

Climate Change, Energy, and Environment Commission (C2E2)

Summary of Sept. 28, 2023

Hybrid Meeting

Members Present: Joan McIntyre (Chair), Carrie Thompson (Vice Chair), Cindy Lewin, Kevin Vincent, Stephen D'Alessio, Rob Sandoli, Doug Snoeyenbos, Elizabeth Whitney, David Evans

Members Absent: Suzanne Swink, Majdi Shomali, Mikaila Milton

Guests Virtually: Mark Greenwood, Eric Gibbs, Johnathan Morgenstein; Jon Obenberger (public), John Bloom (Energy Committee)

Staff Present: Demetra McBride (DES-OSEM), Jenna Peabody (DES-AIRE)

1. Introductions.

2. Energy Committee Members Update. EC Chair Doug Snoeyenbos remarked that most of the EC members' terms have technically expired and recommended that they should all be reappointed. He listed the names of the members. He moved for all individuals to be reappointed for two-year terms to the EC. Seconded. Voting received unanimous approval. Elizabeth and Suzanne were appointed.

3. Other updates. Demetra (OSEM) remarked that the Committee of 100 is hosting a virtual climate panel on the evening of October 11th that runs from 7:00 to 8:15 pm. On the committee of 100 website, you can register for it free of charge. Demetra will be participating. Waiting to lock down another panelist. There will be follow-up information.

4. LEED Platinum Award. Arlington County was recertified as a LEED platinum community. In this cycle, there were 54 applicants, including Arlington, because Arlington had to reapply or lose the prior certification. In the six years since the USGBC launched the program, this was the most rigorous process, and an extensive accomplishment. Arlington County scored the highest. The County was recognized at their opening reception to the Green Build conference on Wednesday and Christian Dorsey spoke on a mayor's panel on Thursday. Demetra is working with the internal team. She mentioned that Arlington is also working on the global Carbon Disclosure Project and with the USGBC on press. Arlington is also in the process of applying and submitting the Carbon Disclosure Project recertification, which happens every year.

5. Public Comment. John is a resident of Arlington, Virginia. He asked the group if they have reviewed the environmental impacts and implications of the Langston Blvd. Plan study that's been going to the Board for a proposed change on the general land use plan that has substantial up zoning in density that will add a significant adverse impact to traffic. He remarked that there's been no assessment of the proposed changes in land use, so if there's any group in Arlington that should be reviewing and requiring the staff to assess the environmental impacts, be it human impacts, noise, air quality, runoff, stormwater impact and safety to individuals for walking, it should know that there is not going to be parking for the density being added. It will significantly adversely impact safety. He brought up the crime that occurs with people walking at night, such as, people have been murdered walking to their cars at night. There are adverse impacts to what is being proposed and no consideration of parking. He said the staff did a rudimentary back of the envelope analysis on

traffic and there'll be severe congestion. The plan proposes to take a lane away on one of the only East/West truck routes in Arlington County which is a D.C. emergency evacuation route and plays a role for safety and security for the county. The plan that's been released and that's been circulated makes no mention of the severe congestion where substantial different tools must be used to analyze the impacts of safety. They haven't used the right tools. The delays will be significant and decrease safety, and as a result, increase emissions. There is a lack of analysis that's been done into something substantial with the up zoning that's being proposed. He thinks C2E2 needs to look at the environmental assessment that has or hasn't been done with the plan Langston Blvd. Study. He recommends sending a message as a chair to the board, that Arlington County Board does not accept and make any changes. He concluded that only three of the five areas are being studied and no impacts have been made and they want to change to the general land use plan for the county. He encouraged C2E2 to become familiar with the plan. Joan responded that they put together a letter and sent it in July, which is on the website

1. Transportation Update –

- a. **Zero Emissions ART Feasibility Study.** Demetra (OSEM) has been briefing the County Manager's Office on this study. The team however, has not had the opportunity yet to brief the Board and must do so before sharing it publicly. Demetra said that C2E2 will have the information it needs (an updated version?) in October to enable it to conduct a better analysis. The Board is looking at a couple of scenarios on the buses. We can have a more comprehensive discussion during our October meeting. Joan had done some analysis on the technical report and had questions on the equations and how they were calculated. Demetra can follow up and have questions ready for the team's response. Elizabeth Whitney emailed a few concerns to the group regarding needing more than one battery electric bus to replace the CNG. Elizabeth was concerned about the idea of constructing a natural gas plant to provide capacity to charge the buses in an outage situation.

She wants to make sure all of the tax credits that were available were used and it would be important to also have a 0-emission backup generation, such as a mobile battery or using some of the buses for emergency resilience. It was suggested to list all of these questions in one place. Demetra responded with current information. Demetra noted that this is being upgraded to be a closed system. Comments were endorsed by Rob Sandoli who asked if a peer review was made. Demetra remarked that conducting peer reviews is rare for governments, and the study includes enough benchmarking. The request for a peer review can be made, however. Kevin notes that the team should not just have the questions, but the team should bring up how long the team has been raising these questions to the board. Carrie suggested that C2E2 put all of our questions on the study together in one place for the staff to respond to, and Eric concurred. Elizabeth suggested having the questions ready for the Board before their meeting with them. Joan suggested that there is no reason to consider hydrogen buses based on the study numbers. Kevin said C2E2 needs the definitive bus route schedules to do our analysis.

- b. **Carbon Neutral Transportation Master Plan. *Please refer to the CNTMP presentation link on the website.*** Presentation shared on screen. Purpose and objectives were shared. A sampling of the analysis in connection with the planning and mapping out scenarios for the public EV access were shared. The problem stated that

the chargers are in structures where no access at all for payment for access. The report will be complete (pre-Board consideration) by November. APS confirmed as included, not the ART bus study. The Goals include: reduce reliance on SOVs by increasing utilization of multi-modal carbon neutral transportation options; facilitate an array of EV charging options in the County; support phased decarbonization of the County fleet. Joan wondered how much this report is going to look at where people go and where they will be in transit since this is a behavioral change. Demetra responded there was an analysis done on the origin and destination of those in transit. Carrie asked about the results of this analysis. Demetra responded with the combination of benchmarking and looking at specific characteristics. This report will be used to inform public engagement. The chart of Preliminary Public Charging Site Options for Further Investigation was shared.

2. **Green Building Incentive Policy Status Update.** Last year an analysis of 5 million square feet was completed, with over 50% grandfathered into the prior standard. AIRE started developing a proposal for financial incentives and the financial incentives are based on price value. Arlington's pre-existing buildings are trapping a lot of our greenhouse gas emissions, and generating a lot of our greenhouse gas emissions in terms of buildings. There was a financial incentive because they are existing buildings and the value is lower, so that might be more doable or conceivable for the near term. A training program was mentioned and C2E2 will start to see that kind of climate adaptation model design. Demetra presented to the County Manager; he asked a number of questions and AIRE has the information and will respond to him in the next couple of weeks and then going to go to the County Board. There is also a focus on extreme heat in the future, in addition to inland flooding which will be the second largest climate vulnerability with significant impacts. There will be a much stronger presence of biophilic infrastructure. Tax rebates and tax reductions were discussed as these could be good incentives after a discussion with Ted Longer and the EC Committee. The IRA incentives were discussed as a complicated but potentially cost-effective option. Educating people on incentives will be very important.
3. **Worcester Polytechnic Institute – Embodied Carbon Project.** Worcester Polytechnic Institute evidently has a well established program in which students in their junior years who are well-versed in the subject receive proposals from all over the United States and some from overseas. WPI chose Arlington's to conduct an embodied carbon analysis specific to our local conditions and building types.
4. **Legislative Priorities Letter.** Final letter can be found on the website. Review of the entire letter. Edits made to multiple sections and change in order of sections. Letter recommendations included topics on: Protecting Statewide Climate Initiatives, Net-Zero Carbon Buildings, Renewable Energy, Decarbonization of Transportation, and Other Environmental Issues.
5. **Other Letters –** Final letters can be found on the website. Reviewed, edited and approved the S. Glebe Road Sunrise Project letter. The Commission recommends the project not be approved as currently proposed. The project is not participating in the Green Building Incentive Program.
6. **Updates**
 - a. **Solid Waste Management Plan.** Carrie advised that the Solid Waste Management Committee approved the draft 2024-2044 Solid Waste Management Plan during its

September 21 meeting. The draft plan, after minor tweaks, will be ready for sharing with the public in late October and discussion in one or more town hall meetings. She noted that the first section of the plan fulfills State of Virginia's requirements for solid waste management plans, and the second section proposes voluntary measures to advance the zero waste resolution passed by the Arlington County Board in 2015. This portion of the plan represents a 'menu of options,' and a determination to move forward on each of these initiatives will be made during regular budget decision making processes in coming years.

- b. **Other.** Joan said that, after three years in this role, she would be stepping down as C2E2 Chair next year but would be willing initially to serve as C2E2 Vice Chair and then look for somebody else to step into this role by the end of March, 2024.

Meeting adjourned: **9:30 pm**