Environmental Stewardship Committee Meeting

Meeting Summary

Participants

Tom Arnold, Tina Bailey, Matthew Barnett, Kristel Griffith, Troy Gagliano, Mac Martin, Vinod Singh, Justin Green, Jeff Pazdalski, Hannah Cruz, Fawn Bergen, Tina Chang, Mia Hocking, Randall Olsen, Makena Krause, Counselor Anthony Martin, Allison Puch Cahuich, Tasha Johnson, Tony Varela, Audrey O'Brien, Peter Brandom, Jason Robertson, Mayor Steve Callaway

Absent: Nina Carlson, Laura Trunk, Kieran Sikdar
Guest: Debby Garman

Welcome + Introductions

Councilor Anthony Martin introduced himself as the new liaison between the ESC and Hillsboro City Council. He shared that he would like to help facilitate change in our local environment and invited members to share their goals for environmental stewardship in Hillsboro. Input included:

- More renewable energy production locally
- Less waste, energy efficient buildings
- More trees
- More bike lanes
- Energy efficiency and renewable energy
- Transportation options
- More native plants
- Resource conservation in mainstream curriculum
- Efficient waste management cycle
- More recycling outlets
- More community outreach and engagement on stewardship
- Trails and high quality water
- Electric vehicles and battery storage
- Hillsboro recognized as a cutting-edge leader on stewardship topics

City Council Priorities Discussion

Jason shared the City Council had prioritized environmental stewardship during its annual planning retreat and was seeking ESC feedback on potential priorities. He said staff had combed through City-led actions for the Vision plan and presented three potential scenarios for discussion and recommendation:

- #1: Incentivize residential and commercial renewable energy options with an emphasis on solar installations (including those renting or leasing) (Action ES1B)

- #2: Strive to establish energy-independent buildings with renewable energy, beginning with public facilities (Action ES1F)

- #3: Expand programs to remove invasive plant species (Action ES6H)

Discussion and Direction:

- #3: Students are required to complete a community service project as part of their high school graduation requirements. It seems like invasive species removal would provide an ideal match for some. Is that outreach/awareness education happening in schools? (Answer: some to be sure, but more can be done)
    - The City mobilizes hundreds of volunteers annually to help with this effort.
    - Invasive species removal is fairly intense. We would need to think about the level of commitment and ability of those we ask to participate.
    - Consider providing recognition to those who help – e.g., "this are preserved by..."
    - Get goats and sheep involved (via email from Kieran)

- #1: Seems like an ideal option. We already have federal incentives, but they'll be scaled back soon and now is the time to seize the opportunity. But there are other continuing and emerging opportunities including battery storage advances, community solar program, ETO incentives (income qualified solar incentives are relatively large for PGE homes) and it would be visible!
    - Existing efforts do target lower income customers through partnerships/contracts with community orgs; more and diverse outreach strategies would be beneficial

- Question: What is the timeline? Is Council expecting target priority to start, or be completed, over the next year? (Answer: the goal is to accelerate an action that could be started "anytime" before 2025; what action should be "moved up" to advance community priorities sooner?)
    - Chair: from Council perspective, they want group to help inform what actions are focus sooner than others

- #2: The City had a community solar initiative in 2012 and it went well; could build on that. City is planning to complete energy-efficiency projects at all or at least most facilities – so we wouldn't be starting at zero.
    - At least one member is interested in incentives to facilitate solar array installation at private facility.

- #1: Very supportive of this initiative, especially with respect to weatherizing homes. That would help make affordable homes more efficient, less expensive to maintain and preserve critical housing stock.

- #1: Seems that action #1 might have the biggest impact on climate change goals. Also consider other partners, like ODOE, for multi-family opportunities.

- **Consensus**: Do all three if you can, but if you have to choose, prioritize #1 (renewable energy)

Home Energy Score Discussion

Peter presented findings from the Home Energy Score community survey. Nearly 800 people responded, primarily representing those definitely "for", definitely "against" – and a smaller number of "unknown" or "neutral." He asked ESC to discuss and offer a Council recommendation:

Discussion and Direction:

- It's a relatively small sample, perhaps not representative of the full community view on this topic. It seems like one of those polls where the more motivated/negative people engage – and yet more than half are in favor
- We should focus on doing more to educate people what this is or isn't
    - (Answer: since the survey was released, the City has issued an FAQ addressing most misperceptions, though more can be done)
- Any tool that provides info and transparency is good; please do stand-up grant program
    - But address legit concerns: COVID, financial impact and timing
- YAC has this as a priority, they are focusing on education about policy and underlying environmental issues. Support the policy.
- Set up the grant support (financial incentives, offsets) before establishing the policy
- Try to be consistent with other programs that already exist
- **Consensus**: Encourage Council to move forward policy/program, but with appropriate incentives, mitigation and timing relative to current pandemic concerns.

Indicator Review – Energy

Peter noted that a subcommittee had been formed to review existing energy indicators and consider establishing new ones. Subcommittee: Peter, Jason, Nina, Troy, Randy and Hannah.

Existing indicators include:

- Non-renewable energy input/output
- Residential energy consumption
- Residential energy retrofits
- Industrial, commercial and institutional (ICI) energy efficiency, net total savings
- % energy offset by renewable source purchases and local renewable energy production

New indicators for consideration include:

- Homes with home energy scores
- Energy cost burdened households
- Local solar generation
- Zero emission vehicles per capita/1k people)
- Zero emission fueling stations per capita

Discussion and Direction:

- Question: How is "residential" defined for energy use (Answer: will require follow up)
- Energy cost burdened households good, but need good data; related to environmental justice
    - Oregon Housing and Community Services has this data (not ETO)
- New zero-emissions indicator may not be that valuable since it's not Hillsboro-specific (County)

- Question: How is ZEV defined? Maybe there is a different measure of ownership of lower emissions vehicles? Is a zero-emission vehicle zero-emission if it takes energy to manufacture?
- Recommendation: merge or compress various indicators to keep them manageable and useful
- **Consensus**: Staff to determine right combination of existing/new indicators based on available info/story-telling potential
- **Next Steps**: Materials indicator review. Committee volunteers – Matthew, Tony, Vinod, Peter and Jason (to start)

Member Announcements/Public Comment

- Mayor Calloway: Keep an eye out for upcoming series of six videos re State of City
- Hillsboro Water: InPipe hydrogenator system installed in Gordan Faber Complex will generate energy to help fuel activities at Hops ballpark (thanks to PGE, ETO)
- Intel: New renewable energy project will help PGE DOUBLE solar energy project capacity offsite, but within power generation system (138 mW solar facility in Oregon)
- Intel: On-site water treatment facility has saved 2B gallons of water to date
- Genentech: breaking ground on solar/storage facility on 3/15; will provide power redundancy for their site for intermittent periods when power goes out (so no products have to be disposed)