

**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, October 10, 2023
9 AM
Hybrid Meeting**

**HYBRID MEETING - ADJOURNS BY 9:55 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 9:01 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

Committee Discussion and Recommendation to Council

1. [AB2023-640](#) Ordinance establishing a task force to develop a Whatcom County Forest Resilience Plan

Galloway briefed the Councilmembers.

Tyler Schroeder, Director of Administrative Services, referred to a “Memo from the Executive” (on file) which gives feedback on the ordinance from the Administration. He answered whether the Executive is saying in the memo that there is just too much staff requested for supporting the committee in its present form, and stated they do request to limit the involvement, if the task force is formed, to one County employee designated by the Executive who would be the Administration’s central point of contact and would coordinate with the rest of the staff who are working on forest management. The co-management with Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is where they would need to add some capacity and get a sense from the Council about what that should look like.

Galloway moved to amend 2.170.040 (A-C) to strike B and C and amend A so that it reads, “One representative from Whatcom County, appointed by the Executive;” as follows:

- 2.170.040 Permanent Members.
 - A. One representative from ~~the~~ Whatcom County, appointed by the Executive; Parks & Recreation Department;
 - ~~B. One representative from the Whatcom County Planning & Development Services Department;~~
 - ~~C. Two representatives from the Whatcom County Public Works Department;~~

Donovan stated he hopes to get feedback from this advisory committee on

how to administer forestry issues across the different County departments.

Kayla Schott-Bresler, Strategic Initiatives Special Programs Manager, stated staff has developed a land management committee and they have looked at a mechanism for coordinating across departments within County government.

Schroeder answered whether this group could share with the City in terms of managing the land they have acquired that is forestry.

Councilmembers discussed whether we have been invited by DNR to co-manage their State-mandated properties, why they would not just expand the capacity of the existing Forestry Advisory Committee, whether forest management is the priority they should be focusing on, a concern about reduced revenues if the task force puts a stop to DNR harvesting, the intent for this task force and how it might engage with DNR, and how issues around forestry and climate have changed since the Forestry Advisory Committee was formed.

Galloway repeated her motion to amend 2.170.040 (A) and strike B and C.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 2 - Donovan and Galloway

Nay: 1 - Elenbaas

Galloway moved to amend Exhibit A 2.170.080 to so that it reads:

2.170.080 Committee Staffing and Funding Support.

The Task Force will have full support from the Whatcom County Council, and will coordinate with the Executive's office, and relevant department staff. The Council may provide, through the budget process, funding for locally delivered paid consultant assistance to conduct and complete its tasks in an efficient and effective manner.

Councilmembers discussed the motion.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Elenbaas, Donovan, and Galloway

Nay: 0

Donovan moved that the "Substitute" Ordinance be RECOMMENDED FOR ADOPTION WITH PROPOSED AMENDMENT(S).

Schroeder spoke about the comments they received, which are in the agenda packet.

Galloway stated the version they worked off of today is the “Substitute Ordinance for 10.10.2023,” so a revised substitute ordinance with today’s amendments is what they are voting on to forward to the full Council.

Donovan's motion that the substitute Ordinance be RECOMMENDED FOR ADOPTION WITH PROPOSED AMENDMENT(S) carried by the following vote:

Aye: 2 - Donovan, and Galloway

Nay: 1 - Elenbaas

Committee Discussion

1. [AB2023-667](#) Discussion of a draft resolution requesting that the Whatcom County Executive and department staff propose amendments to the Whatcom County Code to support clean energy

Galloway briefed the Councilmembers and stated this is for discussion only. She stated if emerging clean energy technologies are not in our code, they need to be written into it and this will be the first of a multi-step process in updating our code. This resolution focuses on three energy technologies (solar, geothermal, and hydrogen).

Donovan asked whether we are asking staff to come up with the code changes and asked why the Planning Commission has not been meeting very much recently.

Tyler Schroeder, Director of Administrative Services, stated the Administration’s understanding of this resolution would be to docket the items, and some may be easy to accomplish and others may take longer. He would like to acknowledge the other long list of things that are docketed.

Steve Roberge, Planning and Development Services Department, answered whether this is enough direction in terms of what needs to be docketed, why many Planning Commission meetings have been cancelled, where the Planning Commission is with the docket, and what he thinks about the scope and scale of this request and adding it to the docket. He stated the Planning Commission has checked off the majority of the docket and some things on the docket are moving over to the Comprehensive Plan update.

Councilmembers and staff discussed adding one whereas statement to a

future draft of the resolution, broadening their discussion to talk about all the things on their radar that they are thinking about docketing so they can amend the docket as a whole, the timing of the docketing process, whether they should just put these items directly on the docket as opposed to a resolution, having Planning and Development Services come and talk through what is currently on the docket and how to add to it, and bringing a proposed resolution back in two weeks for consideration.

This agenda item was DISCUSSED.

Items Added by Revision

There were no agenda items added by revision.

Other Business

Donovan stated he has been meeting with people about the Lake Whatcom Policy Group and the role of Councilmembers on the group. He stated the Policy Group has been talking to them about the direction and purpose of the meetings and how much the legislative side should be directing staff. He spoke about scheduling an update in this committee about how we are doing on meeting the 50-year Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) goals and whether the current models they have been working with are considering climate change. He would also like to know whether the stormwater utility has increased the capacity for stormwater projects. He stated there may be an ask from the Sewer District to fund studies to determine impacts of failing septic systems. He then spoke about the possibility of requesting the Conservation District to expand their urban interface fire prevention planning they have with the City to the County and getting a presentation in this committee from the Conservation District about the program.

Galloway stated she would be interested in doing another Lake Whatcom work session in this committee and stated it would be nice to have this policy discussion in conjunction with the budget for Lake Whatcom.

Tyler Schroeder, Director of Administrative Services, answered what the timing is for the County's mid-biennium budget review.

Gary Stoyka, Public Works Department, answered whether he could share information on the budget with them if they did a Lake Whatcom work session out of this committee.

Galloway stated she would work with Council staff on getting a work session scheduled.

Frazezy stated it might be good if Councilmembers could come up with questions before the next Policy Group meeting.

Elenbaas stated he has a grizzly bear meeting from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. today so he may be in and out of committee meetings.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:53 a.m.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

Kaylee Galloway-via email 10/16/2023

Dana Brown-Davis, Council Clerk

Kaylee Galloway, Committee Chair

Kristi Felbinger, Minutes Transcription

SIGNED COPY ON FILE