

Climate Action Plan Committee

Meeting #3, March 21, 2017 minutes (Approved at April 4 meeting)

Committee Members and City Staff Attending: Mike Koopal, Jeff Arcel, Jodi Petlin, Nancy Woodruff, Sierra McCartney, Richard Hildner, Rachel Sussman, Robin Kelson, Ruthanne Coffey, Karin Hilding.

Members of Public Attending: Kate McMahon (land use planner), Steve Thompson (chair of Climate Smart Glacier Country), Chase Jones (Energy Conservation Coordinator for Missoula)

1. Call to Order – The meeting was called to order at 5:03.
2. Approve Minutes – The committee approved the minutes for the Feb. 28 meeting.

The committee also agreed that going forward meetings will be two hours long, from 5 to 7 p.m.

3. Chase Jones – Chase was involved in the development of a climate action plan for the city of Missoula. At the invitation of the Whitefish committee, he attended the meeting to share information about their process and experiences developing a plan.

Chase has served as Energy Conservation Coordinator for Missoula for four years. Missoula adopted a climate action plan for municipal operations in January, 2013. It took 18 months to develop and adopt the plan.

To develop the municipal operations plan, a task force of city staff, the mayor and city council members, and members of the public was formed. They adopted a phased approach, deciding to create the municipal operations plan first and to focus on mitigation (reducing emissions). In the next phase, a community-wide plan was developed, and adaptation as well as mitigation was included. The community-wide plan was created under the auspices of Climate Smart Missoula and was adopted in July, 2015.

In creating the municipal operations plan, the task force began with two goal setting meetings. A target goal for emissions reductions was discussed. Some task force members wanted to aim for carbon neutrality, and some wanted to set an achievable goal. The group decided to aim for municipal operations to be carbon neutral by 2025 with these interim goals:

- 2015 – 10% reduction
- 2017 – 30% reduction
- 2020 – 50% reduction

To become 100% carbon neutral, carbon offsets will be purchased.

At the next meeting the task force reviewed climate action plans from other cities, such as Fort Collins, CO; Pittsburgh, PA; Boulder, CO; Flagstaff, AZ; Asheville, NC; and Burlington, VT.

Ideas were written on a white board and eventually were grouped into three categories:

- Facilities and fleet
- Internal practices and policy
- Renewable energy and carbon offsets

A working group was formed for each category. The working groups looked at possible actions to reduce emissions and researched each one. They compiled information on the cost of implementation,

annual energy savings, amount of emissions reduced, and payback timeframe for the initial investment for each action. A list of recommended actions for each category was developed.

Chase wrote the narrative of the plan. An Energy Corps staff member did a lot of number crunching for the tables and charts. A graphics design team was hired to create graphics and do the layout of the publication.

Chase listed the following lessons learned by going through the process:

- Adopting goals, such as emissions reductions goals, is good. They provide a way to talk about the plan with the public and provide a measure of whether the plan is on track.
- Plan for growth. As population increases city facilities may expand, adding another challenge to reducing emissions.
- Consider framing goals in other terms than just emissions reductions. For example, San Francisco's goals are 0% waste, 50% sustainable transportation, and 100% renewable energy.
- It is important to get input and buy-in from city staff, especially department heads. They are the ones who will implement the plan.
- Adopt a realistic monitoring frequency. Missoula initially planned to do monitoring and reporting annually, but this turned out to be too time-consuming. About every three years is a feasible interval.
- Budget for staff. In order for the plan to be implemented, there needs to be a staff person who is responsible for implementation.
- Understand other plans the community has adopted, such as the growth policy.

The committee asked questions and discussed a number of topics of interest with Chase.

Chase was asked how Missoula defined the scope of municipal operations. Most cities use operational control (whatever operations the city has control over) or ownership (all facilities owned by the city) to define which facilities are included. Missoula used operational control, with some exceptions. They included their employee commute in the plan, but decided not to include waste. Waste was not included because they did not have tracking information about it and it was a small percent of the footprint for municipal operations. However, the city is now drafting a zero waste plan.

The effect of the emissions factor used to calculate emission equivalencies for electricity was discussed. Chase mentioned that one factor helping Missoula reach an 11% emissions reduction in 2015 was that the emissions factor they used was adjusted. Rachel said that Whitefish's emissions will probably be overestimated because we are using a standard emissions factor but much of our electricity is produced by hydropower, which produces fewer emissions. However, if the same factor is used year after year, incremental reductions will be reflected accurately.

Chase recommended documenting issues and decisions, such as how municipal operations are defined and which emissions factor is used, in the plan. Explaining choices that are made and the reasons behind them makes the process and document transparent for the public, he said.

There was some discussion about implementation of the plan by city staff. Missoula has no accountability mechanism for this, Chase said. It would be helpful if implementation of the climate action plan was part of the performance evaluation for department heads, he said.

Chase was asked about the public involvement process for Missoula's plan. For the municipal plan, the only public element was the task force. For the community plan, there were two community "climate

summits." These were large public meetings. At the first meeting, participants brainstormed strategies. At the second meeting people sat at tables with groups focused around some of the issues identified at the first meeting.

4. Public Involvement Planning – Kate made several suggestions regarding public involvement with general agreement from the committee:

- Minutes and agendas for the meetings should be posted on the city's web site
- In terms of gathering public input for the plan, at a minimum we should do an online survey, possibly regarding the goals of the plan (such as an emissions reduction target)
- We should invite department heads to attend our meetings, especially if the topic is relevant to them

The committee discussed holding an open house to introduce the plan to the public and to gather input. It was decided that the appropriate time to do this would be once we have a draft plan so that people have something specific to comment on.

5. Discuss Outline Options – Rachel prepared two versions of an outline for the plan, one organized by topic and one by organization (city, schools, community). The committee decided to go with the one grouped by organization (Outline B).

6. Choose Subject Committees – It was proposed that we tackle three topics at a time, breaking up into smaller groups to work on them. After some discussion, the committee decided that, due to the size of our committee, sub-groups would be quite small and we may need input from a wider group of people. We will tackle one topic at a time, as a whole committee. The first topic will be buildings and energy usage. Rachel will email information on energy usage in city buildings to the committee.

7. Discuss Future Meeting Format – See previous item.

8. Other: Map of city facilities and leased city facilities – Skipped due to time constraints.

9. Public Comment – None.

10. Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 7:07 p.m.

The next meeting of the committee is April 4 from 5-7 p.m. at the city hall conference room.

Related documents:

- CAP outline drafts
- Audio recording of meeting