

Climate Change, Energy, and Environment Commission
(C2E2)

Summary of September 23, 2024

Hybrid Meeting

Members Present: Cindy Lewin (Chair), Joan McIntyre (vice-chair), Mikaila Milton, Jonathan Morgenstein, Rob Sandoli, Mark Greenwood, Doug Snoeyenbos, Kevin Vincent, Joseph Trivette

Members Virtual: Trevor Montano, Majdi Shomali, Elizabeth Whitney

Staff Present: Jenna Peabody (DES-AIRE), Rich Dooley (CPO), Jennifer Fioretti (CPO)

Public comment

Diana Preston addressed the Commissioners about synthetic turf at Kenmore, highlighting several key points:

1. **Materials Sent:** Diana had previously sent materials to the Board before the CIP vote and to the C2E2, including pictures and an appendix on public engagement in Arlington, MA.
2. **Public Engagement:** She emphasized the importance of involving the public in decisions about synthetic turf, noting that Arlington has not indicated a willingness to do this.
3. **Funding and Costs:** Diana mentioned a \$34 million allocation for various CIP synthetic turf projects, including nearly \$10 million for the Kenmore fields. She pointed out that maintaining synthetic turf is significantly more expensive than natural grass.
4. **Issues with Synthetic Turf:** She raised concerns about the high costs, safety, environmental impact, and existing problems with synthetic turf materials.
5. **Public Opposition:** Diana noted that during a public comment period on Kenmore, many opposed synthetic turf, with over 65 unique comments expressing concerns.
6. **Future Engagement:** She hopes for more public engagement in the fall and encourages C2E2 to consider this.

Update from New Assistant County Manager for Climate Policy

Jennifer Fioretti and Rich Dooley from the Climate Policy Office (CPO) introduced themselves and presented their new roles and their goals for the CPO.

1. **Background and Experience:** Jennifer has been with the county for 21 years, with a diverse background in international development and land use planning in Central America. She returned to the U.S. due to health concerns and joined Arlington's Community Planning Housing Development department in.
2. **Career Path:** She worked in various roles, including neighborhood conservation, transportation site planning, and regional transportation planning. She highlighted her

involvement in passing the bike share policy and the importance of regional collaboration.

3. **Department of Parks and Recreation:** Jennifer served as a deputy director, overseeing administrative functions and environmental initiatives.
4. **Climate Policy Office:** Currently, she is the assistant county manager for climate policy. The office, re-envisioned by the county manager, includes Jennifer, Rich Dooley, and two additional positions. Their focus is on providing vision and leadership in climate policy with a whole-of-community approach centered around racial equity.
5. **Four Cs of the Climate Policy Office:**
 - **Commitment:** Supporting and leading climate policy aligned with county goals.
 - **Coordination:** Engaging with county peers to advance climate goals and break down departmental silos.
 - **Collaboration:** Building and strengthening partnerships with other jurisdictions and organizations.
 - **Communication and Engagement:** Continuously communicating and engaging with stakeholders to inspire and support climate action.
6. **Future Plans:** Jennifer emphasized the importance of thoughtful recruitment for the new positions and ongoing coordination with other departments, particularly OSEM. She mentioned the upcoming update to the C-PACE Ordinance as an example of their collaborative efforts.

Jennifer concluded by expressing her commitment to making meaningful changes in climate policy through collaboration and engagement with various stakeholders.

Jonathan Morgenstein asked what was different about Jennifer's role from Bill's. How are the two positions in her office now different? The conversation revolved around the creation and evolution of a new climate policy position within the county. The key points include:

1. **Position Evolution:** The new position has been expanded from what Bill Eger previously held. The office now has more positions to support policy work
2. **Reporting Structure:** The reporting structure has changed. Previously, Bill reported to Michele Cowan, the deputy director. Now, the new position reports directly to the county manager and interacts regularly with the deputy county manager.
3. **Office Expansion:** The Climate Policy Office has been expanded to bring in more expertise and support, strengthening its capacity.
4. **Coordination with Other Departments:** The Climate Policy Office works closely with the Office of Sustainability and Environmental Management (OSEM), run by Demetra McBride and other departments like Environmental Services, Parks and Recreation, Public Health, and Human Services.
5. **Main Task:** One of the primary tasks for the new office is to update the Community Energy Plan with a Climate Action Plan, focusing on developing policy rather than implementation.
6. **Setting Measurable Goals:** There is a need to set measurable goals and track them, especially regarding greenhouse gas emissions. The office aims to improve in this area and plans to have more robust conversations about it as part of the Climate Action Plan update.
7. **Timetable for Tasks:** The new office is still in its early stages (week seven), and there is no set timetable yet for updating the Community Energy Plan. They are waiting for the greenhouse gas emissions inventory, which is expected by 2025, they are waiting on the COG for numbers.

Rich Dooley began by expressing gratitude to the volunteers and shared his own experience as an C2E2 commissioner. He then summarized his 19-year career with the county, starting as a senior land use planner and later becoming the project manager for the Community Energy Plan (CEP) in 2010. He worked on the CEP's development, implementation, and maintenance, including its 2019 update. Recently, he joined the Climate Policy Office.

Rich highlighted the county's pioneering role in creating the Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (C-PACE) financing program in 2017, which helps commercial property owners finance energy efficiency, renewable energy, and water efficiency projects. He discussed updates to the ordinance to align with state legislation and best practices, including expanding eligible improvements and clarifying enforcement and contract terms. These changes aim to enhance the program's attractiveness and effectiveness, with positive feedback from capital providers.

Trevor Montano praised the updates to the C-PACE program, noting that the enforceable lien was a significant issue for lenders. He asked about the future of the program's administration and plans for marketing the new ordinance. Rich Dooley responded that Sustainable Real Estate Solutions (SRS) will continue as the program administrator and that they plan to promote the changes through webinars and other communications in 2025.

Trevor also inquired why Arlington chose to manage its C-PACE program independently rather than joining the state program. Rich explained that Arlington's program was established before the state program and tailored to meet local needs, which included avoiding certain state requirements that might not align with Arlington's approach.

Finally, Trevor asked about the program's uptake and future goals. Rich mentioned that Arlington was the first in the Commonwealth to close a C-PACE project and hopes the ordinance changes will lead to more and larger projects, especially in metro corridors. He noted that SRS receives a fee when projects close, which has not been a barrier to project completion.

Trevor Montano noted that most C-PACE programs have an administration fee and asked about integrating the updated Green Building Incentive Policy with C-PACE, especially for existing buildings. Rich explained that C-PACE can be part of the capital stack, which includes various funding sources, and is attractive due to competitive interest rates. He emphasized the importance of outreach to building owners to encourage energy efficiency improvements.

Doug Snoeyenbos asked about the C-PACE program's progress and whether Ted Tad Lunger, for example, had been consulted about the latest iteration. Rich confirmed that he and Tad had discussed the program multiple times. Doug asked if Rich had consulted Tad on the latest iteration. Rich said he did not specifically consult with Tad about the latest updates.

Rich mentioned they aim to present it to the County Board this year, with meetings planned to address questions and gain support. Trevor highlighted the importance of having the ordinance in place as federal funds for greenhouse gas reduction become available.

Mark Greenwood acknowledged the importance of addressing extreme heat, noting it as a growing challenge. Rich emphasized learning from other jurisdictions and the need for community networks to support adaptation and resilience. He highlighted ongoing efforts,

including communication strategies and leveraging trained individuals for emergency response. He also mentioned the role of the Climate Action Plan and the importance of tree planting to mitigate heat island effects.

Rich Dooley added that addressing urban heat island impacts requires collaboration across various departments and partners. Jenna Peabody mentioned the AIRE taking educational initiatives and action, such as translating response materials for the Hispanic community. Jennifer Fioretti mentioned CPO is using data to target tree planting in vulnerable areas. All emphasized the urgency of the issue and the need for proactive strategies to support the community.

Visioning 2050 Submission for Approval

Cindy Lewin discussed the finalization of the Visioning 2050 submission, which has evolved from a postcard to a more detailed letter. The submission includes updates on various topics such as Community Choice Aggregation (CCA), virtual power plants, bird-friendly glass, dark sky initiatives, and equity. Cindy thanked Mark and Joan for their comments and mentioned that headings were added to make the document more accessible. The headings cover electrification and renewables, transportation, development and zoning, resiliency, green jobs, and equity.

Elizabeth K. Whitney suggested using the term “clean energy” instead of “renewables” to encompass future technologies and innovations. Group agreed, noting that “clean energy” could include nuclear and other non-emitting sources. They discussed the potential for technologies like fusion energy and green hydrogen, while acknowledging the complexity of defining “clean energy” and avoiding greenwashing. Elizabeth proposed “non-emitting” as a more specific term.

The group discussed the term “non-emitting sources” but preferred “clean energy” for its broader inclusivity. They agreed to amend the motion to include starting efforts immediately and to change “renewables” to “renewables and other forms of clean energy.” The motion was accepted, and the group moved forward with no further comments or discussion.

Legislative Priorities Letter for Approval

Joan led the discussion on the legislative priorities letter, emphasizing the need to shift from a defensive to a more proactive stance in anticipation of key elections next year. The letter has been updated to prioritize differently, focusing on grid improvements, utility reform, and composting infrastructure. Joan highlighted the importance of coalition building and educating county staff and the board about the full range of issues.

Elizabeth Whitney suggested that the letter might be too exhaustive and proposed highlighting three to five top priorities in future letters, with additional details in an appendix. C2E2 agreed, noting the need to approve the current letter at this meeting. The group discussed the possibility of ranking priorities within major categories to streamline the process. They acknowledged the complexity of the issues and the importance of being prepared for legislative opportunities.

The group discussed the process of submitting the legislative priorities letter, which is combined with letters from other commissions to form a comprehensive legislative package for

the county. Ilana Morof, the state legislative liaison, is responsible for gathering feedback and helping the board develop this package.

The group also noted that individual citizens can send the letter directly to their delegates or state senators. There will be opportunities for public input during county board meetings, and various organizations will mobilize their constituencies as needed. Motioned to approve, all approved.

Crystal City Block W Letter for Approval – Rob Sandoli and Elizabeth Whitney

The discussion focused on the Crystal City Block W project and the Site Plan Review Committee (SPRC) process. Rob and Elizabeth worked on this project, and there are three active projects on the SPRC roster. Cindy emphasized the importance of the SPRC process and the need for volunteers for upcoming projects.

Elizabeth provided an overview of the proposed seven-story mixed-use building, highlighting its sustainability efforts, such as aiming for LEED Gold certification and participating in the Green Building Incentive Program. However, she expressed concerns about the claimed 38,000 square feet of open space, which seems to rely on adjacent parkland rather than actual open space within the project. There were also discrepancies between the project's plans for electric vehicle chargers.

C2E2 questioned the legitimacy of counting adjacent parkland as open space, suggesting it might be acceptable if the space is privately owned and protected by an easement. Elizabeth noted that the SPRC staff seemed to accept the developer's claims, but the situation remains unclear. The group discussed the need for further clarification and adjustments to the letter based on these concerns.

Elizabeth expressed concerns about the developer's claim of 38,000 square feet of open space, which seems to rely on adjacent parkland rather than actual open space within the project. She emphasized the importance of ensuring this space remains undeveloped and integrated into the design. It was suggested that the sector plan might clarify the open space designation and noted concerns about the adequacy of tree beds and sidewalks.

The group discussed the challenges of the SPRC process, including incomplete information and the need for further clarification. They acknowledged the importance of the green building incentive policy and the typical scores for such projects. Rob highlighted discrepancies in the sustainability documentation, particularly regarding HVAC systems and bird-friendly glass. The group agreed on the need to ensure the project meets current policies and standards.

Rob clarified that most of the HVAC system would be electric, except for the dedicated outdoor air system (DOAS), which would use gas. He noted discrepancies in the EV charging spots, with the developer planning for 6% fitted and 19% ready, exceeding the policy requirements. The group discussed whether to include these values in the letter and agreed to mark the HVAC system as not meeting the all-electric standard due to the use of gas.

The group also discussed the use of plastic turf in the dog park, agreeing it was not ideal. They decided to approve the letter with the necessary updates and amendments, including addressing the HVAC system and bird-friendly glass. Rob and Elizabeth will finalize

the letter, and the group emphasized the importance of having someone attend the Planning Commission and County Board meetings to represent their concerns.

The motion to approve the letter with amendments was passed.

SPRC Process and C2E2 Checklist

Mark highlighted the need for volunteers for upcoming SPRC projects, noting that several new projects could become active soon. The group acknowledged the challenges of the SPRC process and the importance of staying informed and involved. The discussion touched on the subjectivity of the SPRC process and the need to address significant issues in an upcoming November agenda. There are currently three active projects requiring volunteers, with five preliminary projects potentially becoming active soon. Cindy, Joan and Majdi have taken on some projects, but volunteers are still needed for others, including Clarendon Square, Shirlington House, and 2500 Wilson Blvd. The group emphasized the importance of staying engaged and ready to participate as new projects arise.

July Meeting Summary for Approval

Reviewed, motioned to approve. Approved.

Updates (e.g., deer management, proposed update to Admin Reg. 4.1, SPRCs, Energy Committee, recruitment, air quality listening session, other)

Cindy provided several updates:

1. **Deer Management Letter:** Under Mikaila's leadership, a letter on deer management was sent to the county. The county received many letters on this topic and generally followed our recommendation, though not all specific tweaks were adopted.
2. **Administrative Regulation 4.1 Update:** Cindy attended a meeting about updates to the SPRC process. The new regulations will require developers to provide detailed plans and sustainability commitments earlier in the process, which should improve transparency and public engagement.
3. **Solar Switch Program:** Doug highlighted a new initiative from the Office of Sustainability and Environmental Management to facilitate the installation of solar panels on residential roofs. He praised the county's efforts and suggested similar outreach for other climate-related initiatives.
4. **Air Quality Meeting:** Cindy, Doug, and Rob attended a sparsely attended air quality meeting for Arlington and Fairfax. The meeting involved consultants asking detailed questions about Arlington's air quality initiatives.
5. **Commission Vacancies:** Cindy mentioned that David Evans and Eric Gibbs have resigned from the commission. Mikaila has been conducting screening interviews, and two names have been submitted by Cindy to Susan Cunningham for consideration to fill the vacancies.
6. **Upcoming Plans:** The next major plan for the county will be the transportation plan. Joan will be our liaison for that work.

The group also discussed the importance of staying engaged and informed about these initiatives and plans.

Joan highlighted the urgency of finalizing comments on the Green Building Incentive Policy (GBIP) by the next meeting, as the policy is expected to be implemented in January. She mentioned an upcoming public session on October 7th and the need for robust comments from the commission. The discussion included whether to focus on the current draft or propose more ambitious changes, such as tax exemptions for high-efficiency systems and comprehensive decarbonization strategies.

Jenna noted that the public comment period would be from October 15th to November 15th to receive feedback from developers and residents. The group discussed using their checklist to evaluate the policy and ensure it pushes for significant improvements.

Next meeting: October 28 (Hybrid)