

# Orange County Climate Council Meeting Summary

**July 15, 2021**  
7:00pm - 8:30pm

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Online Meeting

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## Members and Alternates in Attendance:

Melissa McCullough (Chair), Brennan Bouma (staff), Kathy Kaufman, Donna Rubinoff, Stephanie Trueblood, Marc Miller, Bill Ward, Amy Ryan, Jamezetta Bedford, John Richardson, Jonas Monast, Ray DuBose, Robb English

## Other Attendees:

- Chloe Allen (intern)
- Stella Kempf (intern)
- Georgia Morgan

Public comments received by advertised deadline: None

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- I. Call to Order, Land Acknowledgement, Changes to the Agenda** - McCullough called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

McCullough gave a native lands acknowledgement for Orange County, recognizing that Orange County sits on the historic lands of the Occoneechi, Saponi, and Tutelo people, and historically the land where Orange County is now was also the land of the Tuscarora, Sissipahaw, Eno, Shakori, Saura, and Catawba people.

No additions or changes to the agenda were suggested.

McCullough reminded the Council of the ongoing effort to draw up bylaws for the Council and move the bylaws forward for approval by all 4 local governments who created the Council in parallel. Everyone was encouraged once more to make comments and suggest edits.

## II. Approval of Meeting Minutes from June 16, 2021

Rubinoff corrected the draft June minutes to reflect that she was actually not in attendance. With no other discussion, Kaufman moved to approve the minutes as amended. Monast seconded this motion and the minutes were approved unanimously.

## III. Discussion of Restructuring - Roles and Process

The Council continued their discussion to clarify and focus the work of the Council. Workgroups reported on their discussions and proposals for future products.

Miller shared a summary of the discussion of the Partners Committee that proposes how the Council might prioritize, select, and address a proposed project based on the new Working Groups and audiences. He then walked through an example.

Ryan pointed out that it would be difficult for the Council to take on project based work as it does not have staff or a budget, or the mandate to act in this way. She acknowledged the

passion of the OCCC members and said this may be more effective coming from a non-profit. She offered that inter-governmental groups are often very effective at sharing information, identifying partnership opportunities, to amplify impact.

Rubinoff pointed out that it may be useful to continue noting ideas like this even if they are not currently supported to show what more could be done if greater support were provided.

Ryan agreed that generating ideas and suggesting them to other entities might be a good role for the Council, and clarified that she was pointing out that this group may not ever have the resources to support direct implementation itself.

Bouma agreed and offered an example to help illustrate what this group might do in the Green Plus program. Supporting another entity's certification program might be within reach of the Council.

Kaufman clarified that this green certification example actually came out of Carrboro's CAP and discussions with green developers. She agreed that the Council might best serve as an "idea engine" and avoid planning to implement projects directly.

Richardson then summarized on behalf of the Policy Working Group. They chose not to meet this month as they felt their work had finished for now and was waiting on additional direction from the Council on future directions. He also mentioned that work was continuing to develop quick policy briefs.

Bouma then asked how the Council should generate the ideas that are considered.

Ward offered a couple of high-priority example actions including electrification of buildings and vehicles, and highlighted areas where the lower income residents might benefit first.

Richardson pointed out that those two ideas are in Chapel Hill's climate action plan already. Trueblood said that these projects are both in Hillsborough's developing plan as well, and pointed out that it may be useful for members for the Council to help identify the best equipment to use.

Rubinoff pointed out that EV charging and evaluation tools might be good areas where members could share resources and save money overall.

#### **IV. Guidance for Communications Committee**

Rubinoff and the interns who continue to support this Working Group provided an update and the Council discussed their current work and proposed future direction which they intend to align with the plans of the 4 local governments. They underscored the importance of representing the voices of underrepresented communities in guiding climate action planning. They also agreed with previous discussions that implementing an ambitious communication plan is beyond the scope of the Council.

Ryan pointed out that diversity staff and efforts like the Durham Ambassador program might be useful to think about as models or partners, and underscored that this is great work and may need to be implemented by another organization.

Ryan and Bedford also pointed out that the Council should steer clear of attempting to clarify climate misconceptions during local elections. This might be a better role for a non-profit.

Trueblood pointed out that in Hillsborough they have Public Relations staff that control the communications from the Town. They have the expertise and resources and know how to balance. They must be included on all communications that represent Hillsborough.

Bedford offered that she loved the idea of holding workshops to assist people in writing grants.

Bouma agreed and also said that the work of the interns might be good to tie into the ongoing climate action planning of the county.

#### **V. Council Meeting Time**

Bouma and McCullough discussed the participation over the past two evening meetings and reminded the Council of the survey results showing an overall preference for the afternoon time slot. It was decided that the August meeting and future monthly meetings would begin at 3pm. The Council committed to re-examining the meeting time periodically to ensure maximum participation for members and any interested residents.

#### **VI. Adjournment**

McCullough asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting and this was provided by Bouma and seconded by Slade. The Council voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:29pm.