

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TACOMA-PIERCE COUNTY OBSERVER REPORT

City of Tacoma - Sustainable Tacoma Commission (STC)

Virtual meeting, September 17, 2020

Observer: Lydia Zepeda

Commission members present: Lexi Brewer (chair), Matthew Benedict, Elly Claus-McGahan, Evlondo Cooper, Phil Coughlan, Grace Hope, Tony Ivey, Katin Kendrena, Sam Lake, Emily Pinckney, Ashley Sloan, David Thompson, Nikie Walters, Gabe Moalii

Commission Support Staff: Patrick Babbitt, Beth Jarot, Mike Carey, Kristin Lynett, Jim Parvey, Phet Sinthavong, Ryan Hebert, Lewis Griffith, Arin Lewis

Called to order: 5:02 pm

August 20 minutes - approved

STC's five priorities for 2020: 1) climate justice, 2) equity-focused community food projects, 3) expand transportation by foot, bike, and transit, 4) implement the Urban Forest Management Plan, and 5) prevent waste.

Staff updates

City Council highlighted support for food programs (gardening), general support for electrification of transportation. Council members Walker and Biel want to meet with STC regularly, possibly quarterly.

STC will meet with assistant city manager to discuss priorities prior to October 6 before budget goes out. There is a \$20 million shortfall for City budget in 2020, about half of what was predicted last May.

Resolution 40622 on transformative, anti-racist change needs to be incorporated in STC work.

Infrastructure Planning Sustainability needs to revise code to allow food producing trees in right of way.

Metro Parks is taking feedback on their budget. Any individual can provide input through an online survey.

Subcommittee updates

Building Electrification - working to build electrification by getting a resolution to move from gas to electricity in buildings. It helps if resolutions come through STC. The goal is to have draft language for STC in October.

Equity norms and operationalization - would like to work with Human Rights Commission to develop shared norms.

Co-chair and vice-chair elections

1 year term, 10 and 5 hours per month, respectively. No one interested in Co-chair position.

Both Grace Hope and Matthew Benedict interested in Vice Chair role. After some discussion and a straw poll, there was a motion to elect Grace Hope as Vice Chair until second meeting of 2021. Passed unanimously.

Climate Planning Update (staff update)

Year long process, start delayed until September 2020. It involves technical plan development, community engagement, contract and consultant work to develop plan, selection of Environmental Justice leaders work group plan ambassadors (Over 60 applications).

There are 7 parts of the Climate Plan: 1. buildings and energy, 2. mobility and land use, 3. consumption and material management, 4. natural systems and local food, 5. climate adaptation and resilience, 6. green economy, 7. municipal operations (carbon neutrality strategy).

Opportunities for STC to support Climate Action Plan: serve on subcommittees; provide input to implementation teams for each of the 7 sectors; and commissioners can serve as informal Plan Ambassadors.

Sustainable Materials Management (staff update)

Solid waste diversion goal of 70% by 2028. Phase 1: education and outreach to get voluntary compliance; making easier, simpler guides; some educational work on food waste (food saver challenge with restaurants); some work on city purchasing choices. Challenges: vacant staff position and COVID-19. Had planned to do waste characterization study, but it had to be postponed. Services (recycle hours reduced, events cancelled) also reduced due to COVID-19. Phase 2 has begun: continued education and outreach; additional regulations on multifamily housing (eg. must provide space for recycling). COVID-19 has decreased capital and staff budget, restricted in-person events, and funding was cut for industrial symbiosis.

Recycle Reset's main focus has shifted from landfill diversion to waste prevention, and from landfill tonnage to include GHG.

Waste Free 253 website went live today. It shows how we can reduce, reuse and recycle. Other activities include curriculum, games, bilingual materials, focus groups with Spanish and Russian speakers to provide culturally appropriate materials, and a tagging campaign. Recycle bins were tagged if they had plastic bags in them; over three pick-ups there were improvements.

Transition from glass pick-up to drop-off sites: identifying sites and permitting has been complicated. There will be 3 sites in all of Tacoma, and eventually 5. Local artists have designed the bins that are ADA accessible. Glass goal is 62% recycle, has not be changed even with no curbside, but glass is small part of waste stream.

Extended Producer Responsibility legislation: Tacoma is supporting upcoming legislation to shift cost of recycling to producers and manufacturers, requiring producers to harmonize accepted materials, reimburse haulers for full cost of collection

Legislation passed in 2020: HB 1205 based on Tacoma ordinance except it will be a 10 cent fee per bad instead of 5 cents, may be pushed back from scheduled January implementation because of COVID-19 making reusable bags less safe. HB2645 solar panel take backs. HB2713 encourage compost procurement and use.

Need to do regional planning update, joint City County plan. Has not been done in 20 years. Focus will be reduction of waste. Opportunity for STC to provide input over next 6-8 weeks. As private citizens can provide input to committee, but as STC, it would have to go through the city council. There are vacancies for citizens on the regional planning committee.

Commissioners raised concerns about access/equity for glass recycling, and concerns about creating markets for recycled materials in the US, with recommendation to work on this regionally (e.g. with King County).

Tree coupons and Grit City Trees Programs and Urban Forest Management Plan updates – (staff presentation)

An urban forest management plan was done to involve community input in tree management in Tacoma. Phase 1 (research): reviewed all plans, staff interviews, community interest, and audit. Tacoma ranked 77% on an urban tree metric, where 100% is the goal. Tacoma did especially poorly on natural disaster and pests. Phase 2: action plan with a time line. Time line has been altered due to budget issues so that anything requiring arborists or work crews has been postponed, while policy issues have been moved up.

Goal: 30% tree cover in Tacoma would require planting 2 million trees now to achieve goal by 2030.

Tree Coupons - tree planting incentive programs. \$30 off 3 trees every three years, funded by Tacoma utility. 592 trees purchased with coupons in Tacoma in 2019-20. Total coupons requested 4105 over program. Can request coupons in October.

Grit City Trees - free street trees, prioritizing low opportunity areas. 457 trees distributed for \$50,900.

Public comments - no written public comments

Objectives of October meeting

- Subcommittee updates.
- Draft letter on resolution for building electrification/clean buildings
- Climate Planning staff update
- Discuss tideflats regulations, projects and tracking information: it is up to STC to gather information (Note: Citizen's for a Healthy Bay already track information)
- Review commission rules of procedure
- At Home in Tacoma (possible)
- Transportation Master plan, Vision Zero (possible)
- Active/Sustainable transportation updates (possible)

Adjourned 7:23 pm