



**JOINT SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES**

**REGULAR MEETING  
December 18, 2024**

**The Joint Sustainability Committee convened in a hybrid meeting via videoconferencing and at Austin Energy Headquarters.**

**Board Members in Attendance in Person:** Chris Maxwell-Gaines, Marissa Bell, Charlotte Davis, Haris Qureshi, Kaiba White

**Board Members in Attendance Remotely:** Diana Wheeler, Shelby Orme, Heather Houser, Ben Luckens, Rodrigo Leal, Melissa Rothrock, Natalie Poindexter, Christopher Campbell

**Board Members Absent:** Amy Noel, Yure Suarez, Alberta Phillips, Anna Scott

**City Staff in Attendance:** Rohan Lilauwala, Emily King

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Kaiba White called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm.

**1. Approval of minutes from the November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024 meeting of the Joint Sustainability Committee.**

- Requested edits
  - 9a EPA grant amount was \$31.6 m, 'grant' spelled incorrectly.
  - Heather Houser name spelt incorrectly in attendance sheet
- Davis motion, Qureshi second, passes on a 13-0 vote.

**DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**2. Low Carbon Concrete in Portland, OR – Cary Watters, City of Portland**

- Scott: questions around testing timeline
  - Pilots were done after EPDs required, before GWP standards
  - Visual inspections done 3, 6, 9, 12 months after pouring
  - Surveyed concrete finishers after about how it went
- Scott: Who determined work would be done? What department?
  - Done in procurement, some funds earmarked to pay for incremental cost of concrete, interviews, inspections. Used on projects already happening

(ramps, sidewalk sections, etc.). No exact amount, but estimate of only a few thousand dollars.

- Portland has an internal materials testing lab performing QA testing on construction materials used by the city, this was part of regular workflow.
  - Scott: what were barriers?
    - Biggest: resistance from private suppliers.
  - Next steps: training, support at pre-bid meetings, reestablish conversation on how to expand program and lower GWP over time, slowly but surely. Also looking into expanding into materials like asphalt.
3. Austin's Urban Forest – Emily King, Development Services Department
- Davis: What is trend of tree removals vs canopy cover
    - Priorities in order: preserve trees on site, plant more trees on site, payments to mitigation fund, which supports Urban Forest Grant.
    - Supports community groups + additional trees in city projects
  - Have we estimated cost of achieving 50% tree canopy cover goal
    - Maintenance units are only funded to be able to do reactionary tree work, not on proactive maintenance plans. There is a maintenance gap. We don't have a full accounting of what we have – need funding to conduct a tree inventory as a first step. Ballpark cost \$10 million, needs more refinement of number.
4. Discussion of Joint Sustainability Committee preparation to make recommendations for the FY 25-26 budget
- End of March – likely deadline for budget recommendations. Internal deadline of February, to allow recommendations taken back to home commissions.
  - Draft versions to be brought to January JSC meeting
5. Discussion of updated JSC priorities for the Land Acquisition Fund
- JSC members met with staff, learned they are developing a prioritization framework for holistic acquisitions (rather than dept. by dept. as in past).
  - Would make sense for JSC to set up land acquisition working group to transmit JSC priorities to staff, and lay foundation for more comprehensive land acquisition process in future bond.
6. Update on the Austin Energy Resource, Generation and Climate Protection Plan – Kaiba White, Electric Utility Commission
- Passed with several positive amendments. Big loss – old plan said, 'no more fossil fuel expansion', new plan puts it back on the table. Expect to see an 'all-source' RFP which could use gas peaker plans
  - Issues raised with models/cost assumptions. Groups pushing for batteries to be used before peakers are installed
  - Still needs a plan for how to get to net-zero by 2035
7. Update on the Congress Avenue Urban Design plans – Diana Wheeler, Urban Transportation Commission
- Money from Project Connect

- Instead of cars ending on 11<sup>th</sup>, project proposes plaza blocks, cars only go to 7<sup>th</sup>. E-W traffic continues but N-S area repurposed for public space
8. Update on PFAS water testing and the approval of the Water Forward 2024 plan, Water Conservation Plan, and the Drought Contingency Plan – Chris Maxwell-Gaines, Water and Wastewater Commission
- PFAS levels well below limits, quarterly testing until 2027. If we stay under limit, no treatment will be needed in 2029.
  - Multiple plans passed recently – designed to talk to each other
  - Lots of positive elements in Water Forward plan that align with JSC recommendations

### **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Bond advisory committee update

### **ADJOURNMENT**

White adjourned meeting at 8:51 pm with no objections.