

August 2023 Meeting Minutes

Attending: Barbara Menne, Chuck Jensen, Elly Claus-McGahan, Debra Grady, Jason Berkowitz, John Doherty, Mustafa Haziq, Nancy Atwood, Sue Lepore, Marti Lambert, Linda Cohan, Jamie Skaar.

This ZOOM meeting screen was enhanced with closed captioning.

Announcements

Several members are planning to attend the **WA State CCL Conference**, which will be held on **Sept. 22-24** at the [Rainbow Lodge Retreat Center](#) in **North Bend**. Join us! A beautiful facility and location, a great educational, networking, and social event! People can attend on an overnight basis Friday-Sunday, or for Saturday only (about a 45 minute drive). [Registration](#) is open until **Tuesday Sept.12**.

Barbara Menne--Candidates are now lined up to speak at our September and October meetings. We currently have **six interview questions (see them in bold below)**, but time constraints may require that we reduce them to just four. Please respond with your top four to [Barbara Menne](#).

A good way to make our local advocacy more effective will be to consistently read the nine **city councilmembers' newsletters**, keeping up with opinions and new trends. We will need to divide this task amongst us so please let [Barbara](#) know of your interest in covering one or two.

Several of us attended the 27th District Community Conversation with state Representatives **Laurie Jinkins** and **Jake Fey** on Aug. 29th. There was an unusually large turnout and a strong interest in climate issues! So much so that climate won top spot on the list to discuss. Times are changing, awareness is growing.

The tabling season is going strong, we tabled four times in August. Join us! The next event is the [Steilacoom Drive Electric Festival](#) on Saturday Sept. 16. Contact [Linda Cohan](#)

Candidate Interview, Deanna Keller, Port Commissioner Position 3

A [recording](#) of this interview is available on our website.

Deanna Keller is currently the **President of the Port of Tacoma Commission** and **Co-chair** of the **Northwest Seaport Alliance**. She is running as an incumbent for the Port Commissioner Position #3. She lives in Gig Harbor. A Marine Corps veteran, she has degrees from W. Washington Univ. and Northwestern Univ. She has 24 years of experience in education, including principal and administrator. She was CEO/President of a multi-million-dollar manufacturing business in Tacoma, winning awards for her leadership in jobs initiatives such as the Goodwill Industries Business Advisory Council and the Economic Development Board.

1. Where do you see climate issues having major impacts on areas under the Port's jurisdiction and how will you guide the Port's response to those issues?

It's important to be proactive on this and all safety issues, not wait for something to occur. I've been very closely aligned with military leaders, who have made the Port of Tacoma one of the top three strategic military ports in the country. Using third party independent consultants, they are studying sea level rise and how we are going to mitigate its effects. The recent Kodiak ship fire had huge impacts on water and air quality. We are working closely with the fire department to strengthen an incident response team, get better support and training for the fireboat force.

2. Between the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022, Infrastructure, and Build Back Better Bills, there will be a lot of federal money for local climate measures. How do you plan to tap into these funds for use by the Port? What would your priorities be for spending these funds?

We have 18 environmental specialists, including grants specialists, on staff. Both U.S senators and Rep Kilmer constantly send us notices of available monies. I'm a big fan of "other peoples' money," we don't want to impact local taxpayers any more than we have to. We work on Brownfield parcels redevelopment with federal grants. Another issue is traffic congestion around this area and we want to tap into Infrastructure and BBB dollars to provide low-cost loans to semi-truck owners, individual operators, to get them to switch from diesel to electric vehicles.

3. How could the Port lead on collaboration between cities and towns in Pierce County to tackle common climate mitigation and climate resilience solutions as well as apply for federal IRA Act monies?

Our staff also helps smaller municipalities become aware of and apply for grants. I sit on the Pierce County Flood Control Zone Advisory Council. I've learned a lot about climate change issues as they pertain to the various small municipalities. We review their applications and offer our grants-writing resources for their use.

4. Do you have a plan to manage new development in the Port so that there can be a balance between paved space, green space, and habitat? So development does not lead to further environmental degradation through loss of green space and increased construction & traffic?

We've been putting together a priority list, especially transportation pollution. The Port doesn't own the roads so the most strategic thing we can do is to expedite traffic (both truck and commuter) and reduce the congestion which creates so much air pollution. Have been talking to state and federal legislators looking for grant money to help with the 509/167 project. We need to balance protecting habitat with our economy/jobs. Businesses we bring in must be good stewards of the environment. Don't think the environment was taken as

seriously as it should have been in the past, but now we look at this carefully and write it into our leases before we sign them. This is following taxpayer wishes--getting green businesses in and making sure they are environmentally accountable. This is extremely important to me. The stand of cottonwood trees that recently had to be cut down—that's an example of having to keep a balance with business needs. They were right in the middle of an industrial area so it made sense. Restoring Lower Wapato Creek back to its natural state, that did make sense and was the right thing to do. It's an ongoing discussion. I don't have all the answers and I do grieve for the losses.

5. What is your plan to bring and support green, renewable energy jobs that are also high-wage, to the Port and County? What about green hydrogen hubs?

Ports are specified to create economic development. We don't house chemical plants, have phased that out. We want to help out with the infrastructure for green energy companies, maybe as a part of their supply chain. Also some technology pieces, like the Maritime blue Incubator Project in the Center for Urban Waters here. There's a young company taking the PFAS (forever chemicals) out of the water, for instance. We can encourage and nurture that, and want to keep businesses like that here beyond the development stage.

Ford trucks are looking at converting from diesel to dual fuel (biodiesel and green hydrogen), and hydrogen can be used as storage for solar and wind energy. In talking to the shipping industry, they are looking at e-methanol and e-ammonia for transcontinental shipping (green hydrogen-based alternative shipping fuels). Smaller uses, like our ferry system, could be a test case for using green hydrogen.

6. What are current tribal environmental concerns with the Port and how do you plan to address them?

I deal with not only the Puyallup but the Muckleshoot, Suquamish and Nisqually tribes of Indians. Their biggest concern is making sure that their heritage is being sustained, such as salmon fishing. I'm on the environmental committee of the Northwest Seaport Alliance. We have conversations with large shipping lines about reducing their speed, we put in underwater sensors to monitor the noise levels that disturb fish. Even in construction around the port itself, we consider the marine life and control noise levels.

We consult often with the tribes, we can't assume we know their concerns. We need to be great partners and have open communication--it is getting much friendlier all the time. During the Wapato creek restoration we planted trees side by side and it was a great opportunity to work together. I'm very dedicated to that.

Q & A

Chuck Jensen—How much unused space is there at the port? Is it all used now for car import companies? What is your priority in bringing in new industry or commerce?

We have increased our car import business so much that we have ships waiting at anchor. We are at about 90% in terms of use of the land, but only 50% in utilizing the terminals. The Kaiser facility has been capped and mitigated and is in productive use now. The Arkema chemical facility has been 42 years sitting as a Brownfield site which is very frustrating. OCChem is also a superfund site. We have to work with the Dept of Ecology to agree upon a plan of mitigation and it has been really slow.

John Doherty—Regarding emissions around the port—we have ships tying up, and we have trucks coming in. What are the plans to provide electric power for ships and to reduce pollution from trucks?

Trucks' emissions are monitored and if their emissions exceed level, they are not allowed in the Port. It's not enough, or soon enough, but we are trying to get to zero by 2040. As well, there are staff working with the truck owners to help them comply in the future, I'm proud of that. Shore power—one powering terminal costs 12 million dollars, so we only have one so far. We can't afford to go faster, we have applied and are waiting to hear about grant money. Another shipper has actually approached us requesting a floating charging dock and we are considering that now too.

This is where as voters and as consumers, it's extremely important for us to communicate our environmental concerns, they **do** listen! Your elected leaders do listen to you too. It takes all of us to do this. You are doing great work!