



Agenda

RECORD OF ACTION

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION An Advisory Body to the Board of Supervisors

February 28, 2022, 5:00 P.M.

****Meeting Remotely Until Further Notice****

To slow the spread of COVID-19, in lieu of a public gathering, the Sustainability Commission meeting will be accessible via live streaming to all members of the public as permitted by Government Code section 54953(e).

PERSONS WHO WISH TO ADDRESS THE SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION DURING PUBLIC COMMENT

Mike Moore, Member, District 3, Chair	Wes Sullens, Member, District 4	Chuck Leonard, At-Large, Business
Nick Despota, Member, District 1, Vice Chair	Brandon Matson, Alternate, District 4	Marisha Farnsworth, At-Large, Business
Shoshana Wechsler, Alternate, District 1	Charles Davidson, Member, District 5	Isabella Zizi, At-Large, Environmental Justice
Victoria Smith, Member, District 2,	Renee Fernandez-Lipp, Alternate, District 5	Sarah Foster, At-Large, Environmental Justice
Chris Easter, Alternate, District 2	Luz Gomez, At-Large, Community Group	Kim Hazard, At-Large, Education
Samantha Moy, Alternate, District 3	Howdy Goudey, At-Large, Community Group	

Agenda Items:

Items may be taken out of order based on business of the day & preference of the Commission.

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

<https://cccouny-us.zoom.us/j/85863103248>

Or Telephone, Dial:

USA 214 765 0478 US Toll

USA 888 278 0254 US Toll-free

Conference code: 841892

Present: Wes Sullens
 Nick Despota
 Mike Moore
 Victoria Smith
 Brandon Matson
 Chuck Leonard
 Marisha Farnsworth
 Charles Davidson
 Renee Fernandez-Lipp
 Shoshana Wechsler
 Howdy Goudey

Absent: Kim Hazard
 Sarah Foster
 Isabella Zizi
 Luz Gomez
 Chris Easter
 Samantha Moy

Staff Present: Jody London, Sustainability Coordinator, Department of Conservation and Development
 Demian Hardman, Senior Planner, Department of Conservation and Development
 Savannah McCarthy, Climate Corps Fellow, Department of Conservation and Development
 Maureen Toms, Department of Conservation and Development

Attendees: Jan Callaghan
 Carlyn Obringer
 Carol Weed

1. Call to Order and Introductions

Wes Sullens calls meeting to order. No new members to introduce.

2. Public Comment

No public comment on items not on agenda.

3. APPROVE Record of Action for December 13, 2021, meeting

Moved: Smith Second: Moore

Minutes approved unanimously.

No public comment.

4. ELECT OFFICERS for the Sustainability Commission for 2022

Mike Moore for Chair.

Moved: Smith Second: Davidson

Nick Despota for vice chair.

Moves: Davidson Second: Moore

Officers elected unanimously.

No public comment.

5. ADOPT CALENDAR for 2022

Commission reviews calendar for coming year. The 4th meeting in December to be changed to December 12th.

Smith concerned with CAP fire resilience, add this to the work plan. Fernandez-Lipp, Davidson, Farnsworth expressed interest in adding this to the work plan. Davidson also interested in air quality as it pertains to wildfire. County staff to follow up with a meeting to continue this conversation.

Moved: Despota Second: Sullens

Calendar adopted unanimously.

6. RECEIVE UPDATE and DISCUSS Recommended Definition for “Sustainability”

Ad hoc working group of Matson, Leonard, and Fernandez-Lipp presents proposed definition of sustainability. The group had two in-person meetings to discuss research on the merits of the term. See PowerPoint attached to agenda.

Matson presents research on how other organizations define sustainability. With a group this large, a working definition will help facilitate progress and collaboration.

Fernandez-Lipp presents ad hoc working groups recommended definition of sustainability: “meeting the environmental health, social equity, and economic needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet those same needs.” This proposed definition was derived from the United Nations (UN’s) traditional definition comprising of three pillars (social, environmental, and economic). Note that equity was a big part in the formulation of this. Three recommendations for the Commission: adopt definition, recommend that the Board adopts, then recommend this definition be used to advise the Climate Action Plan (CAP) strategies. This is how the definition will be operationalized.

Leonard then provides clarification on this proposed definition, that it’s purposefully broad, while also recognizing the goals of the County. It was intentionally created to be interpreted and will serve as general guidelines for this Commission. Leonard encourages Commission members to agree with this definition, reminding that UN’s adoption is sound.

Commission discussion:

Commission discusses potential interpretation of definition. Concerns include misinterpretation of the definition, particularly that the economic category is problematic. Questions arise such as: What are the economic needs of the present? What is economic growth? Is this unbounded economic growth, which in that case is not sustainable? What are the needs of the present? It is controversial, because what is economically advantageous for one group may not be so for another. How will this change how we work as a Commission? Would this change how we operate and make decisions? Because it has been brought down from the UN level to that of the County, it may have some nuances attached. Overall, some Commission members suggest that there be more discussion before adopting proposed definition.

Others pointed out that this definition did what it was supposed to do: create conversation. With so many educated opinions, group can revise definition forever and never find one that everyone agrees on. It’s meant to be vague. The goal was just to put something together. Questioning how it impacts the economy is the point. Moving forward, this definition provides a constructive framework with these three pillars and will encourage thinking about how actions affect this generation and future generations.

One member pointed out that the County has a definition of sustainability included in 2015 CAP: “Community use of natural resources in a way that doesn’t jeopardize the ability of future generations to live and prosper.” In comparison, the 2015 definition is too vague; this proposed one is so much better! In an effort of time, Commission should adopt definition and move on.

There was no public comment.

The Commission asked the ad hoc working group to perform research to further this

conversation. The working group agreed to do additional research around definition of sustainability that other jurisdictions use.

Moved: Despota Second: Sullens

Motion carries with one objection. Leonard votes nay, with the recommendation that other members join on the ad hoc working group.

7. RECEIVE UPDATE and DISCUSS Recommendation from Green Building Working Group

Despota presented the report of the working group (Despota and Easter) on low-carbon concrete, attached to the meeting agenda. He reminded the Commission that the present report revisits its June 2021 report, which included five recommendations to the Commission for the reduction of embodied carbon in the built environment. The Commission adopted all but the low-carbon concrete recommendation, which it asked the working group to research further.

Building codes regulating concrete mixes have lagged behind current technologies. But Marin County and several Bay Area cities have recently adopted low-carbon concrete building codes. Because public agencies purchase approximately one-third of all concrete, they have significant market leverage.

Concrete, Despota said, has four basic ingredients: sand, water, limestone aggregate, and cement. Of the four, cement contributes by far the greatest level of GHG emissions. Therefore, the most efficient way to reduce concrete's global warming potential (GWP) is by substituting part of the cement with another material that has equivalent "binding" capacity but is less carbon-intensive. (The other methods for reducing concrete's GWP is the use of a synthetic or recycled-concrete aggregate, and sequestering CO2 into concrete during manufacturing and/or mixing.)

The most widely used "substitute cementitious materials" (SCMs) are fly ash and slag. In a 2021 paper, the Sierra Club stated that handling of these finely ground materials presents a potential PM2.5 health hazard. It also expressed concern about potentially monetizing a byproduct of the fossil fuel industry.

While its concerns are not irrelevant, the Sierra Club paper presented no evidence to support claims of health impacts resulting from mixing fly ash or slag into concrete. A public health expert Despota consulted also stated that proper handling precautions must be followed in the use of any finely-ground materials, including the "natural" SCMs the Sierra Club recommended.

The concrete industry is strongly driven to bring less carbon-intensive products to market. Therefore, the best regulatory approach must allow flexibility. A future-proofed building code will set maximum permissible limits on either cement content of concrete, or the calculated global warming potential of a project. How to design within those limits will be the decisions of engineers, architects and developers, made in consideration of current market conditions and technologies.

The Working Group therefore asks the Sustainability Commission to recommend to the Board of Supervisors direct staff to study adoption of low-carbon concrete standards, implemented through a reach code applicable to all new construction in unincorporated Contra Costa County.

Commission comment:

- Has this topic been revisited with County staff? Easter clarifies that County is waiting for direction from CalTrans.*
- State agencies already buy low carbon materials through Buy Clean. Concrete not on that list, but there is movement.*
- Caveat of public health. The safety of green cement. For plant that was close to community, attorney general shut project down. Threshold of PM2.5 and smaller was not met. Suggestion that this needs to be brought back to a public health discussion. Can the facilities be covered? Need to isolate the public from these projects, including trucks driving to and from them. Consider this caveat without damaging this proposal.*
- Investigate the potential of recycled materials such as crushed rocks as aggregates rather than synthetic materials. Policy signals need to direct low carbon concrete in the right direction.*

Public comment: Jan Callaghan, appreciate watching out for health impacts of PM 2.5 because we have too much of it in County. Thank you for considering these health impacts, especially the disadvantaged communities!

Motion for the Commission to recommend to the Board of Supervisors that staff be directed to study the adoption of low-carbon concrete standards, and that those standards be implemented through reach codes that would apply to all new construction in unincorporated Contra Costa County.

Moved: Sullens Seconds: Farnsworth

The motion was adopted unanimously.

8. RECEIVE UPDATE on Status of In-Person Meetings of Sustainability Commission and DISCUSS Options

Jody London summarized the current ability of the Board of Supervisors and advisory bodies to meet remotely. Remote meetings were first allowed under the Governor's emergency declaration and continued with Assembly Bill 361. The Board of Supervisors on a monthly basis approves the conduct of remote meetings for the Board of Supervisors and advisory bodies. This is required under law to be revisited on a monthly basis.

London reviewed the requirements for remote meetings that will go into effect when the emergency declaration ends. These are included in the staff report. London noted that the Board of Supervisors is clear that even when meetings return to in person, the public should be able to continue to participate remotely.

The Commissioners took a poll on whether members prefer meeting remotely or in person. There was no consensus. See attachment for poll results (Attachment A).

There was no public comment.

9. RECEIVE UPDATE on and DISCUSS Implementation of Climate Emergency Resolution

London provided an update on the Interdepartmental Climate Action Task Force. The Green Government Group (G3) Champion Program is in process of launching. The G3 Champions will help County departments implement best practices from the County's Green Business Program. The California Green Business Program has developed a dashboard specific to Contra Costa County to track greenhouse gas reductions and other metrics. Other updates include the new energy manager in the Public Works Department started last week; the Economic Transition earmark request was approved last week in the Omnibus Appropriations bill; there are staff changes in the County's economic development group; and the all-electric ordinance was adopted by the Board of Supervisors in January and goes next to the California Energy Commission for approval.

Commission comment: What are examples of Green Business Program Best Practices? London said she would forward information.

There was no public comment.

10. RECEIVE Reports from Sustainability Commission members and alternates, and PROVIDE DIRECTION as needed

Goudey attended an MCE Power Hour last week. Goudey encourages other Commission members to join this noontime talks that outline a lot of MCE's programs. Topics include EV charging, demand response, etc. See following for more information:

- o Community Power Coalition (representatives of community groups can join) to join contact: engagement@mceCleanEnergy.org*
- o Links to past Community Power Coalition presentation slides <https://www.mcecleanenergy.org/energy-equity/#communitypower>*
- o Powerhour talks get announced on their Facebook page and email list for Community Power Coalition <https://m.facebook.com/mceCleanEnergy/>*
- o Energy 101 informational web pages on various topics <https://www.mcecleanenergy.org/category/energy-101/>*

Despota announced that a youth march and rally for No-Drilling Contra Costa is happening on Saturday March 12th from 1-3 in Antioch. This is a chance to support young people who are rallying to stop extractive industries in the County. Despota encourages group to attend. See Attachment B for more information.

Davidson provided information during the meeting in the Zoom chat, which is provided in Attachment B.

Moore followed up on the Bay Conservation and Development Commission and Delta Stewardship Council presentation from the December meeting. The Board of Supervisors voted to support the Bay Adapt platform sponsored by BCDC in February. Moore encouraged others to sign up for stakeholder meetings and encouraged people to reach out to him directly to Moore to coordinate meeting attendance.

Moore reviewed a written report he included with the agenda that suggests the Sustainability Commission recommend the Board implement the findings from the 2019 UC Berkeley Goldman School of Public Policy report to form a working group in Contra Costa County to develop a work plan for adapting to rising tides.

Moves: Moore Seconds: Smith

Motion passes unanimously.

Staff will work with the Chair to convey this recommendation to the Board.

There was no public comment.

11. RECEIVE Report from Sustainability Coordinator

In addition to the written report published in the agenda, Jody London, Sustainability Coordinator, notes that the County is getting attention for the all-electric ordinance. There is exciting work in the Health Services Department, where the new position of Chief of Climate and Health was recently created. Health Services is joining Practice Green Health, a network of healthcare organizations that focuses on reducing medical waste. Other updates include the County has applied for a grant from the Bay Area Air Quality Air Management District for filters for clean air centers; the Sustainability Group in the Department of Conservation and Development is bringing on two new Planners (one of whom was the Climate Corps Fellow last year); and Public Works hired a new Energy Manager. London also acknowledged a correction on the December 2021 minutes (2021 versus 2022 Electrification Reach Code).

12. RECEIVE Report from Sustainability Commission Chair and IDENTIFY TOPICS for next report to Sustainability Committee

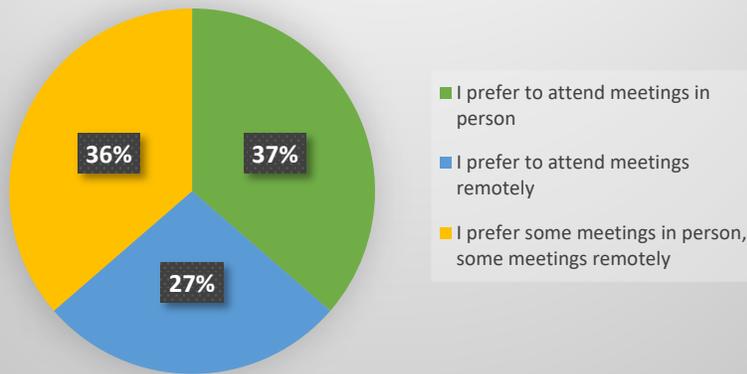
Despota noted topics include the definition of Sustainability and low carbon concrete. Davidson recommended the Commission consider the SB9 housing element, and issues with more expensive, larger houses being in demand, as a topic. Moore recommended Davidson share more on this next meeting.

13. The next meeting is currently scheduled for April 25, 2022.

14. Adjourn.

**ATTACHMENT A:
POLL RESULTS: IN-PERSON MEETINGS**

Poll 1: In general (i.e., when we are past the pandemic), if State law is modified to permit remote meetings, what is your preference for Sustainability Commission meeting format?



Poll 2: Under what circumstances would you be comfortable returning to in-person Sustainability Commission meetings? Please check all that apply (multiple choice)

