

# MINUTES

**CITY OF FLAGSTAFF  
SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION**

**THURSDAY**

**April 22, 2021**

**ONLINE MEETING  
MICROSOFT TEAMS**

**4:30 – 6:30 PM**

## **1. Call to Order**

Chair McCain called the meeting of the Sustainability Commission held April 22nd, 2021, to order at 4:30 pm.

## **2. Roll Call**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chair McCain	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commissioner Kauffman
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Vice Chair White	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commissioner Konkel (Arrived at 5:15 pm)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commissioner Chamberlain	<input type="checkbox"/> Commissioner Dailey
<input type="checkbox"/> Commissioner Coffey	

Others present: Marissa Molloy (Minutes, Staff Liaison), Sara Dechter (presenter), Judson Tillinghast (presenter), Nicole Antonopoulos (Staff Liaison)

## **3. Public Comment**

Public Participation enables the public to address the Commission on any subject within their jurisdiction that is not scheduled before the Commission on that day. Due to Open Meeting Laws, the Commission cannot discuss or act on items presented during this portion of the agenda. To address the Commission on an item that is on the agenda, please wait for the Chair to call for Public Comment at the time the item is heard.

No Public Comment

## **4. Approval of Minutes**

**Moved by Chair McCain, seconded by Vice Chair White to approve the March 25th, 2021, minutes**

Vote: 4-0 Unanimously passed

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#### 5. **Business**

##### **A. Regional Plan Update (20 minutes)**

Sara Dechter, Comprehensive and Neighborhood Planning Manager, City of Flagstaff  
Requested Action: Informational

Sara Dechter introduced herself and gave a presentation on the upcoming Flagstaff Regional Plan update. The Regional Plan is a guiding document for the City and County, provides community vision, goals and policies, and fits into the legal framework for land use management. It does not create a mandate for or against development or automatically update zoning ordinances. It influences the Capital Improvement Plan and City Budget. It is not unchangeable and is meant to be adaptable. The Regional Plan is adopted by Council every 10 years and sent directly to the ballot to be ratified by voters. For the County, the Regional Plan is an amendment to the County Comprehensive Plan adopted by the Board of Supervisors and provides refinement and a map for the Flagstaff area.

Ms. Dechter then went over the history of the 2030 plan. The public had wanted the government to be accountable for public derived policy outcomes and policies, a guide for physical and economical development, priorities for public action, a direction for the private sector, and to encourage predictable decision making. Some of the plan's amendments over the last few years has been to ensure implementability. Ms. Dechter described lessons learned from the previous Regional Plan process. They learned not to create a one size fits all group to solve all problems for the plan, but instead to bring in the right people and right agenda at the right time in the process and to look at the public participation plan as a progressive series of decisions that are easily revisited and refined throughout the process. They learned that they need to have public members and experts working together side by side for the entire process. There is also a need for outside, neutral facilitation to be available. Equity and inclusion need to be considered. There needs to be a clear set of expectations for how to endorse the plan, as previously the Board of Supervisors and the City ended up adopting two different plans.

Ms. Dechter is currently working on a draft public participation plan, however this will not be used for a few months. Current outreach efforts are working to get feedback on the public participation process and to provide a road map so people can think about how and when they want to be involved. They are producing self-evaluation papers to look at specific issues, how they're addressed in the current plan, and if these goals are being achieved. They are also setting the stage over the next year to get the process started by including some youth activities and by working with BPAC to bring artists in to work on visual and emotional activities with

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values. After that, they will work on how to build collaboration, and how to synthesize public participation and data. They are currently considering several techniques like study circles, informal working groups, or citizen assemblies. In the background this year, they will be looking at how to manage data. The public process and data management process will heavily involve emerging issues such as carbon neutrality. The Regional Plan is not the fastest way to reach those goals, but it can ensure discretionary decisions made by Council have this issue at their heart. They would also like to include policies on equity, affordable housing, public health, and emerging technologies. Plan creation will benefit from a diverse and inclusive advisory committee. Ms. Dechter outlined the process as drafting chapters, drafting policies, debating them in the committee, sending out to public, and having workshops. A 60 day or 90-day comment period is required. It will then go to legal review, which is an intensive and time-consuming process. Lastly, they will need to confirm how this document is adopted.

Chair McCain expressed appreciation for the focus on process, inclusion, and the review on previous efforts. He commented that it seemed like in the previous process there was a big commitment of time and energy, and hearing that their work with experts was difficult was concerning. He said that hearing that the process will emerge a little more organically is an exciting prospect, and he is looking forward to being a part of it and hearing how it goes.

Vice Chair White expressed appreciation for the update and said he was glad to see that there might be more of a focus on equity. He noted that last year has exacerbated a lot of crises, and it's going to be important moving forward in terms of how to deal with things in the short term and how to maintain community resilience in the face of the housing crisis that is spiraling out of control among other things. He asked in relation to the advisory committee if the Sustainability Commission would have a subcommittee as part of the process or if there would be members of the Sustainability Commission as a part of the advisory committee. Ms. Dechter responded that they are probably a year out from deciding on that process and that they are open to suggestions. She noted that they appreciate the expertise of the commissions, but they are more concerned that the committee reflects Flagstaff's population as a whole. She expressed that it has been a challenge to reflect the diversity of the City's demographics in the commissions. Vice Chair White added that a danger when creating committees is that the values of the committee will strongly reflect those from the people creating it, and encouraged the inclusion of people whose values reflect that of the Greater Flagstaff community and other demographics.

Chair McCain asked when the Commission could expect an update. Ms. Dechter responded that she is looking to put together self-evaluation papers over the next few

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months and is hoping to be back in the fall to go over the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities assessments. She asked if there were any topics that the Commission would be interested in that Staff might not think of as being sustainability issues to include in the analysis. Chair McCain listed the social economic and environmental aspects of sustainability, highlighting the economic piece as one that the Commission doesn't have a lot of attention towards. It would be important to talk about what the economics look like in relation to climate neutrality and other issues such as housing affordability and interactions that are important to pay attention to. Vice Chair White reiterated social sustainability issues and economic sustainability issues and how those interrelate. He said one of the big crises going forward is wages in Flagstaff related to the general cost of living including housing. He said general sustainability issues are also part of the Commission's purview and related to ecological sustainability issues. Chair McCain asked what was meant by self-evaluations, and if this was to see if the goals or objectives of the current plan were met. Ms. Dechter confirmed this by saying it would be for the broader goals. She said the plan wanted to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The idea is to reflect on how well this was done before trying to set new goals and new benchmarks.

**B. APS Update (20 minutes)**

Judson Tillinghast, APS

Requested Action: Informational

Judson Tillinghast introduced himself and gave an update on what APS is working on. He said their four main pillars are being clean, affordable, reliable, and customer centric. APS has made a clean energy commitment that is broken into two phases: through 2050 and through 2030. They are focusing on increasing renewable energy, decreasing coal, more battery storage, the support function of natural gas, and focusing on the economic growth of Arizona. Their clean energy commitment is to provide 100% clean and carbon free electricity by 2050, and providing 45% renewable and 65% clean energy by 2030. They are also accelerating the closure of their last coal plant to 2031. They are becoming a leader in solar, with over 1.5 gigawatts of total solar capacity and over 120 thousand rooftop solar systems in their territory. They will be building 300-400 megawatts of renewables for the rest of this decade. They recently signed a wind contract for 200 megawatts, and have others in the works. Currently, 50% of the energy APS delivers is carbon free. They have been working with municipalities and corporations to do backup generation in a clean way. He discussed various options to reach their 2030 goals, such as battery storage, thermal storage, and hydrogen. They received a DOE grant to build a hydrogen facility with an electrolysis machine where they can use clean produced hydrogen to blend into natural gas to reduce emissions. He said many people think hydrogen could be the solution to give utilities a flexible resource to replace natural gas, but the economics have to come

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down further. Mr. Tillinghast then mentioned the Cool Rewards Program. Those with a smart thermostat can enroll. It will look at how energy is used and will precool a space in off peak hours so that the AC will cycle less during peak hours. This program provides a way for customers to save money and uses energy in a more sustainable manner by using more midday solar energy and using less carbon intense resources. APS currently has a special where benefits from enrolling completely offset the cost of a thermostat. They have also developed the Solar Communities Program to bring benefit to low-income households unable to invest in solar energy. APS pays \$30 a month to rent rooftop space and install an APS owned and operated system. So far, 716 have been installed. Multifamily and nonresidential options are available as well. APS is working to encourage electric vehicles with the Take Charge AZ program. They installed infrastructure for level 2 charging at Flagstaff City Hall and other locations, recognizing that more charging infrastructure encourages people to invest in electric vehicles and helps to accelerate that transition. Mr. Tillinghast also presented on their Microgrid program. He explained that customers in need of back up generation tend to buy dirty tier 2 diesels. APS is unable to use those resources for anything. They developed a program that uses cleaner resources that can be shared. These grids can provide capacity for the whole grid in the event of an outage. He said it was better for APS to provide these cleaner options that benefit the whole grid. Mr. Tillinghast then showed a graph displaying the mismatch of when facilities produce solar energy and when customers demand energy. He said that natural gas is important for flexibility and reliability. APS is currently discussing three different portfolio options on how to meet their 2035 goals. The major difference is how much storage to add vs natural gas. Natural gas will be replaced by a combination of renewables and storage.

Commissioner Chamberlain mentioned that he has a company called Cozy Home that is a participating contractor with the Home Performance Program through APS. He expressed appreciation for the presentation and excitement over what APS has been working on the past couple years. He asked if the projections and models shown accounted for electric vehicles coming onto the grid for charging and the electrification of the grid, noting that part of the Flagstaff Carbon Neutrality Plan is to electrify houses and transition out of natural gas. Mr. Tillinghast said it had been taken into account, recognizing that it is a moving target but adding that they have forecasts for solar, electric vehicles, and other things. He added that reliability comes first, and that they have to be prepared to serve. Commissioner Chamberlain said manufacturers have announced features for their electric vehicles that can bring electricity onto the grid from their vehicle. He asked if Mr. Tillinghast saw that as being a part of their demand side management. Mr. Tillinghast responded that it fit right in, though they're not sure how to forecast it at this point. He said it is a technology APS is trying to understand and test out, but would be a good investment. He said coordination in

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managing the reliability piece will be important. He also mentioned concerns about batteries going into storm mode with the monsoons. If all batteries try to charge at the same time, it could bring the grid down. There are policy, safety, and reliability questions that need to be figured out and will be over time.

Vice Chair White said that hydrogen is not so much an energy source as it is an energy carrier and asked if APS were to switch to hydrogen if they would commit to source their hydrogen from sources that don't produce carbon. Mr. Tillinghast said that is the plan but that the technology isn't ready yet. They have a project working to figure that out. Solar facilities weren't designed to be flexible, and if there's excess and nowhere to send the energy, they end up turning it off. The thought was to have electrolysis and generate hydrogen instead of turning it off. He said the problem is right now, the hydrology machines are so expensive, it only makes sense to run them 24/7. Vice Chair White said a lot of natural gas is produced by fracking which has its own ecological footprint. He asked if APS had a stance on how much they are willing to get from fracked gas and if they would be willing to avoid natural gas from that source. Mr. Tillinghast said he was not familiar, but that he knew there were a couple basins they get gas from. He said that gas is a key factor for reliability because it can ramp up and down. Vice Chair White asked if there were any internal or external consequences on APS if they do not meet their carbon free goals. Mr. Tillinghast answered that there were not, they are self-imposed goals, and they believe it is the right thing to do.

#### **C. Update on Commission Presentation to City Council (15 minutes)**

Chair McCain

Requested Action: Informational

Chair McCain gave an update on the Commission Presentation he and Mr. Lenzen gave on March 23<sup>rd</sup>. Staff had reached out to Chair McCain a couple weeks ahead of time to figure out how to do the presentation. This is something new for the Council and was sparked by challenges in communication between Council and the Commissions. He said a presentation will happen again with more time to prepare in the future and invited any Commissioners with interest in creating or giving a presentation to Council to express that interest when it next comes up. He noted he would have liked to have had more Commissioners involved, but due to the time frame they went with what they had.

Mr. Lenzen and Chair McCain gave Council an introduction on how the Commission was created and gave them a rundown on the Commissioners and current efforts. They focused on five topic areas of work: the grants, climate action, feedback to City planning efforts, collaboration with City commissions, and listening tours of City operations. In talking about the grants, they mentioned the potential for additional

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funds and walked through grants previously awarded, including to the Compost Crowd, a graduate student at NAU, TerraBIRDS, the Flagstaff Arboretum, Oakley Anderson-Moore, Darrien Benally, the Southside Community Association, and Threaded Together. They also talked about what the working group and Commission have done to update the application review process. Other talking points included work done on the climate neutrality plan, a summary of other things the Commission has given feedback on, and listening tours. They went on to talk about collaboration and the BPAC Mountain Line project, as well as upcoming work, such as the mission and vision statement. Lastly, they covered challenges and concerns, such as being offered a defining role, how to get more robust dialogue, and how to manage an increase in funding, as well as ideas for consideration such as organizing community forums. Chair McCain and Mr. Lenzen received some positive general feedback from Council for the work that the Commission is doing. Chair McCain said they will likely do this again in several months. When they are given a time frame, he will invite other Commissioners to present.

**D. Mission and Vision Next Steps (30 minutes)**

Chair McCain

Requested Action: Discussion and Vote

Chair McCain shared the Mission and Vision statements the working group came up with and invited feedback. The working group reviewed all the data from the previous meeting and worked to come up with language for mission and vision statements. Chair McCain read the vision statement the working group wrote: "The Vision of the City of Flagstaff Sustainability Commission is to create a culture and community that thrives in response to the climate crisis." He mentioned that the working group liked the idea of a thriving community and wanted to talk about culture and community, as these were the pieces they felt were important. Commissioner Kauffman commented that the working group tried to go through the language that everyone had put in and that's what they came up with. She said they were open to feedback, but that she thought they did a pretty good job combining what they saw was most important to everyone.

Commissioner Chamberlain said he thought it was great and that he liked how concise it was. He said it touched on all the points.

Vice Chair White said he liked a lot of the language but would prefer that they talk about the larger ecological crisis rather than just the climate crisis. He appreciated the emphasis on culture and community. Chair McCain asked how that would fit language wise and if there was something they could add that would better encompass those larger issues. Vice Chair White responded that they could replace climate crisis with ecological crisis and add something about "doing our part to mitigate the ecological crisis." Commissioner Konkel said she thought it was great as written, and that the working group hit the nail on

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the head with a succinct and correct statement. She said she saw Vice Chair White's point about being honed in only on the climate crisis, but didn't think that ecological crisis is relatable or understandable to the public. She said she thought climate crisis was language everyone is more familiar with. Chair McCain asked Vice Chair White if he was deadest on these changes or if he was comfortable with the vision as written. Vice Chair White agreed that it was fine.

**Moved by Chair McCain, seconded by Commissioner Kauffman to approve the Vision Statement as written: "The Vision of the City of Flagstaff Sustainability Commission is to create a culture and community that thrives in response to the climate crisis."**

Vote: 5-0, Unanimously passed

Chair McCain then moved to the mission statement. He said the working group thought a lot of the potential mission language was pretty aspirational and that there were ideas of what the Commission might do. He said one piece that came up repeatedly was more community engagement and involvement. The working group was reluctant to dive too deeply into saying that. He said the Sustainability Section is doing so much of that as well. The working group really boiled down to what the Commission has been doing and took out aspirational elements. He read the mission statement the working group had written: "The Mission of the City of Flagstaff Sustainability Commission is to advise Sustainability Section Staff on matters related to climate and sustainability, distribute the Neighborhood Sustainability Grants, and provide feedback to City Council on sustainability issues." Commissioner Kauffman said that when the working group was going through the proposed language and ideas, they wanted to get back to what the Commission has actually been doing and spending time on. When they discussed community outreach, they noted that the Commission isn't doing that right now and they weren't sure if the resources were there to do that in the future. She said in thinking about where the Commission spends its time, the working group really wanted to include the Sustainability Grants. They didn't want some of the aspirational items to be included in a way that became a requirement. They also recognized that Staff is working on those items full time, and they didn't want to assume more active roles if it was going to hold up timelines. Chair McCain noted that he also liked that the mission reflects on how to create culture and community that thrives and is a nice connection between the mission and vision statements.

Commissioner Konkel expressed appreciation and offered a wording suggestion. She said the wording "distribute Neighborhood Sustainability Grants" sounded too procedural. She thought language such as "support community projects through Neighborhood Sustainability Grants" or "support community members with Neighborhood Sustainability Grants" captured a little bit more of what the Commission actually does in that process. She noted that she liked the three things featured and thought it described what the Commission does well. Chair McCain asked if there was a preference for either of the



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changes. Commissioner Konkel responded that she thought they captured the same idea and put the community members back into the statement in a way that reflects what the Commission actually does. Chair McCain agreed that the community piece being included was important. Commissioner Chamberlain agreed that the change sounded more comprehensive and encapsulated what the Commission does. Commissioner Kauffman also appreciated the suggestion. Vice Chair White said it sounded good and had no additional feedback. Chair McCain asked if there was a preference to change the wording to support community projects or community members through grants. Commissioner Kauffman said she liked projects more, as the grants support not just community members but specific projects they are working on. Chair McCain agreed. Commissioner Konkel recommended removing the "the" before Neighborhood Sustainability Grants. Chair McCain Agreed.

Commissioner Konkel mentioned that the word sustainability is in the statement five times, but she was not sure if that mattered for the Sustainability Commission. Commissioner Kauffman noted that many of the times it is mentioned, it is part of a formal name. Commissioner Konkel agreed.

**Moved by Chair McCain, seconded by Commissioner Konkel to approve the Mission Statement as written: "The Mission of the City of Flagstaff's Sustainability Commission is to advise Sustainability Section Staff on matters related to climate and sustainability, support community projects through Neighborhood Sustainability Grants, and provide feedback to the City Council on sustainability issues."**

Vote: 5-0 Unanimously Passed

McCain thanked the working group and the Commission as a whole for their time. He requested to have these statements on future agendas.

**E. Update on Potential Changes to Neighborhood Sustainability Grant Program and Timeline (5 minutes)**

Marissa Molloy, Administrative Assistant, City of Flagstaff  
Requested Action: Informational

Ms. Molloy gave an update to some potential changes to the Neighborhood Sustainability Grant. Staff has been busy creating the new timeline and coming up with some options to present to the Commission. They are mid discussion on this. She gave a recap on the current Grant amounts of \$19,500 in General Sustainability and \$6,000 in Water Conservation, and the potential increase to \$49,500 for General Sustainability. This budget will be approved by resolution in June and implemented July 1st. She then laid out a potential new Grant cycle timeline, which had advertising

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starting mid-July for an August application cycle, workshops held in August, scoring in September, presentations in September and October, final scoring in the October meeting, and funding dispersed in November. Ms. Molloy said one of the items Staff is currently discussing is the possibility of adding transportation and public health categories. They are also looking into what real projects would cost to implement so they can provide recommendations for award amounts in the different categories. She expressed appreciation for the feedback given in the last meeting about avoiding multiple grant cycles, and noted that Staff is considering this as they work on the options and recommendations they will bring forward in the May meeting. She noted that the grading activity that was originally going to take place in the April meeting would be pushed to the June meeting, and added that any questions, feedback, or ideas could be emailed to her.

#### **F. Sustainability Section Update (5 minutes)**

Marissa Molloy, Administrative Assistant, City of Flagstaff

Requested Action: Informational

Ms. Molloy gave a brief update on what Sustainability Section Staff is working on. The Drop-off Day event is on April 24th, from 10 am to 2 pm at the Flagstaff Police Department where medications, sensitive documents, batteries, lightbulbs, and electronics can be dropped off for disposal. They are no longer taking liquid waste such as latex paint. The Fix-it Clinic will be held on May 1st, from 10 am – 2 pm at CoCo-Op by appointment only. Staff is also hosting a One A Day In May anti-litter campaign and Litterati challenge during the month of May. To join, download the Litterati app through the Google Play or Apple stores and use challenge code "1ADAYMAY." This event helps combat litter in Flagstaff, but also helps Staff identify litter hotspots. Prizes will be available to the top three litter pickers at the end of May. Staff will be meeting with community members on April 28th to discuss next steps in the Materials Recovery Facility planning and will update Commission in the May or June meeting. They also plan to bring other future Materials Management-related initiatives to the Commission for input. Community garden plots are still available. To register, visit [www.TerraBIRDS.org](http://www.TerraBIRDS.org) There has been an increase in volunteers cleaning up their Adopt-an-Ave and Adopt-a-FUTS sections, and staff is nearing completions of FUTS signage installation. Climate staff has been presenting the Carbon Neutrality Plan to over 30 groups this month. They will be going to Council on May 11<sup>th</sup> to discuss Carbon Dioxide Removal and on May 18<sup>th</sup> to present the updated Carbon Neutrality Plan. The document that goes before council will include some revisions compared to the current public draft that was presented on March 9th based on feedback from Council, staff and the public, and general editing. Staff expects the revised draft to be available in early May. Council will have the option to adopt the Carbon Neutrality Plan in the May 18<sup>th</sup> meeting. The most recent Carbon Neutrality Plan Survey closed on April 20<sup>th</sup>. Staff received 226 responses and is working to synthesize results. The HEE Online Course has been translated into Spanish as a part of a capstone project for an NAU student in the Climate Science and

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Solutions program. Anabeth is a native Spanish speaker that is also pursuing a certificate in translation and science communication and this project helped fulfill some of her certificate requirements.

**6. To and From (5 Minutes) – All**

Chair McCain asked about a webinar Ms. Antonopoulos had attended. She responded that she was on a panel for an Earth Day webinar put on by high school students in Flagstaff. Discussions started at 4:00 pm with a focus on youth activism, and it ended with students asking poignant questions to the panel about climate action, renewable energy and clean energy, and how Staff is moving forward in talking about climate action with constituents around the community.

**7. Future Agenda Item Requests**

None

**8. Adjournment**

The meeting of the Sustainability Commission on April 22, 2021 adjourned at 6:20 pm.

**CERTIFICATION OF POSTING OF NOTICE**

The undersigned hereby certifies that a copy of the foregoing notice was duly posted at Flagstaff City Hall on \_\_\_\_\_, at \_\_\_\_\_ a.m./p.m. in accordance with the statement filed by the Disability Awareness Commission with the City Clerk. This notice has been posted on the City's website and can be downloaded at [www.flagstaff.az.gov](http://www.flagstaff.az.gov).

Dated this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2020.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jenny Niemann, Sustainability Commission Staff Liaison