

# Climate Action Task Force Minutes

Tuesday, April 6, 2021 7:00 p.m.  
Harrigan Centennial Hall/Videoconference

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**Task Force Members:** Chair Elizabeth Bagley, Vice Chair Catherine Riley, Kent Barkhau, Elizabeth Borneman, Molly Grear, Kathleen Kreiss, Darby Osborne, Caitlin Way, Caitlin Woolsey

## I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Bagley called the meeting to order at approximately 7:02 p.m.

## II. ROLL CALL

Task Force members present: Elizabeth Bagley, Catherine Riley, Kent Barkhau, Elizabeth Borneman, Molly Grear, Kathleen Kreiss (videoconference), Darby Osborne, Caitlin Woolsey

Absent: Caitlin Way (excused)

Staff: Deputy Clerk Jess Earnshaw, Public and Government Relations Director Melissa Henshaw

Others: Joel Hanson, Larry Edwards (videoconference)

## III. CORRESPONDENCE /AGENDA CHANGES

None.

## IV. PERSONS TO BE HEARD *(not to exceed 3 minutes on topics off the agenda)*

Joel Hanson stated he was a climate advocate for community resilience and adaptation. He said he attended the Health Need and Human Services Commission meeting noting that they had secured their 2021 goals. He relayed that food security was one goal that included community composting. He told of a large-scale composting machine in town that was available for sale.

## V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. March 2, 2021 and March 16, 2021

**M – Riley / S – Osborne moved to approve the March 2, 2021 and March 16, 2021 minutes. The motion passed by a unanimous voice vote.**

## VI. REPORTS

Chair: Bagley reported on the enjoyment of whale watching.

Task Force Members: None.

City Staff: Henshaw reported on the ETIPP delay in community selections to mid-April. She thanked the dedicated members of the task force and introduced Jess Earnshaw as the new Deputy Clerk.

Other(s): None.

## VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

## B. Subcommittees:

### 1. Community Outreach

Woolsey stated the subcommittee would be focusing on gathering information from Anchorage and Juneau to strategize especially with moving toward a sustainability commission. She listed all organizations in Sitka that were doing climate action and met with others including Juneau Sustainability Commission and Anchorage. Bagley would connect Woolsey with the sustainability employee in Anchorage.

### 2. Greenhouse Gas Inventory and City Infrastructure

Kreiss stated the subcommittee greenhouse gas inventory in 2008 was done with guidance and software of a group of 600 communities that were committed to climate action called ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability. She recommended an ICLEI membership to help develop a greenhouse inventory. She said that they were currently offering 20 cities to enroll in training. She felt it would be useful to the city employees and other volunteers.

Bagley mentioned she had a meeting with Riley and staff to talk about 2010 Action Plan questions. She stated that her and Riley listened to goals from staff and challenges including the budget deficit. In the meeting, discussion took place of how to tell the progress/story of the plan. Riley stated staff emphasized a long-term vision and how they fit in the broader picture with the expected expansion of SEARHC and electrical capacity with regards to efficiency and conservation from that load coming online.

Bagley wondered how to best serve the municipality. Noting that the Task Force was appointed by the Assembly and what policy recommendations and practices that could make a long-term difference. Riley added the meeting was about communication and how to work together (staff and the Task Force) to accomplish goals. Also discussed was a 2020 baseline and metrics to improve upon. They heard from staff about challenges of maintenance and maintaining infrastructure and noted that understanding how the city worked was vital to make sustainable changes. There were discussions on optimization and interruptible rates stating that the gains made from the expansion of Blue Lake was temporary. She stated that there needed to be realistic goals/changes for departments. Bagley added that staff was willing to come and present. She mentioned that climate action was about systems change and a long-term solution.

### 3. Policy

Riley noted the opportunity to work with staff as a co-crafted policy. The Subcommittee met and reminded there were five policies recommended at the end of the 2010 Climate Action Plan and wondered what happened with them. They were community wide measures that

could be done by the municipality. She went over the policies. She said the Subcommittee would be moving forward on where to go from updates.

Barkhau mentioned it would be important to keep eyes on the Federal level and noted the shift in administration and more movement on national policy as far as funding. He felt it presented an opportunity. Riley's impression was that the Task Force should ask more of their thoughts from staff and should inquire if the policies were useful. Feedback was needed which policy worked or if adjustments should be made.

4. Grants and Other Opportunities

Borneman relayed the conversation with Community Outreach Subcommittee. The list they created helped to keep focus on who partners could be. She told of examples. Osborne felt that the subcommittee could look at the composting machine opportunity mentioned under Persons to be Heard and the idea of a sustainability employee in Anchorage.

C. Future city requests

Bagley reminded this was a recurring item in order to streamline requests from the Task Force to staff. Kreiss felt that a request should be home building standards requirements and what the city was using for energy standards. She thought it would be helpful to arrange a meeting with the Building Department to also include how new buildings would be heated. She wondered if the city had a way to encourage energy efficient heating, or how permits were handled for renovations with regards to energy efficiencies and new buildings. She also thought to inquire if staff considered upgrading to higher standards. Kreiss was also interested in hearing from the Electric Department of their priority of finding other renewable energy.

Barkhau wondered what remained to be learned about the development of the SEARHC expansion project/status of, projected electrical demand required and how that placed Sitka with respect to the generating capacity. Woolsey felt some of that information was in the ETIPP proposal. Barkhau wondered if there was a way to design needs using a saltwater heat pump system. Gear agreed and was interested in the heat pump idea. It was noted that the Sitka Sound Science Center may be a resource. Consensus was to have prepared questions for the Electric Department. Bagley would work on next steps with staff.

**VIII. NEW BUSINESS**

D. Preparing for Assembly presentation

Bagley stated the Task Force would have the opportunity to give a 15-minute report at the May 25 Assembly meeting. She offered a recommendation could be made that the task force become a commission. She thought that a progress report on the 2010 climate action plan could be a part of the presentation along with support in the hiring of a staffer to work on sustainability. Osborne thought to suggest grants

and other opportunities to apply for. Riley agreed that grants and policy in the form of an ordinance for a permanent commission and felt it could be prepared along with a timeline and draft to send to the Administrator early May. She could give a 2010 Climate Action Plan update and would come up with questions to answer the unanswered components. She wondered if a video would be a good communication tool for presenting.

E. 2010 Climate Action Plan Updates

Riley reported on the progress by going through the spreadsheet. She went over energy efficient affordable housing funding, home rehabilitation loan program adjustment, green building education, right size city vehicle fleet, commuter transit reimbursement program, conversion to energy efficient streetlights, diesel generator replacement, energy and fuel saving behavior audits, city building add electric heat, employee incentive program for saving energy and fuel, increase fuel efficiency, reduce vehicle idling, hybrid and electric vehicle replacement, maintain parks with non-chemical inputs, adjust new development zoning, adjust code for solar panels, city building energy audit initiatives, materials reuse center, curbside recycling, ban yard waste from garbage, municipal composting, enforce/strengthen secondary heat source requirement, adjust contract bidding, energy/fuel conservation training, energy efficient remodel of Pacific High School, serve locally caught fish in schools, compost school food waste, schools – add electric heat, and Blatchley Middle School energy audit initiatives.

Riley thanked the other members for their assistance on obtaining answers. It was noted that Riley and Grear would be leading this for the assembly meeting presentation. It was also noted that several items for the list had been done but that there could be more to pursue and going forward new baselines would be created although some may be relevant from the 2010 plan. There should be co-creating with the city to get buy-in for the most success.

**IX. PERSONS TO BE HEARD** (*not to exceed 3 minutes on topics on or off the agenda*)  
None.

**X. ADJOURNMENT**

Agenda items discussed: Subcommittees may shift to the 5 topics to bring to the Assembly presentation, future city requests, preparing for Assembly presentation, and 2010 climate action plan would remain.

Next meeting was scheduled for April 20, 2021 at 7:00 p.m., Harrigan Centennial Hall/Videoconference

**M – Barkhau / S – Grear moved to adjourn the meeting. Seeing no objections, the meeting adjourned at 8:59 p.m.**

Attest:  
Melissa Henshaw, Staff Liaison