

**Whatcom County
Council Climate Action and Natural Resources Committee**

**COUNTY COURTHOUSE
311 Grand Avenue, Ste #105
Bellingham, WA 98225-4038
(360) 778-5010**



Committee Minutes - Final

**Tuesday, September 26, 2023
8:50 AM
Hybrid Meeting**

**HYBRID MEETING - ADJOURNS BY 9:40 A.M. (PARTICIPATE IN-PERSON, SEE
REMOTE JOIN INSTRUCTIONS AT www.whatcomcounty.us/joinvirtualcouncil, OR
CALL 360.778.5010)**

COUNCILMEMBERS

Todd Donovan
Ben Elenbaas
Kaylee Galloway

CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Dana Brown-Davis, C.M.C.

Call To Order

Committee Chair Kaylee Galloway called the meeting to order at 8:51 a.m. in a hybrid meeting.

Roll Call

Present: 3 - Todd Donovan, Ben Elenbaas, and Kaylee Galloway

Also Present: Barry Buchanan, Tyler Byrd, Carol Frazey, and Kathy Kershner

Announcements

Special Presentation

1. [AB2023-597](#) Presentation on the sustainability of Whatcom County forests

Ellyn Murphy, Climate Impact Advisory Committee Chair, read from a presentation (on file) and answered questions. She answered whether managing forests for maximum sustained yield of timber versus managing by maximizing return on investment is to make an argument that, with longer rotation cycles, we would be growing bigger trees that could result in more mass (or cross-laminated) timber, and she stated it is not necessarily related to mass timber but it would be better for the climate. She answered questions about the Climate Impact Advisory Committee's (CIAC) recommendations on planting for climate management and adaptation. She also answered whether funds from the Climate Commitment Act to support transaction costs of getting a carbon market established are being used in practice now for a functioning market and whether they are designed for private land owners or for beneficiary districts for land that the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) might administer. She stated, to her knowledge, the Legislature has not decided yet how to disburse those funds and this is just a suggested use of the funds.

Councilmembers discussed the presentation with Murphy and the following:

- Tyler Schroeder, Executive's Office

They discussed the CIAC recommendation of hiring a sustainable forestry staff member, and Murphy's perspective on the management of and regulations associated with DNR-managed lands and how DNR is doing.

This agenda item was PRESENTED.

Committee Discussion

1. [AB2023-541](#) Discussion of a proposed ordinance to establish a Forestry Task Force
Galloway briefed the Councilmembers on the ordinance and the intent behind establishing this task force.

Tyler Schroeder, Director of Administrative Services, stated the Administration has been coordinating with the departments on what Whatcom County currently does as it relates to forest management and how we could expand that focus to make it more of a core service. He stated staff and the Administration see three components in the purpose and function of the task force:

- Climate resiliency
- Forest management on County lands
- Department of Natural Resources (DNR) trust lands

He stated the Administration is concerned with the overall administration of this Forest Resilience Task Force as it relates to the Forestry Advisory Committee (FAC). Working together to combine those and providing this timeline up to 2025 may be something we should talk through as well. He stated the Council as a whole could maybe provide a little bit more guidance to the FAC and open up the membership, and identify deliverables for the Forest Resilience Task Force that the Council would like to see back by the update of the Comprehensive Plan.

Councilmembers and staff discussed the difference between the draft ordinance and the substitute ordinance, the hope of getting guidance from the task force regarding climate impacts on the forest in the watershed, whether this was formally run through and reviewed by the FAC, whether the two committees should be combined, having further discussion on the timeline for the Request for Proposals to develop a forest management plan for Lake Whatcom Park, and asking for recommendations from the various advisory committees and commissions listed in the ordinance.

This agenda item was DISCUSSED.

Items Added by Revision

There were no agenda items added by revision.

Other Business

There was no other business.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:46 a.m.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

Kaylee Galloway-via email 10/2/2023

Dana Brown-Davis, Council Clerk

Kaylee Galloway, Committee Chair

Kristi Felbinger, Minutes Transcription

SIGNED COPY ON FILE