

September 2022 Meeting Minutes

Attending: Nancy Atwood, Barbara Menne, Chuck Jensen, Sue Lepore, Ginny Lohr, Elly Claus-McGahan, John Doherty, Jim Tuttle, Jason Berkowitz, Caranda Prater.

This ZOOM meeting screen was enhanced with closed captioning.

Action Team Reports

Tabling, Linda Cohan:

August 27, Hilltop Street Fair and **Sept. 10, EV National Drive in Steilacoom** were both fun and successful tabling events, with several new member sign-ups!

There are two more tabling opportunities to join in, no experience necessary (contact [Linda Cohan](#)):

Saturday, Oct. 1, 10-12, [Climate Change is Here: Challenges and Actions](#). CO-SPONSORED BY CCL TACOMA! SAMI/Pt. Defiance Zoo Environmental Learning Center, booths and a panel discussion including **Kristin Ang, Port of Tacoma Commissioner**.

Saturday or Sunday, Nov. 5 or 6, [Thriftapalooza](#), Tacoma Convention Center, day and time TBD. Huge second-hand sale emphasizing repurposing and sustainability; ours is one of several non-profit booths.

Get Out the Vote group, Sue Lepore:

We met Sept. 16 at **John Doherty's** house and wrote close to 300 postcards. It's really enjoyable to do this with a group and have a little social time afterward. Join us at our next meeting, **Friday, Oct. 7, 2-4 pm**, at **Sue Lepore's** house. Email [Sue Lepore](#) for details.

Candidate Interview, for Pierce County Council District 7, Paula Lonergan

[Video on our website](#)

Introduction by Sue Lepore: Paula Lonergan graduated from UPS with a BA in Public Administration after being honorably discharged as a Sergeant in the US Air Force at McChord. Her career spanned 30 years in state service, working primarily in Human Resources and Program Management. She currently chairs the Sheriff's Civil Service Commission. She served two terms on the governor's Affordable Housing Advisory Board, as well as serving on Tacoma's Human Rights Commission and on its Affirmative Action Advisory Board. Her top three campaign issues are: crime/public safety, homelessness, and affordable housing.

Questions:

1. Now that there is federal money specifically earmarked for combating climate change, what projects are already in the works that need federal funding? What priorities and other projects do you envision to bring (climate) federal funding to Pierce County?

I'm still a candidate—I'm trying to understand what the needs are for the constituents and feel that it's premature for me to look at specific legislation or ordinances. I have started looking at

the 2030 Sustainability Plan--the desire to bring in more electric and hybrid vehicles is one area where they do have a plan but no specific ordinances.

2. PC Sustainability 2030 is a GHG emission reduction plan. How will you help the council move the ball faster to see a measurable reduction in GHG emissions by the next inventory?

I believe that the county is doing their part to address this issue. A helpful project that needs to be completed is a stretch of highway around Canyon Rd that would allow trucks to get from Frederickson up into the Port. Right now the traffic congestion is so bad that trucks are sitting, burning diesel fuel for extended periods.

We have partners, the Port, the City, and can work together to try to encourage ways to reduce GHG. I think that's important and would be willing to support that. I would like to see more businesses come to the county so that people could find good paying jobs here, work where they live, and reduce commuting.

3. What is your plan for bringing green, renewable energy jobs and industries to the county? As part of that, there is an opportunity for Washington to become a green hydrogen hub and Tacoma already has an interested customer. What will you do to make that happen?

I'm not familiar with hydrogen, would need to know more about what kind of businesses would be interested in that. I would certainly support bringing green jobs into the county, it would depend on who the employer is, what the cost benefit might be, how soon can they get things up and going. Federal monies sometimes have strings attached and don't last, and the permitting can be really challenging. Sometimes we have employers come for a few years and then disappear—I would hope they'd be here for the long run.

4. Transportation is the sector with the highest GHG emissions, and freight traffic particulate pollution is responsible for health care costs related to lung diseases, heart attacks, and premature deaths as the TPCHD health equity map shows. Then there's simply traffic congestion. What does Pierce County's transportation future look like to you?

As a person who has had lung issues, I would be very interested in making sure that our air is as clean as possible! The air around Fife is terrible at certain times of day. We can make truck trips more efficient and direct there. We can encourage use of mass transit and working from home if possible. We can encourage the use of hybrids and EVs and electrify freight vehicles if possible. But I don't think we can outlaw non-electric vehicles. The Governor wants to outlaw the manufacture of fuel cars by 2035 which is pretty radical. There can be unintended consequences if we have a mandate but don't have the infrastructure in place, like in CA where they can't meet their energy needs. There are also down sides to the manufacturing of the batteries which concern me. We need to see options for people, not dictate or mandate things.

5. The Tideflats subarea plan is of huge interest to many stakeholders. As a council member what will you be looking for in terms of how the port develops to accommodate the 10,000 additional jobs laid out in the PSRC planning target?

If they're going to add more jobs, they will have to plan on locations, soil health, parking, public access, pollution control. It would be a great thing if we can get employers who are committed to green practices and buildings. Some use a lot of power--the LNG plant, if it's safe, could be

an option if we need an alternative fuel source. We need to have long term goals with zoning and permitting. These investments must have a clear payoff in the end--our tax dollars must be used very responsibly to keep the trust of the public.

Paula expressed that “this has been a very good experience and I’ve actually learned quite a bit and I thank you for being willing to meet with me.” Barbara emphasized that we were very happy to be initiating a relationship with her.

Candidate Interview, for Pierce County Council District 7, Robyn Denson

[Video on our website](#)

Introduction by John Doherty: Gig Harbor City Councilmember Denson has brought incredible energy to public service over many years. On the Gig Harbor Parks Commission since 2008, and the Gig Harbor representative to the Pierce County Conservation Future Citizen Advisory Board. She is a founding member of [Harbor Wildwatch](#), which has educated over 30 thousand people about the Salish Sea! A businesswoman, she keeps the need for jobs and entrepreneurship in mind as well as the environment.

Questions:

1. Now that there is federal money specifically earmarked for combating climate change, what projects are already in the works that need federal funding? What priorities and other projects do you envision to bring (climate) federal funding to Pierce County?

I’m extremely excited about the IRA and a level of investment in climate that we have not seen in a long time-- I think this says a lot about who we elect and what their priorities are!

The Port—a concern as well as opportunity here—for environmental protection and economic development to work together. I want to be a champion for that in a positive way.

Projects for federal dollars:

Shore power for the vessels, very important and extremely expensive.

A zero-emission truck and cargo handling program with some fleets of trucks going electric.

EV charging stations not only for cars but for some of the larger trucks that pollute more.

Fish passageways—it is extremely expensive to open up the coverts and make them fish-friendly. In Gig Harbor alone, there are over 30, requiring millions of dollars to do it well and in a way to educate the public about the need.

Stormwater infrastructure improvement—stormwater is the largest polluter of the Puget Sound. Along with this could be improvement in septic systems.

Habitat restoration, conservation of critical habitat. Recently started Gig Harbor Land Conservation Fund all about making sure there are open spaces and wildlife corridors.

Workforce development: as we move forward with these new green initiatives, we need to make sure we are bringing our working people alongside. Making sure our education communities are able to upscale folks, labor organizations have access to training programs, so that we have the workers to attract green industry to make sure we have good living wage jobs in our communities.

2. PC Sustainability 2030 is a GHG emission reduction plan. How will you help the council move the ball faster to see a measurable reduction in GHG emissions by the next inventory?

Kudos to this County Council! It's because we elected people who care about the environment that this plan exists. 2030 is not very far away; we need to be aggressive in implementing it and I'm excited to dig in if elected.

Be a leader in converting natural gas to electrification. Can do this through education and building code changes and standards. And the County must quickly look to electrifying its own fleet and buildings as well.

Encourage people to move to EVs. This is really challenging for low-income families. Everyone must benefit from this new technology, not just the wealthy.

3. What is your plan for bringing green, renewable energy jobs and industries to the county? As part of that, there is an opportunity for Washington to become a green hydrogen hub and Tacoma already has an interested customer. What will you do to make that happen?

The green hydrogen hub really looks promising and will put Tacoma on the map! The most important thing to do is to get everyone as excited about green industry as the environmental community is. Help business, labor, neighbors, etc., understand why this is good for the economy as well as the environment. The two things are not mutually exclusive.

Green businesses need to know that there is community backing and a ready workforce. Government incentives, innovation incubators like [Maritime Blue](#), and business support programs will help us grab this opportunity.

4. Transportation is the sector with the highest GHG emissions, and freight traffic particulate pollution is responsible for health care costs related to lung diseases, heart attacks, and premature deaths as the TPCHD health equity map shows. Then there's simply traffic congestion. What does Pierce County's transportation future look like to you?

Along I-5 is certainly very polluted. EVs, more charging stations, mass transit and electrification of mass transit, light rail, supporting walkers and bikers, all will cut down on congestion and pollution.

Looking at where we grow is key. We need housing and good jobs, but not to just sprawl out on the cheapest land—usually working farmlands and natural wild lands that we should be conserving. We need to think things through as a total and see how it all fits together in a way that is best for our world and our community. People can live closer together and shop, work, and go to school in vibrant walkable cities with all the services they need, while leaving undeveloped areas alone.

5. The Tideflats subarea plan is of huge interest to many stakeholders. As a council member what will you be looking for in terms of how the port develops to accommodate the 10,000 additional jobs laid out in the PSRC planning target?

We need to be very intentional about it and listen to our constituents, talk to the experts, to the neighbors nearby, make sure that we are following the science, what's best for the future of Tacoma and the county. To me, green industry is the way to go, not the "quick buck."

We must create a workforce around that, to build good living wage jobs. And support and attract other green businesses that can work off each other. And as well, be an incubator for people with great ideas and hearts for the environment who need mentors and funds.

Robin wanted to know how we usually meet with elected officials, how can she be accountable to us if elected, get feedback on policies they are considering, and hear our ideas and news about what is going on in other towns and states. Barbara assured her we would be happy to set up such meetings regularly.