is pared back. Understand why some of it is, but it also might send a message to include some local actions
- Baumer – if we act today, council will see it. Otherwise, they won't, but individual comment is still possible
- Scott – Can we find a middle ground
- Maxwell-Gaines – should we take things out that directly challenge the state? (e.g. gulf coast) White – yes

- Leal – lets identify a short list of local actions to consider
- White – cut paragraphs 2-3 from the first ‘be it resolved’
- Davis - Fayette coal plant is the most impactful. Who are we making more work for by asking for more frequent reporting?
- Scott – not intended to be a prescriptive recommendation.
- Brimer – our job is to advise, push the envelope to a reasonable amount
- Davis – prefer aspirational deadlines for goals, rather than increasing updates
- Rothrock – add Styrofoam to number 7
- Scott motions to adopt with amendments (striking paragraphs 2-3, adding Styrofoam to number 7), Brimer seconds. All in favor, none opposed (13-0)

7. Promotion of cooperation between the Airport and Environmental Commissions and the Department of Aviation on environmental matters that extend outside the boundaries of the ABIA property (Discussion and/or Possible Action).

- Improve environmental conditions surrounding the airport – many activities on airport land extend influence beyond airport lands. Environmental commission wants to set up collaborative relationship with Airport Advisory Commission.
- Final decision would remain with Aviation department – Environmental commission to only provide recommendations.
- Brimer motions to approve, Campbell seconds. All in favor, none opposed (13-0)

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- Update on interdepartmental workshop
- Revisit strategic plan from Jan 2023
- Standing agenda items
 - Working group updates
 - Reports back from home commission

White adjourns meeting at 8:40 pm with no objections.

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](mailto:zach.baumer@austintexas.gov) or 512-974-2836).

The minutes were approved at the June 28, 2023 meeting on Commissioner Qureshi’s motion, Commissioner Davis second on a 10-0 vote with Commissioners Deviney and Campbell off-dais.