

# Environmental Stewardship Committee Meeting Summary

May 13, 2021, 3:00 - 5:00 PM



## Participants:

Counselor and Chair Anthony Martin, Tom Arnold, Tina Bailey, Troy Gagliano, Mac Martin, Vinod Singh, Justin Green, Jeff Pazdalski, Hannah Cruz, Fawn Bergen, Tina Chang, Randall Olsen, Makena Krause, Allison Puch Cahuich, Tasha Johnson, Tony Varela, Audrey O'Brien, Laura Trunk, Nina Carlson Peter Bandom, Jason Robertson

**Guests:** Amy Meaut

**Absent:** Kristel Griffith, Mia Hocking, Matthew Barnett, Kieran Sikdar

## Welcome + Introductions

Chair Martin welcomed members and reaffirmed his goal to convey Task Force input to City Council, on Home Energy Score and future topics. Peter notified the ESC that Kristel Griffith, Hillsboro Water, was leaving the City for other employment and introduced her colleague and interim replacement, Amy Meaut.

## City Sustainability Revolving Fund Feedback

Peter explained the origins of the internal City of Hillsboro Sustainability Revolving Fund and how the City uses savings from energy efficiency projects to fund other sustainability initiatives. The City is looking to expand the use of these funds externally, in support of local businesses and nonprofits seeking to make improvements. Feedback included:

- How to define small business? Is it closer to 20-50 employees vs. 500 per SBA definition? Is it to support small businesses? It depends on the size of the fund. DEQ defines small business as <50 employees. Consider adding additional metric beyond employee count, maybe tiered options to define qualification.
- How are energy savings calculated? It depends on the type of project, is relatively straightforward for energy – prior expense vs. post-enhancement expense. Most utilize funds from the Energy Trust of Oregon, and those factors are calculated as part of the incentive process.
- Justin commented that the resource would be of value to them, but they are on leased property.
- Including nonprofits good since they provide special value to the community.
- Why should we call it a grant if it's really a loan? Because they are grants; City cannot be loaning entity. We are still working through how best to set the logistics.
- Could we consider being the "gap funding" source for larger projects that don't yield direct energy savings or the ability to repay funds? Yes, so long as we don't deplete the fund. Must consider aim of program.

- Would you consider other non-energy savings projects, like carbon capture? Possibly. That's something we need to look at – but would need to tie into more specific carbon footprint goal, which we have not yet established.
- Can you standardize ways to calculate cost savings? It depends in part on the scope of the program, some activities are much more difficult to calculate than others, but most can be calculated.
- Would a business qualify, even if they moved out of the facility years down the road? Possibly, since the energy savings continue on at the building.
- Should we limit to just physical buildings? What about activities? We would need to evaluate those opportunities on a case by case basis. Maybe consider qualifying HOAs as well.
- How would we evaluate grant applications? With a subgroup comprised of subject matter experts, either committee members or perhaps subject matter experts from our organizations. Maybe ODOE have criteria for grant review.
- Should we consider allowing just property owners or tenant businesses as well? Benefit should be realized for both tenant and owner, not just one.
- Should we consider multi-family residential facilities and enlist the support of tenants?
- Equity: leverage partners like Adelante, who can help with reaching markets, translating materials.
- Also consider different repayment options to make it more accessible to all.
- Ask partners like PGE, other utilities to help promote the program.
- Maybe we can simply adapt or add to existing ETO offerings.
- Mac: CWS has learned that a Latinx-sounding name for customers to contact led to more contacts, since some are more comfortable reaching out knowing there is a better chance at common language and culture.
- Do we have info on potential savings to be had? Something we can take to our corporations to seek seed funding support.
- Please manage so that they fund is sustainable long term.

Peter will follow up after incorporating member input and working through logistics with the Finance department and other internal stakeholders.

## Indicator Review – Materials

Peter noted that a subcommittee had been formed to review existing materials-related indicators and consider establishing new ones.

Existing indicators include:

- Number of businesses that have received Washington County Green Business Award
- Solid waste collected by franchised waste collectors, per capita
- Amount of solid waste recovered (i.e., recycling, composting, waste to energy)

New indicators (recommended by work group) for consideration include:

- Food waste generated
- Health of Reuse and Repair activities
- Increase the use of lower-impact concrete
- % increase in actions that decrease consumption, increase re-use, switch to alternative materials

## Discussion and Direction:

- Keep green business award indicator.
- Is there a way to make green business award more attainable for small businesses? Application is fairly involved, and it appears those who receive it are fairly large/sophisticated? Is there effort underway to reach other types of business?
- Remove solid waste recovered indicator. Poor data quality; limited value in measuring environmental stewardship; increasing recycling is not helpful to climate objectives
- Focus on “materials” is better than focus on “waste,” but distinguish between “waste materials” and “materials” in general – there’s a difference between promoting waste material recovery and materials consumption reduction.
- Proposed to add new indicators that are focused on specific, high impact materials (e.g., concrete and food). We don’t have a lot of information or easy ways to track that right now, but we can improve and expand over time. DEQ is working on this same initiative, so we can discover together.
- How does this align with Portland’s efforts to move materials waste into wastewater system to form natural gas? We have had discussions with Clean Water Services about potential for utilizing food waste in waste water digestion, and using methane for vehicle or other fuel.
- Materials are recovered at the regional level – perhaps work with other area partners to form a shared regional materials management measure.
- FYI: <https://www.oregon.gov/deq/mm/Pages/What-is-Materials-Management.aspx>
- Add new indicator focused on food waste.
- Ambivalent on repair fair indicator. It’s possible to track with support from fair managers (they know how many of items that come are repaired), but difficult to quantify impact.
- Use concrete indicator if it can be measured. Consider incentives like “preferred status” contractor for those who voluntarily participate.
  - For concrete, find out if there is a way to track who is using (see related info) <https://www.oregon.gov/deq/mm/production/Pages/Concrete.aspx>
  - <https://www.nrdc.org/experts/sasha-stashwick/carbon-capture-concrete-could-one-day-be-carbon-sink>
- Behavioral change survey indicator could be good one, especially if the survey incorporated other areas of the plan.
- Behavior survey would be good to do at schools as well.
- There is some risk with survey since it’s more “feels” vs “empirical” data.

## Annual All-Partner Event Revised Approach

Robertson shared that the Visioning program would be disseminating a thank you letter to implementation partners by early June, in lieu of the annual partner event (due to COVID). They plan to go “big” with next year’s event, assuming it’s safe to resume large gatherings.

## Member Announcements/Public Comment

- Washington County partnered with the City of Hillsboro and Far West Recycling to conduct its first ever old, polluting wood stove turn-in event, with the objective of decommissioning stoves that contribute to air pollution. The event was a success.
- Councilor Martin reminded members he has an “open door” policy for discussing questions and issues.