



COMMUNITY CLIMATE STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

September 3, 2014

Present: Joep Meijer, Francois Levy, Dave Cortez, Brandi Clark Burton, Todd Hemingson, Paul Stinson, Mary Dodd, Roger Duncan, Kaiba White, Jere Locke, Kevin Tuerff, Al Armendariz, Matt Russell, Justin Murrill, Pam Reed, Jeremy Martin

Phoned in: Michael Blackhurst

City of Austin Staff: Zach Baumer, Lewis Leff, Karla Taylor

Citizens: Bruce Melton

Meeting recording: <https://www3.ci.austin.tx.us/p50045063/>

I. Public Input

- a. **Bruce Melton: Climate Change Now Initiative:** Current climate change policy only affects long term climate change. But will end up warming more in short term than if we did nothing at all. Strong negative emissions are more than 100% reductions. Policy suggestions.
 - o Strong negative emissions: includes reforestation, agricultural practices, anything that removes carbon from the air. IPCC statement says “strong net negative emissions”. Roger suggests filtering GHG out of the atmosphere by the millions.
 - o Gov. funding on air capture policies has totaled \$300,000. Flu capture= \$7 billion

II. Briefings/ Presentations

- **Briefings on Carbon Offsets (Barbara Haya, Research Fellow at Stanford Environmental Law Clinic)**
 - o **Cap and trade programs** (are defined by administrative programs)
 - o Joep: do offsets have to be within the cap and trade region so that the cheapest source in the region will be applied? Can be within region. Ex. CA’s program covers major emitting sectors so that leaves 15% of emissions not covered under the cap. So all of its protocols can credit projects anywhere in US but they could have chosen to restrict it to CA only.
1. **Types of Offsets**
 - a. **Compliance** (can be used to meet a gov. target or binding regulation; like Kyoto protocol) majority are in Power sector,
 - b. **Voluntary:** intl. offsets, smaller providers focusing on projects in developing countries, ex. When you fly and are offered to offset your emissions
 - c. **Direct Investments:** instead of going through the market or to a third party provider, this is directly investing in a project and having a contract; helping



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fund it. Google has done many. An adv. Is that you have direct knowledge as to how much of an influence your investment has.

2. **3 challenges of offset administration:**

a. **Additionality:** Kyoto protocol-like program results are poor b/c of this additionality. Emitter pays to offset but money goes towards a project that is happening anyways and basically “pads pockets”. Discovered issue during research in India on effects of national and intl. efforts of industry to support sugar factories. Paperwork doesn’t make sense that administrator evaluates thousands of proposals and which to move forward. So she looked further at program in India and learned that majority of projects that were registering under UN’s offset program would have gone forward on their own anyways. Offset program is only having very small impact. For Austin this means that the best type of offsets are those within Austin itself; the Austin govt. can understand what effects of offset credits are and you’d be producing local reductions that you can target. Second best option would be signing contracts directly with project developers; Google approach. You’d understand effects of those payments. Third best is working with trusted offset provider. Member of project developers and that’ll provide high quality offsets. Please don’t use Kyoto protocol credits or from using voluntary offsets that use a project by project approach.

i. Question: Brandi: how much \$\$ comes in from offset projects? From perspective of additionality it matters on the project. Methane project offset income is more effective because it generates more income. For non CO2 gases, it can be large \$\$ for small cost project. Wind in India: the cost is not enough to make or break a project in part b/c offset income comes with some uncertainty.

b. **Environmental Justice Issues:**

i. In CA there are a lot of impacts from air pollution. Opportunity to get pollution out of community. Vocal opposition to offsets from communities impacted by air pollution. Certain types of projects in developing countries have been criticized for causing harm like displacing people.

c. _____

3. **Whether an offset program should be large or small**

o 70% of CA reductions are expected to happen b/c of range of direct regulatory measures they’ve adopted. Remainder expected to happen because of cap and trade program. Its function in the most likely scenario is that it keeps prices low and postpones reductions in the cap sector. We need to quickly move full force towards ultra-low carbon economy. Globally, with developed and developing countries, it’s important that we rewrite vision of what an advanced developed economy is (one of sustainability and low carbon



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offsets). Alternative way is for it to be a City-run offset program where it's set by City not left up to the market.

- i. Question: Effective models that would provide sliding scale for cost of offsets to encourage emitters to get in early? Has seen under Kyoto protocol and in CA to push as many offset projects as possible. Another way of doing it is carefully deciding what sort of projects are allowed. Another approach is City-run offset program where price that emitter pays is separated from cost to the City and City offers credits at price determined by City to be appropriate ceiling price and \$ is put into support dif. Offset projects that reduce emissions elsewhere.
- i. We're looking at City wide policy for net-zero; would we write policy to invite folks to come on their own to be a part of it? Creating local offset market is for us to think about how to invite citizens and businesses to do this.

- **Emerging Energy Technology (Roger Duncan)**

- Questions:

- Any research about potential of nana tech. for increasing efficiency of solar cells? Yes; will increase it greatly but you won't ever get above 100% density.
- Could we replace the word electricity with energy, in conclusion? Yes. Can we do it by 2030? Yes. If you want to spend the money. You can get first 60-70% cheaply. But we have about 2.5 gigawatts of space you can get from distributed solar but at night you can't and then you have to store it, etc.
- In formulating an actual plan; will some of these be huge successes but many of them may never materialize. So in terms of planning, how do we have a plan that is realistic? Not sure but knows that some have high probably. Distributed solar can be rapidly expanded, for ex. In future, we'll be more sophisticated in distinguishing b/t high and low power energy loads.
- Thoughts on coastal wind? Starting to see farms have great profiles in matching what we're getting out of panhandle and west TX. Trick is to marry onshore and offshore wind but still have overall capacity factor under 40% for whole system.
- How do we take this info. And turn it into something useful, given the charge; who's going to do this? Trying to get a sense of how to move forward towards setting targets. We have great TAGS that if we can distill Rogers presentation into specific questions, the TAGS can weigh in.

- **Individual Behavior Change (Joep Meijer)**

- **TAG updates (30 min.)**

- Will send via email