

**Climate Action Plan Standing Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
May 18, 2022**

**A. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 5:33 pm.

Attending: Robin (meeting chair), Karin, Lydia, Nathan, Ben, Melissa  
John Repke, Giuseppe Caltabiano, Brian Schott attending as public

**B. Approval of Minutes from April 20, 2022 Meeting**

A motion was made by Ben and seconded by Lydia. Minutes were approved unanimously.

**C. Presentation by John Repke - candidate for PSC District 5**

This item was added to the agenda by Robin.

John talked about his background, spent years in finance and understands financials of energy companies. He explained the makeup of District 5, which includes Flathead, Lake, Teton, and Lewis and Clark Counties. He discussed what Public Service Commission is. It ensures affordable, reliable, and sustainable energy for customers of investor-owned utilities in Montana and represents rate-payers in negotiations for utility rates. He discussed that the PSC evaluates proposals related to future energy use needs and renewables.

He said that the PSC is the 3rd highest paying job in the state, and that audits of the PSC found an unhealthy environment. He said that he is running to improve the competence, discipline, and experience of PSC and provided his email address: [repke4psc5@gmail.com](mailto:repke4psc5@gmail.com).

**D. Communications/Outreach/Education – Protect Our Winters/Explore WF/Whitefish**

Brian Schott stated that his goal is to brainstorm with the committee to elevate the discussion about the recently announced POW partnership to facilitate discussion with visitors and locals. Some ideas are to screen a film this fall, provide education about whitebark pine at the resort, the city's solar panel project, directing CVB funds toward these efforts.

Karin stated that the Flathead Electric community solar project will address approximately 30% of the annual usage from wastewater treatment plant and that Explore WF could address the City Council when this project is brought back in front of them.

Committee members provided additional suggestions that Whitefish Mountain Resort could purchase solar panels and provide an educational viewpoint, Explore Whitefish could sponsor electric vehicle chargers and/or a bike share, funds could allow for electric busses.

**E. Coordination with Climate Action Plan**

- Transportation Plan update (Karin)

Karin shared that an open house will be held on June 1 from 11 am-1 pm and from 4:30 -6:30 pm at City Hall. Presentations will be at 12 pm and 5:30 pm. She discussed that the next step is that the plan goes to the planning board, then to the city council. She talked about the work session with the city council that was held this past Monday. She discussed that the plan does a good job addressing EV readiness, transit, bike/ped, and potential for future paid parking.

- CAP Strategies/Actions Status Update – Spreadsheet (Karin)

Not addressed this meeting.

## **F. Project Updates**

- Existing Projects

- o Recycling (Karin)

Not address this meeting.

- o Community Solar Project (Karin)

Karin reiterated that the solar project would produce about 30% of wastewater plant needs, she will meet with Craig to determine when it will come back before council. She discussed that it could possibly be completed by fall pending the final steps.

- o Parking Management update – Nathan's letter

Karin talked about the letter that Nathan put together after some discussion a few meetings ago. She asks the committee to discuss if they want to forward this letter to the council.

Nathan discussed that his intent is to get the discussion started as it will likely take years to implement. He said that the idea is to discourage some driving behavior like circling to find parking spots and to decrease traffic congestion.

Melissa and Ben discussed concerns about adding another potential fee to locals and to the possibility of differentiating between locals and non-locals. They talked about community involvement in the process being important.

Karin discussed that she talked to Dave Taylor who thinks it is great that this discussion is happening and that it would probably be best to bring Julie Dixon back as a consultant. She talked about the biggest part of this idea is to reduce traffic and that it might be best to add language to the letter addressing the potential impacts on the community and acknowledging frequency of recent changes in Whitefish.

Lydia said that she thinks that we're in a time where change is needed and agrees that it will take some time to implement a program, but that programs like this pay for themselves and provide potential revenue to the city.

Ben talked about concern that it might not go anywhere due to people thinking about the negatives. He thinks that we should write a longer whitepaper with more explanation of the benefits and with comparison to similar cities.

Karin stated that she will reach out to prior consultant for more information.

The committee decided not to take further action on the letter during this meeting.

Brian Schott commented as public and spoke about concerns related to all of the recent changes in the city and paid parking representing yet another change and possible increased fee.

- Proposed Projects

- o Proposed Electrification Strategy (Robin)

Lydia shared an update from the electrification subcommittee. She discussed that their goal is to look back at the Climate Action Plan to improve it to focus more on electrification and that their findings will be presented to the committee at a future meeting. She talked about their focus being on the plan as currently written, and identifying areas where the city can plan for electrification when future needs arise.

Ben talked about creating a one page information sheet related to heating/cooling and solar that the building department could provide along with other paperwork and that this could go beyond electrification to more efficient building practices. These informational brochures could be provided to builders and their clients. He stated that the Flathead Builder's Association may have resources to assist.

## **G. Other Committee Status Updates**

There were no other committee status updates.

## **H. Public Comment**

There was no additional public comment.

## **I. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 7:01 pm.