

MEMORANDUM

To: Board of Aldermen
David Andrews, Town Manager

Through: Randy Dodd, Environmental Planner
Christina Moon, Planning Administrator
Patricia McGuire, Planning Director

From: Energy and Climate Task Force

Date: Wednesday, November 4th, 2015

Subject: Community Climate Action Plan: Response to Review Comments

Background and Summary

This memo is a companion to the Community Climate Action Plan. The intent of the memo is to summarize the Task Force response to review comments provided.

Information

The Energy and Climate Task Force has been meeting since the fall of 2014 to draft a Community Climate Action Plan. The draft plan is being developed as a step in supporting the community in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, becoming more energy efficient, generating more renewable energy, and nurturing a social and ecological environment that is more resilient, livable, and attuned with the epochal change currently occurring. The plan we have drafted recommends a goal of a 50% reduction in per capita greenhouse emissions by 2025, and includes over 25 specific recommendations relating to community integration, buildings, transportation, renewable energy, and ecosystem protection and restoration.

On June 23rd, 2015, the Board of Aldermen provided feedback to a draft of a Community Climate Action Plan. In September/October, the Task Force presented the draft plan at the Advisory Board Joint Review. (Formal/final comments from advisory boards are provided in a separate document). The Task Force has updated the plan in consideration of the review. Our attempt to encapsulate and capture specific review comments offered by the Board of Aldermen and Advisory Boards (through November 4) is provided below, along with the Task Force responses, with attribution to the person or Advisory Board providing the initial feedback.

Community Integration: Capacity, Partnering, Community Organizing

- a) Hire Sustainability Coordinator (several BoA members; PB) *Task Force is behind this 100% and recommends that the Town hire a Sustainability Coordinator in the coming fiscal year (please see reworked Community Integration, Recommendation #5).*
- b) Pursue partnering approach with Chapel Hill to create joint stormwater utility (EAB, PB). The county is in a position to take leadership with composting (PB). *The Task Force concurs that partnering in principal for both stormwater and composting is worth pursuing, and also recommends that the Town be prepared to move forward if obstacles to partnering emerge.*
- c) Incorporate interns in climate action implementation, especially in FY 15/16; look into green conservation corps, grants (Bethany); *Task Force in general supports and defers to Town for best way to pursue.*
- d) Use Solarize as community organizing model to expand capacity (Michelle); Look at Solarize for apartment complex, church, park, parking lots (Lydia). *The three things that have made Solarize a successful community program are lowering installation costs, reducing consumer complexity, and*

motivating change. These elements have been captured in the Community Integration Recommendations.

- e) Provide additional detail on outreach approach in community integration recommendations and specifically to HOAs/neighborhoods (Randee, Sammy). *The Task Force has developed a new introduction for Community Integration Recommendation: Create Grass Roots Partnerships to Engage Community. The specific approach will depend on the community program and the Task Force recommends that these details be developed during the implementation phase.*
- f) Consider more detail on identifying partners and highlighting joint programs (Damon); support coordination with other partners (Michelle) *The Task Force strongly agrees that developing partnerships is critical to the success of this Climate Action Plan and where we were able, they have been listed in the report. The specific approach will depend on the community program and the Task Force recommends that these details be developed during the implementation phase.*
- g) See if some neighborhoods are interested in “opting out” of streetlights (Lydia, Sammy). *Task Force in general supports and defers to Town for best way to pursue.*
- h) Work with restaurants for a “Meatless Monday” initiative (Lydia) *Task Force supports this. Meatless Monday Community programs added to Implementation Opportunities under Community Integration, Recommendation #1.*
- i) Coordinate with schools/school groups (Michelle/Sammy) *Task Force supports this and has listed Chapel Hill Carrboro City Schools, PTAs, and School Student Groups as partners under multiple recommendations. When a Sustainability Coordinator is hired, we recommend that s/he meet with the CHCCS District Sustainability Coordinator to discuss ways to partner and coordinate efforts.*

2) Community Integration: Affordability/Social Justice/Economic Issues

- a) Highlight/find intersection between environmental and social justice approaches (Damon). *Task Force recommends that the focus of this nexus be in the relationship between pursuing affordable housing and energy efficiency and clean energy. A Community Integration Recommendation has been added titled “Integrate Climate Action and Social/Equity Initiatives.”*
- b) Have Task Force meet with Affordable Housing Task Force; look at Affordable Housing document as model; use portion of AH Trust Fund to support? (Michelle). *Task Force member(s) intend to attend AH Task Force meeting on November 19.*
- c) Review OWASA report/engage with OWASA to address affordability and find transferability in their strategies (Bethany). *Task Force in general supports this and defers to Town for best way to pursue, while recognizing the significant difference between OWASA as a locally based water and sewer provider and the electric and natural gas utility providers serving Carrboro. This may significantly affect the transferability of the strategies.*
- d) Identify means for addressing economic issues for middle class (Jacquie). *The Community Integration Recommendations are designed to make it easier and more affordable for all citizens to save money while switching to clean energy.*
- e) Support for QECB recommendation (PB). *The Community Integration Recommendation #5 encourages Carrboro to pursue QECB authority to secure low cost financing to facilitate community energy efficiency and renewable energy projects.*

3) Buildings

- a) Highlight building certification recommendation (Michelle). *Task Force appreciates the identification of this priority and defers to Town and implementation of recommendations for best way to pursue.*
- b) Would a downtown geothermal district require State authority? (Sammy) *Task Force defers to Town to explore this question, and also recommends that the Town contact a qualified professional with expertise in geothermal/geotechnical studies for advice on feasibility of geothermal in downtown area based on soils, geologic, and development features.*
- a) Use thermal imaging to look at energy leaks (Sammy) *This suggestion has been incorporated into Building Recommendation #2: Require Energy Audit / Performance Rating.*
- c) Pursuing energy performance beyond minimum for new buildings not recommended as point of emphasis (PB). *The Task Force recognizes that going beyond current building code requirements brings in added complexity and challenges. To address the recommended climate action goal, we believe that both regulatory and non-regulatory options for new construction should be considered.*

4) Transportation: Promotion

- a) Plan more bike to work days (Michelle); designate every Friday bike/walk day (Lydia). *Task Force in general supports and defers to Town/TAB for best way to pursue. The plan suggests considering weekly bike to work days under Transportation Recommendation #5.*
- b) Coordinate with TTA and local businesses to promote vanpooling (Michelle); Parking lot id'd for regional transit (Lydia). *Task Force in general supports and defers to Town/TAB for best way to pursue.*
- c) Further promote bike/car/ride sharing (Bethany). *Task Force in general supports and defers to Town/TAB for best way to pursue.*

5) Transportation: Other

- a) Support transit and idling recommendations (PB); More leading by example (including idle reduction) from Town fleet (TAB member). *Task Force in general supports and defers to Town/TAB for best way to pursue.*
- b) Determine if Town has authority for reducing vehicle idling (Randee) *Task Force defers to Town*
- c) Professional facilitation for Bolin Creek Greenway (TAB members); Remove Bolin Creek Greenway from plan (TAB member). *Revised language under Transportation Recommendation #2 to make it clear that the goal is to approve a route for a North South greenway connector. The recommendation is to research alternatives if it has not already been done and then bring in a facilitator to guide the decision process.*
- d) Pilot/initiate Green Streets Program (TAB member). *Task Force in general supports and defers to Town for best way to pursue.*
- e) Multimodal focus in future developments (TAB member). *Task Force in general supports and defers to Town/TAB phase for best way to pursue.*

6) Ecosystem Protection/Restoration

- a) Support the creation of stormwater utility or joining Chapel Hill's utility (Randee; PB; EAB; TAB member). *Task Force considers this to be a high priority topic and asks the Town to look into this as a next step. Hold a "lunch and learn" on stormwater utility for Board/staff/Task Force (Bethany). An FAQ on stormwater utilities has been developed to provide more in-depth information on the subject.*

- b) Recommend ordinance review/amendments (e.g., tighten up invasive plant requirements) (Damon). *Task Force understands that reviewing invasive plant requirements is in the current work plan for staff, with a request to set a public hearing planned in the near future.*
- c) Prioritize the deer herd management recommendation (EAB) *Task Force considers this to be a high priority topic and asks the Town to look into this.*
- d) Promote natural/wild yards (TAB member) *The Task Forces supports this. Backyard Wildlife Habitat Certification Programs added to Implementation Opportunities under Community Integration, Recommendation #1.*

7) Other Comments

- a) Recruit/fill in Task Force vacancies, especially with members who can address social/economic topics. *The Task Force recommends that the current Task Force “sunset” and the Board create a new, standing Task Force with the charge to implement the recommendations provided herein, and with a membership composition that is responsive to this concern.*
- b) How will progress towards goals and recommendations be measured/evaluated? (PB) *The Task Force recommends that progress towards goals be measured and evaluated through future greenhouse gas inventories and other metrics developed as part of plan implementation.*
- c) Create more accessible public version of plan (PB) *The Task Force concurs with this recommendation, and also recommends that it include a web component and be developed as part of plan implementation.*
- d) Can the cost of implementation be estimated? (PB) *It is beyond the scope of the Task Force’s work to pursue a fiscal/economic analysis, and given the scope, inherently a very complex undertaking. Having said that, we do assert that energy efficiency and renewable energy improvements are investments that provide economic benefits over time. Philosophically, the Task Force recommends a holistic approach that includes upfront costs, benefits over time, and the environmental and public health costs of not taking action. When analyzed in this way, Climate Action Plans for other municipalities have been shown to have substantial economic benefits for the Town’s financial position and the economic viability of the community.*
- e) Include an introductory section for each (not just some) of the recommendations (PB). *The Task Force has pursued this recommendation in the final draft of the plan.*

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Town: adopt the draft Climate Action Plan; pursue the implementation recommendations offered in the plan; and consider the above supplemental comments to the plan.