

Carolina Sustainability Council

Meeting Minutes April 21, 2022 Via Zoom

Council members in attendance were: Mike Piehler (chair), Ileana Fenwick, Elizabeth Havice, Nathaniel Maniatis, Jonas Monast, Natalie Murdock, Erin Riggs, Aaron Salzberg, and Tracy Triggs-Matthews.

Guest presenters in attendance were: Mary Tiger, Orange Water and Sewer Authority (OWASA) and John Richardson, Town of Chapel Hill.

UNC staff in attendance were: Abigail Brewer, Melanie Elliott, Cindy Shea, Steve Wall and Emily Williams.

Chair Mike Piehler began the meeting at 1:00 and welcomed members of the Council. Council members approved minutes from the March 2022 meeting with one correction suggested by Aaron Salzberg related to the wording of fit for purpose water.

Chair's Report

Piehler began the meeting with some brief updates, including introductory remarks about Earth Day activities on campus and in Carrboro; that Vik Agabekov has left Sustainable Carolina for another position; and that the Champion Sustainability Fund is up and running.

Piehler stated that he and Elizabeth Havice have started some initial work on ESG and evaluating what type of actions other universities are taking around this topic. In the fall more information will be presented to the Council for their feedback and guidance.

Piehler commended the work of the students on the Council and their contributions to sustainability activities on campus. Havice asked about efforts to communicate activity and program information.

OWASA Presentation

Mary Tiger began on her presentation on sustainability with a high level overview of the organization. OWASA serves 86,000 people in Chapel Hill and Carrboro including UNC. Tiger then outlined the partnership with UNC, which goes back close to 50 years. She also detailed the water supply and wastewater service areas that comprise OWASA.

Tiger provided an update on OWASA's Long Range Water Supply Plan which looks out to water supply demands in 2070. In the early 2000's water demands went down due to the university's commitment to reclaimed water and conservation efforts. OWASA is evaluating supply and management demand alternatives, which include a number of community engagement activities. The OWASA board used this guidance to develop principles, which led to Jordan Lake as a priority alternative.

Tiger transitioned to an overview of the energy use and energy goals of OWASA, which includes a 58% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. This has been achieved by energy efficiency measures as part of operations and maintenance. Tiger also discussed OWASA's solar leasing projects.

She concluded her presentation with a summary of OWASA's strategic priorities.

Town of Chapel Hill Climate and Action Response Plan

John Richardson began noting that the Council adopted the plan in 2021, which included an implementation plan and a \$470,000 budget allocation. The goals of the plan include emissions reductions and increased use of renewable energy. Richardson noted the alignment of the Town's plan with UNC's Climate Action plan.

Richardson stated that municipal operations comprise about 2% of emissions and, as such, success in emission reductions requires partnerships. He detailed four areas where the most impact of emissions reductions can take place: greening the grid; sustainable transportation; sustainable development; and green building retrofits.

Richardson highlighted specific issues where the town and university can continue working together. He identified specific climate actions being led by the town, such as increasing solar projects and electric vehicle usage. Richardson highlighted the recent investment of UNC's Renewable Energy Special Projects Committee purchase of an electric bus. He also emphasized the role of the Town's mobility plan.

Richardson concluded by noting the strong working relationship the Town has with the university and Sustainable Carolina.

Have discussed the work of the Southeast Regional Climate Center related to heat issues and inquired about the Town's work related to transportation and climate. Richardson said transportation is connected to land use planning and that new development is being targeted along major transportation corridors to better support mass transit.

Communications Update

Abigail Brewer presented on the communications efforts supporting the UNC Water Plan. She described that the communications efforts will be rolled out in phases: goals and strategies; sources; and progress.

During the first phase the main goal is to receive feedback through the open comment period of the UNC Water Plan. The second phase will focus on engaging students in understanding the campus is part of the broader community. The final phase will involve expanding innovations in operations and research. She concluded by outlining the steps for expanding the reach of the UNC Water Plan across campus.

Strategic Framework Discussion

Piehler and Melanie Elliott led the Council in an interactive session on the Strategic Framework goals:

- Lead Sustainability Innovation
- Facilitate Transformative Action
- Nurture Educational Efforts

Piehler thanked the Council members for their participation and adjourned the meeting.

The full meeting can be viewed at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J5RwI9dH31U>