

COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAM COMMITTEE (CSPC) MEETING MINUTES  
APRIL 1, 2021  
5:00 PM  
VIRTUAL ZOOM MEETING

**Committee Members Present:** Chair Sara Pesek, Rajesh Kapileshwari, Keyra Williams, Denise Terry, Stephanie Friede, Lee Stackhouse, Dane Kuppinger

**Committee Members Absent:** Allison Bowling, Angela Young, Leah Lavin, Amber Baker

**Attendance of City Staff:** Helen Peplowski, Director of Operations Johnnie Taylor

Chair Sara Pesek calls the meeting to order at 5:02.

Roll Call.

Rajesh Kapileshwari moves to approve December meeting minutes. Lee Stackhouse seconds. Committee approves February meeting minutes.

Sara begins sub-committee report outs with the Green Jobs group. Sara has reviewed potential funding from the Federal level like the proposed infrastructure bill and stimulus money, but didn't see a lot of information or details specifically related to green jobs and green job training programs.

Sara asks if Denise Terry is familiar with the PowerUp organization. Denise knows the new Executive Director of the organization but isn't familiar with what they are doing currently.

Sara explains that PowerUp is a local subsidiary of the North Carolina League of Conservation Voters and has local programs like weatherization work and job training. Denise asks if they can have other information and input for organizations who are looking to set up more opportunities in line with green jobs and green job training.

Sara suggests this subcommittee be the point of contact for those organizations.

Rajesh mentions that there are opportunities for ASHRAE/HVAC industry partners that involve paid internships or pre-apprenticeships in a two to three county area through the CARES Act which may relate to the work and interests of the sub-committee. He clarifies that this seems to be an opportunity for students.

Sara asks Helen Peplowski, staff support, to review the funding opportunities from the proposed Governor's budget. Some of the funding sources may be linked to Federal funding due to the large dollar amounts attached to the opportunities, but those amounts may change. The relevant project opportunities are:

- Clean Energy Communities Funding to target local governments to achieve sustainability goals (\$30 million)

- Low Income Energy Program to help expand energy improvements to low-income neighborhoods and expand the federal weatherization program
- Clean Energy Economic Development to incentivize clean energy development, economic development and increase clean energy jobs (\$10 million)
- Energy Workforce Support Study to support pilot strategies for communities to shift to a clean energy economy which includes workforce development and community engagement (\$1 million)
- Clean Energy Workforce Development to support green job/sustainability workforce training at community colleges (\$4 million)

More updates will come once the state decides the budget.

Sara asks what the city might be interested in related to the list of programs. Helen informs the committee that the city is in the middle of strategic planning, which when finished will give an idea of what City Council members are prioritizing. At the moment, programs targeting low-income energy efficiency efforts are being discussed, and more general sustainability work, but nothing more specific than that. This might change since the city is still in the middle of that strategic planning work.

Johnnie Taylor, Director of Operations, agrees that there has been interest in these issues from city leadership but more details will come once they have gotten further in the process.

Rajesh mentions that there is more coronavirus related funding coming from the federal level through the state to other agencies like schools, universities, cities and counties, which also likely means more jobs in the green sector.

Sara asks if there are any specific requirements for use or distribution for that money, such as MWBE or American-made. Rajesh confirms those requirements are included.

Sara then asks the transportation sub-committee for an update. Rajesh says that they didn't meet but asked additional questions to Helen. He has trouble understanding WSTA, which Helen explains that while it is part of city operations, they function more independently. This means that it may be hard to impact changes to the bus fleet. As for the city fleet, since it was included in the resolution, it would be good to document impacts on emissions that may have come from installing propane fuel sources on certain city vehicles in 2018.

Lee likes the idea of doing something Helen suggested in previous notes in relation to policy for electric vehicles.

Helen clarifies that to Rajesh's point about tracking emissions data, the conversions weren't completed until 2019 and they have to track fuel usage as part of the CFAT (Clean Fuels Advanced Technology).

Lee says he sees opportunity to establish policies for where to put the charging stations, and include equity in that work as well.

Sara asks about the work Helen has done related to the Duke EV Pilot Program and what would come out of that. Helen says that in the Duke Energy Carolinas territory, 100 level 2 chargers and

24 DC Fast chargers are available. Duke will own and operate the stations and charge a fee to use, but the city won't pay for any aspect of these stations. The County also plans to apply for some locations. This is separate from the NC DEQ Volkswagen Settlement grant funding, which is still in phase 1. Rajesh says he believes more federal funding will also likely become available.

Rajesh asks if there is a city budget for EVs, separate from grants. Helen shares that all efforts that have been implemented in the past have been a result of grant funding. Due to the availability of grant opportunities, it hasn't been a big enough expense to be a separate budget item. If there were policies and/or a plan for EV infrastructure, it could trigger some additional funding from the city. The exception is some capital funding this year to replace the Level 2 charger at the tennis court/roundabout charging station by Salem College.

Rajesh suggests that perhaps when new facilities are being built, it could be possible to include EV requirements there. Helen says that is a good example of what the subcommittee could discuss in working on policies.

Rajesh runs through other questions the transportation subcommittee asked about, including plans for a streetcar or trolley system, and studies or work done to ensure transportation systems are resilient. Helen suggests the resilience study for transportation would be something that could be included in a larger climate assessment or vulnerability assessment that studies the resilience of various infrastructure, beyond just transportation. However, this plan would be a big undertaking that would need to include the support of a contracted service, and some transportation groups may have done related work.

Sara says that adding an addenda to the annual report related to resilience and adaptation that explains the committee doesn't have the capacity to do that work, but it is recommended that work be done in some capacity. Helen agrees that the suggestion could help make sure this study is considered.

Dane Kuppinger introduces himself on the call.

Sara asks the recycling subcommittee for an update. Stephanie Friede says there isn't much of an update. She would welcome any thoughts on priorities and clarification on what next steps are and what they should take action on since it still feels too broad. Johnnie says that more communication between committee members and staff would provide more guidance so staff can give feedback. Helen adds that these questions and conversations are what subcommittee meetings are for.

Specifically to Stephanie's point, the video series was a great idea but it would have been helpful for staff to have an idea of specific conundrums the subcommittee wanted to make videos for would help set up actionable next steps, like setting up times to work with the city's Marketing and Communications department on the videos. An easy place to start is asking other committee members about what their questions are about recycling to put together some information.

Sara asks if Dane or Keyra from the tree canopy subcommittee has any updates.

Sara moves on to discuss the annual report for City Council. She will be gathering information in the next 2-3 weeks from each subcommittee related to topics of discussion or broader ideas. The goal is to send it to Helen in May.

Keyra jumps in with updates from her subcommittee. She sent Helen a plan for the next two years to get a tree canopy assessment done. Dane is planning on contacting colleagues to organize some efforts in higher education to get commitments from them on working on the tree canopy work.

Helen shares updates from the city. Forsyth Creek Week was a hybrid between virtual and in-person activities and went well and the Great American Cleanup event is still happening in person as well.

Bee City efforts included Jennifer doing a story time event for kids, more native perennials being introduced in the Keep Winston-Salem Beautiful flower bed program for a total of six, and a new program this year will be a library summer reading program to get more kids involved. A pesticide management policy is also being put together.

The last update is recognizing members Allison Bowling, Angela Young, Amber Baker, Denise Terry and Dane Kuppinger as they are rotating off the committee. Reappointments are in the hands of City Council, and members will continue to join meetings until replacements are identified if any of those five are not reappointed.

Helen suggests to members that they can join other committees in the city if they rotate off this committee.

Rajesh moves to adjourn the meeting, Stephanie seconds. Meeting adjourns at 6:00.