



## City of Tacoma Sustainable Tacoma Commission Meeting Minutes

**Date:** November 18, 2021

**Commission Members Present:**

Lexi Brewer (Chair), Margaret Schwertner, Matthew Benedict (Vice-Chair), Elly Claus-McGahan, Evlondo Cooper, Adam Reichenberger, Nikie Walters (joins 5:09pm)

**Commission Members Excused:**

Katin Kendrena, Gabe Moaalii, Tony Ivey, Emily Pinckney

**Commission Members Absent:**

Ashley Sloan

**Others Present:**

Commission Support Staff: Jennifer Kammerzell, Cam LeHouillier, Shauna Hansen, Laura Nokes, Dana DeLeon, LaTasha Wortham, Patrick Babbitt (Commission staff liaison), Kristin Lynett, James Parvey, Lauren Choi

Members of the Public: Heidi Stephens, Sean Arent, Steve Nicholas

**Call to Order**

This meeting was called to order by Commission Vice-Chairperson Matthew Benedict at 5:03pm, including an acknowledgement of the occupied indigenous lands this Commission conducts its business on. The Chair welcomed Commissioners, staff, and members of the public and shared virtual meeting practices and requirements.

**Approval of November 18, 2021 Meeting Agenda**

**Motion:** To adopt the agenda as written. Motion made by Evlondo Cooper.

**Seconded by:** Nikie Walters

**Action:** Voice vote was taken and carried. The motion we declared adopted.

**Ayes:** All

**Nays:** None

**Abstained:** None

**Absent:** Katin Kendrena, Gabe Moaalii, Tony Ivey, Emily Pinckney, Ashley Sloan

**Approval of October 21, 2021 Meeting Minutes**

**Motion:** To adopt meeting minutes as written. Motion made by Lexi Brewer.

**Seconded by:** Margaret Schwertner

**Action:** Voice vote was taken and carried. The motion we declared adopted.

**Ayes:** All

**Nays:** None

**Abstained:** None

**Absent:** Katin Kendrena, Gabe Moaalii, Tony Ivey, Emily Pinckney, Ashley Sloan

### **Public Comment**

Heidi Stephens of the South Tacoma Neighborhood Council commented that the Planning Commission received public input about changing zoning in South Tacoma to protect the South Tacoma aquifer and promote green industry.

### **Staff Updates – Patrick Babbitt (Commission staff liaison), Office of Environmental Policy & Sustainability**

Patrick recounted the Sustainable Tacoma Commission's (STC) October meeting activities and then delivered new notices to the Commission. Following up on October meeting activities, Patrick reported that staff delivered a finalized Commission Proposed Tree Code Updates letter of recommendation to Tacoma City Council's Infrastructure, Planning, and Sustainability Committee and to related City management and urban forestry staff. Regarding this letter, Office of Environmental Policy and Sustainability manager Jim Parvey communicated that Municipal Code updates related to trees will be updated comprehensively in early 2022. In addition, Patrick confirmed both third quarter Sustainability Small Grants applications (St Vincent de Paul's "Thrift is Hip" Project and Foss Waterway Seaport's "Seaport Pollinator Garden" Project) were fully funded after follow-up discussions were had with applicants. New notices included an updated that Tacoma City Council adopted an amended Tideflats Regulations ordinance on November 16; that Tacoma City Council will consider adopting the Home in Tacoma Project ordinance on November 30; and that Tacoma City Council will consider adopting the Climate Action Plan by Resolution on November 30 at the same virtual meeting. In addition, staff reported that Patrick supported an STC Green Economy Subcommittee meeting in mid-November. The Subcommittee is expected to continue in December at a date to-be-determined and a Waste Prevention/Recycle Reset Subcommittee is expected to meet on December 14. Discussing other important news related to the Tacoma community, staff shared recent Health Department reporting about COVID-19. Jim Parvey added that Washington Governor Jay Inslee visited Tacoma for a roundtable discussion of climate change and action in Tacoma in November prior to attending the United Nations climate change conference in Glasgow, Scotland.

Patrick and Commissioner Adam Reichenberger will reach out to Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department staff to invite them to discuss their work relating to climate and public health at a future Commission meeting.

Staff thanked Commissioners for participating in a green economy-focused subcommittee to research what the green economy could mean for Tacoma.

### **Subcommittee Updates**

Patrick Babbitt is sending a When2Meet poll to get Commissioner interest and availability for a Green Economy Subcommittee meeting in December.

Commissioner Elly Claus-McGahan shared that a Green Economy Subcommittee met to discuss recent research and example green economy industries and jobs for Tacoma.

No further updates were provided by Commissioners regarding other subcommittee activities.

### **Commission Business Items**

#### **Transportation Impact Fees Presentation – Jennifer Kammerzell, Public Works, City of Tacoma**

Jennifer discussed transportation impact fees, which are one-time charges assessed to new developments to pay a portion of the costs of new transportation infrastructure capacity necessary to accommodate new growth. These fees can pay for capital system improvements, projects related to development, proportional shares of system improvements, and projects on a jurisdiction's capital facilities element; they cannot pay for ongoing costs (like maintenance), to improve existing deficiencies, project needs caused by growth outside of a jurisdiction, or the full cost of projects. Recently, Pierce County failed to pass transportation impact fees by vote. There, the Master Builders Association was opposed. As a result, Tacoma City Council and City staff sought to bring them into this process considering implementation of transportation impact fees. So far, developers seem to acknowledge that these fees pay for livability improvements that further promote growth – producing a win-win outcome. In addition, the City recognizes the importance of the priorities of other stakeholders that development impacts.

Many jurisdictions in the Puget Sound region use these fees. Compared to many peer cities in the region, Tacoma has among the lowest or the lowest development fees. The City will continue developing a framework for transportation impact fees through 2022, including through stakeholder engagement. Implementation and improvement to the program may begin as early as 2023.

#### **Green Hydrogen Presentation – Cam LeHouillier, Energy Research & Development, Tacoma Public Utilities**

Cam discussed green hydrogen research projects. Tacoma Power has some of the cleanest and cheapest power in the country. Tacoma Power plans for both drought and flood events, and on average the Utility has quite a bit more renewable clean energy than needed. Finding new ways to use that electricity, especially toward decarbonization, is a priority. Using an electrolytic process can make hydrogen a green alternative to fossil fuels. Green hydrogen can be used as a transportation fuel; transportation causes about three-quarters of Tacoma's greenhouse gas emissions. Green hydrogen fuel is a good fit for transportation in part because heavy duty vehicles, which traditionally run on diesel, do not work well with the limited capacity of electric vehicles batteries. Heavy duty vehicles include vehicles for long-haul trucking, transit, rail, maritime, and even aviation. 95% of hydrogen fuel is currently produced using fossil fuels.

Green hydrogen fuel cell stacks could also potentially replace stationary power generation based on diesel at schools, hospitals, or shorepower. Green hydrogen can store excess grid electricity for later use. Green hydrogen could also supplement natural gas and other fossil fuels for heating. Green hydrogen could be used to fuel regional trains, heavy-duty trucks, long-range vehicles, heat for buildings or industry, and as an industry feedstock.

Overall, green hydrogen has great potential as a way to store and later use surplus power. Tacoma could become a green hydrogen hub based on supportive federal/state policy; the Interstate-5 corridor providing good access for long-haul truck fueling; Tacoma's seaport, rail lines, robust water supply, clean and low-cost electricity, web of support industries and skilled workforce, and many possible local end-uses for renewable hydrogen fuels.

Tacoma Power offers a renewable electrofuels tariff to encourage local renewable hydrogen production. The Utility may create a mobile system to fuel up container ships at a cheaper cost as they come to port in different locations.

Tacoma Power is also researching development of hydrogen fuel cells for Ketron Island to replace an undersea cable that is reaching the end of its useful life.

Finally, Tacoma Power is researching how to develop high-speed passenger ferries with renewable hydrogen fuel cells.

### **Stormwater & Watershed Management Planning Presentation – Shauna Hansen and Laura Nokes, Environmental Services, City of Tacoma**

Shauna and Laura discussed stormwater and watershed management planning, which aims to protect people, property, and habitats from stormwater flooding and pollution. Stormwater is the water that leaves our streets, yards, and driveways to flow directly – untreated – to lakes, streams, rivers, and Puget Sound. This planning process began in April 2020 with research and engagement about community and environmental needs. The Plan informs stormwater management priorities and provides guidance to other plans dealing with critical habitat and related topics.

The planning process involves prioritization of stormwater management strategies, further community engagement, development of an action plan, and then implementation beginning in 2024. To learn more, community members can visit [www.cityoftacoma.org/healthywatersheds](http://www.cityoftacoma.org/healthywatersheds) or contact [healthywatersheds@cityoftacoma.org](mailto:healthywatersheds@cityoftacoma.org).

### **Public Comment**

No public comments were made.

### **Objectives for or before the Next Meeting**

- Staff Updates
- Subcommittee Updates
- Year-in-Review & Year-Ahead – Presentation & Discussion
- Sustainability Small Grants Applications – Review & Award
- Green Economy – Presentation (tentative)
- Subcommittees: green economy, waste prevention/recycle reset
- Prepare for Officer nominations in January
- Tacoma Mall Subarea Plan updates
- Tacoma Power green hydrogen research updates

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business, the Commission adjourned at 6:51pm.

### **Adjournment of November 18, 2021 Meeting**

**Motion:** To adjourn the meeting. Motion made by Lexi Brewer.

**Seconded by:** Nikie Walters

**Action:** Voice vote was taken and carried. The motion was declared adopted.

**Ayes:** All

**Nays:** None

**Abstained:** None

**Absent:** Katin Kendrena, Gabe Moalii, Tony Ivey, Emily Pinckney, Ashley Sloan

The next meeting of the Sustainable Tacoma Commission will be held virtually on Thursday, December 16, 2021, from 5:00 to 7:00pm.

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Matthew Benedict, Vice-Chair

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Patrick Babbitt, Staff / Note Taker