

Orange County Climate Council Meeting Summary

December 17, 2019

3:30pm - 5:00pm

Southern Human Services Center, 2501 Homestead Road, Chapel Hill

Attendees: Mark Marcoplos (Chair), Brennan Bouma (staff), Paul Cough, Laura Janway, Kathy Kaufman, Adam Long, Melissa McCullough, Jonas Monast, Sara Pitts, Donna Rubinoff, Dan Schnitzer, Sammy Slade, Mary Tiger, Stephanie Trueblood, Joshua Van Mater, Jenn Weaver,

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- I. **Call to Order** - Marcoplos called the meeting to order at 3:35pm. Council members introduced themselves for the benefit of new members.

 - II. **Approval of Draft Meeting Summary from November 21, 2019** – Slade asked for an edit to clarify his November statement about Climate Change as referring to Council members taking responsibility for the climate debt as represented by historical emissions. A motion was made to approve the meeting summary as edited by Kaufman, and this was seconded by Slade. The meeting summary was approved unanimously.

 - III. **Approval of Climate Council Mission Statement** – Members reviewed and made live consensus edits to a mission statement for the Orange County Climate Council as drafted by the Mission and Vision Committee: Hansley-Mace, Weaver, Richards, and Rubinoff. After removing references to “joint and individual action” and adding the term “climate emergency” time for this discussion closed and members agreed to take up the approval of the mission statement at the January meeting.

 - IV. **Discussion of Climate Action Reporting Database** – Brennan Bouma and Josh VanMater led a discussion about the Orange County Climate Action Reporting Database (CARD) that they have started based on the Council’s guidance and the desire for a gap analysis and updated and unified communication of current and past climate actions in Orange County. Before the meeting, Josh and Bouma filled in the database with content from the initial Ad Hoc Committee report.

The CARD should enable all of the Climate Council members to report what they’re doing now and have done in the past. The current plan is not to report future actions and best intentions. They would show up as gaps.

Slade suggested that there be an opportunity for reporting members to share future plans as this will increase opportunities to collaborate. Council members agreed this would be helpful.

Monast asked if there would be an element of helping communities to prioritize actions on top of reporting what’s being done based on things like equity and GHG reduction potential.

Van Mater and Bouma said that if there were a committee supporting the CARD, then some analysis, match-making, and action prioritization would be possible.

Cough agreed that pointing out gaps is a good start and that prioritizing would go further to show an ideal structure. Rubinoff added that it would be good for the CARD to highlight opportunities for joint and collective action.

Van Mater and Bouma said that many blanks will likely remain for Council members to fill in and we will uncover a lot that Climate Council participants didn't know was happening. Also given that projects are constantly evolving, we think it's going to be worth setting up a committee to carry on this effort.

Marcoplos said that the committee structure will help push the idea forward and moved to take up the next agenda item where committees would be discussed and formed.

V. Formation of Committees – Council members considered establishing committees to carry forward the Council's work on recurring and emerging focus areas such as climate action reporting, benchmarking against national standards, and climate justice outreach.

After a review of previous discussions and some clarification of the proposed committee roles, two committees were formed: a Climate Action Reporting Committee to carry on the work of filling in the CARD for unified reporting and gap analysis, and an Identity and Standards Committee to contribute to branding Orange County as a community that cares about climate change and is ready to act, and to benchmark our actions against national standards such as the newly forming LEED for Cities and Communities.

Members volunteered to join each of the two committees:

Climate Action Reporting Committee: Josh, Adam, Janway, Tiger, Bouma

Identity and Standards Committee: McCullough, Rubinoff, Kaufman, Bouma

Rubinoff applauded the creation of a committee to explore the LEED for Cities and Communities standards as it might help to address an ongoing tension around sustainable urbanism in our communities.

Weaver agreed with the need to discuss land use and pointed to the Transition Movement in the EU as an accessible approach along with LEED.

Trueblood pointed out that this area has long had a reputation for environmental leadership, and it would be good to return more focus to that identity.

Discussion on additional committees used the remainder of the meeting. Members suggested that the Climate Justice Outreach Committee idea be split into separate Justice and the Education/Outreach portions. There was also a clear and well-received proposal to create a committee to monitor and evaluate climate actions so that the Council could help identify the highest impact actions. It was decided to discuss this again in the January meeting.

VI. Discussion of Council's potential role in building broad community support for climate action - Vice-chair McCullough briefly addressed the Council on whether and how the Council might help reinforce Orange County's identity and momentum as community that cares about the climate. She aims to continue to focus the Council's efforts on joint actions

that add up to more than the sum of our parts and creating a County identity and momentum as a “Climate-Caring County”.

The worry is that when the Council or individual groups propose further ambitious actions within Climate Plans, people will panic. This group could help do the outreach and education for climate action plans and help set groundwork to prepare the community. This does not require a new overarching climate plan as the communities and County have them or are actively working on them, and they have the staff and resources to act.

McCullough said it may be good to start by looking at the plans that are on the books, defining synergies/commonalities, maybe this would be done through the Climate Action Reporting Database. Then we could create focused communications that would fill the broader purpose of build community and momentum through early successes. This work would be part branding and part identifying easy wins for County residents to start feeling like what they do can matter.

VII. 2020 Meeting Schedule & Public Status - Bouma briefly updated the Council on received clarifications of the Council’s legal identity as a public entity and plans for meetings in 2020. The Climate Council became a legal entity when the 4 elected bodies of the 4 local governments acted to approve its membership and appoint At-Large members. No single government has a controlling share of the Council. The responsibility for adhering to public records laws required by NC Statutes and Council procedures is on the supporting staff.

VIII. Staffing and Succession - Bouma discussed the level of staff support the Council currently has and proposed the creation of an additional support staff position with an annual succession plan.

This idea was brought up by the Nominating Committee at the last meeting. Bouma explained that an additional support staff position would provide continuity if he were to be sick or otherwise unavailable during a meeting. Also if both staff were there, they could participate more fully in the discussion.

Bouma offered to reach out to the other sustainability staff on the Council to ask for their reactions and ideas.

As for staff succession, Bouma explained that we will likely just have the staff cycle off each September when the new Vice-Chair is selected.

IX. Adjournment – Marcoplos asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting and this was provided by Schnitzer and seconded by Kaufman. The Council voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 5:00pm.