



2021 Annual Report

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Overview

The Green City Commission (GCC) was established by City Council in 2009. The responsibilities and duties of the Commission include:

- providing expertise and information to the City to support its sustainability efforts;
- consulting with state government and other local governments regarding sustainability efforts and methods;
- recommending changes to the Code of the City of Richmond, Code of Virginia, and other laws as necessary to implement sustainable methods in the City;
- encouraging the adoption of sustainable business and building approaches by the private sector;
- working with the Department of Public Works to preserve trees and plant life in the City; and
- preparing and submitting an annual report to the Council.

The Commission is comprised of nine members, seven appointed by Council and two appointed by the Mayor, serving terms of three years and limited to two consecutive terms. The Council-appointed members include one member with expertise in urban forestry and representatives in the fields of sustainability, green building practices, energy efficiency and environmental protection.

The Commission is required to meet at least quarterly.

Current Commission Member List

Name	Criteria for Appointment	Term	Commence	Terminate
Emily Francis <i>Chair</i>	At Large Rep. (Appointed by Mayor)	First Term	1/19/2018	8/10/2020
		Second Term	11/9/2020	8/10/2023
Daniel Klein <i>Vice Chair</i>	Environmental Protection Rep. (Appointed by Council)	First Term	10/25/2019	10/24/2022
Bill Riggs <i>Secretary</i>	Green Buildings Rep. (Appointed by Council)	First Term	3/9/2020	10/25/2022
Robert Birdsey	Sustainability Rep. (Appointed by Council)	First Term	3/22/2021	10/25/2022
Margaret Hopkins	At Large Rep. (Appointed by Council)	First Term	7/22/2019	7/28/2022
Mike Mather	Urban Forestry Rep. (Appointed by Council)	First Term	11/9/2020	10/25/2023
Bill Nickerson	Energy Efficiency Rep. (Appointed by Council)	First Term	11/9/2020	8/25/2022
Sarah Shaughnessy	At-Large Rep (Appointed by Council)	First Term	9/27/2021	10/25/2022
Alicia Zatcoff	Employee of Dept. of Public Works or designee (Appointed by Mayor)	First Term	1/16/2018	8/10/2020
		Second Term	11/9/2020	8/10/2023

Summary of Activities

The Richmond Green City Commission is committed to supporting and advancing sustainability efforts throughout the City of Richmond. The Commission focused on two priorities in 2021.

Advancing GCC's Tree Committee

Trees add significant value to urban environments by reducing the heat island effect (exacerbated by climate change), helping to capture and filter stormwater runoff, sequestering carbon, and beautifying and increasing the quality of life for residents. A strategic plan with updated policy recommendations and guidance for city departments is warranted.

Progress Report for 2021:

The first full year of GCC's Richmond Tree Committee was a productive one. While the committee is still finding its footing, we were able to build momentum for better collaboration and communication between the many local tree stakeholder groups and the city.

We held 4 public meetings over the course of the year to discuss major concerns including the need:

- to update the city's outdated tree inventory,
- to update the city's 30-year old tree ordinance, and
- to create an urban forest master plan.

All of this is necessary to lay out a strategy that will achieve Richmond 300's goal of increasing city-wide tree canopy from 42% to 60% and seeking to achieve a 30% tree canopy in all neighborhoods, prioritizing areas with a high heat vulnerability index rating and low tree canopy coverage.

Our 2021 meetings proved to be valuable spaces for community members to voice their concerns as well as environmental groups to share information on projects, funding opportunities, and tree-related initiatives on the state and local levels.

In the spring, the Richmond Tree Committee supported a volunteer planting at Fairfield Court Elementary School in partnership with the Richmond Cycling Corps and the James River Parks Service to plant native seedlings along a bike trail which sits between Fairfield Court's playground and I-64. In time, these trees will create a buffer to capture vehicle emissions and improve the air quality where the students play while also addressing some of the stormwater runoff issues generated by the sloped lawn. As is often the case, a formerly forested area having been converted to turfgrass has created stormwater runoff issues and this planting sought to restore some of the natural systems that once balanced the area.

Over the summer, the Richmond Tree Committee collaborated on the drafting of the urban forest recommendations in the Climate Emergency Resolution. The major points being the creation and funding of an Urban Forester and the reinstating of the Urban Forestry Commission to work together to draft Richmond's first Urban Forest Master Plan. Those two entities would bridge the government and

community to develop a strategy for achieving the tree canopy objectives laid out in Richmond 300. Without this plan, that objective stands little chance of ever becoming a reality.

In the late fall, the Richmond Tree Committee coordinated a 2nd annual ArborDayRVA – two weekends of a citywide celebration of trees and forests working in partnership with Reforest Richmond, the Richmond Community Toolbank, and the City of Richmond's Urban Forestry Division. ArborDayRVA worked with 16 local organizations to host volunteer tree plantings, seedling giveaway stations, community cleanups, and educational workshops over the first two weekends of November.

Over the course of ArborDayRVA 2021, over 1,500 free trees were distributed. This was a monumental demonstration of community engagement and organizational coordination and we're eagerly looking forward to our 3rd annual ArborDayRVA this coming November for 2022.

The list of participating organizations include:

- Richmond Tree Stewards
- James River Parks Service
- James River Association
- Groundwork RVA
- Seeds of Change
- Science Museum of Virginia
- VCU Community Forestry Program
- Chesapeake Bay Foundation
- Capital Trees
- Virginia Department of Forestry
- Richmond Urban Forestry Division
- Parks, Recreation, & Community Facilities
- Gallery5
- Historic Jackson Ward Association
- TreeLab

The Richmond Tree Committee is proud of the work accomplished in a long and challenging year and looks forward to another productive year of collaboration among Richmond's many tree stakeholder groups.

Developing a Plan, Funding that Plan, and Achieving Net-Zero Greenhouse Gas Emissions Community-Wide for the City of Richmond—meaning we reduce or sequester as much greenhouse gas as we produced in 2008. Families in Richmond are already feeling the impacts of climate change—from increased flooding to hotter and more frequent summer days to more asthma attacks, Richmonders are on the frontlines of a changing climate. We must take steps to reduce our pollution emissions, and the City’s Climate Action Plan—RVA Green 2050—will chart the path to achieve significant greenhouse gas reductions that benefit all Richmonders while helping our community adapt to local climate impacts.

Progress Report for 2021:

Following up on Council’s passage in 2020 of [Resolution 2020 – R024](#) to “recognize the effects of global warming caused by human activity and to establish a climate action goal to achieve a 45 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 from the 2008 baseline,” the Green City Commission supported community-based efforts to pass [Resolution 2021 – R049](#) to “declare the existence of a climate and ecological emergency that threatens the city of Richmond.”

Resolution 049 was introduced July 26, 2021, included a public hearing on September 13, 2021 and was unanimously adopted by Council on September 13, 2021. The resolution reiterates the City’s goal of achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 and identifies specific measurable actions the City should take, including but not limited to:

- Fully executing the RVA Green 2050 Plan;
- Using a community engagement process and the Climate Equity Index to keep the concerns of frontline and marginalized communities central to the planning process;
- Fully funding and empower a new Office of Sustainability;
- Fully funding and utilize a new urban forester position commencing July 1, 2022 to increase the city-wide tree canopy to at least 60% and each neighborhood to at least 30%;
- Shifting energy investments to City-owned renewable energy and phasing out reliance on gas;
- Establishing a green procurement policy and associated staff position;
- And more.

Much work continues to be done in this arena and the Green City Commission looks forward to continuing our support of greenhouse gas reductions and the City’s RVAgreen 2050 plan.



May 19, 2021

Dear Mayor Stoney and Richmond City Council Members:

The Richmond Green City Commission has a long history of support and engagement to further sustainability efforts in the city limits. Specifically over the last few years, our attention has turned to the critical need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, minimize the worst impacts of climate change (especially on our most vulnerable neighbors), and strengthen the city's resilience against the changes already taking place (including increased heat and more damaging precipitation events).

To that end, the Green City Commission voted to support the concept of a City declaration of a climate emergency at our May 17, 2021 meeting. We understand that a draft resolution expressing an official declaration of the City Council along with specific climate solutions to be quickly implemented is forthcoming from community advocates. Immediate action on climate is needed!

We support concrete actions that prepare the city and our neighbors for a changing climate – including but not limited to adoption of the Richmond Clean and Green Fleet Plan; additional support for walking, biking and transit projects; increased energy efficiency that saves residents and taxpayers money; and more.

Such a declaration of climate emergency would be an appropriate prelude to a finalized RVAgreen 2050 Plan – the City's equity-centered Climate Action Plan. We support bold climate action that reduces greenhouse gases community-wide and strengthens our community's resiliency.

We look forward to continuing our work together. Please reach out if you have questions or would like to discuss this issue. You can reach me at EmilyCFrancis@gmail.com. Thank you for all you do!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Emily Francis".

Emily Francis
Chair, Richmond Green City Commission

Commission Priorities for 2022

In 2022 the Green City Commission will prioritize two areas of action in Richmond:

1. RVA Green 2050:

The Green City Commission will continue to support the City of Richmond's Office of Sustainability RVA Green 2050 planning process, plan approval and implementation of activities that equitably reduce our governmental and community-wide greenhouse gas emissions so we may achieve net zero emissions before 2050 and help the community adapt to Richmond's climate impacts of extreme heat, precipitation and flooding.

2. Sustainability & Climate Education:

The Green City Commission will use its regular meetings and additional opportunities & experiences to increase awareness of climate impacts, pollution emissions and overall sustainability efforts of the City. We look forward to engaging City Council, City Administration, community leaders and residents in programming and opportunities that help demonstrate the connectedness of everyday decisions (individually & societally) and our climate.

2021 Meeting Dates & Attendance

Name	1/11/2021	3/15/2021	5/17/2021	9/20/2021	11/15/2021
Emily Francis	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Daniel Klein	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
Bill Riggs	Y	Y	Y	N	N
Margaret Hopkins	Y	Y	N	Y	N
Michael Mather	Y	N	N	N	N
Bill Nickerson	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
Alicia Zatcoff	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Catherine Long	N	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Robert Birdsey	n/a	n/a	Y	Y	Y
Sarah Shaunghnessy	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Y

2021 Meeting Minutes

January 11, 2021 Minutes

Members Present:

Emily Francis, Maggie Hopkins, Daniel Klein, Bill Riggs, Alicia Zatcoff, Michael Mather, Bill Nickerson

Guests:

Wyatt Carpenter, Raz Amahdi, Sandra Leibowitz, Eli Podyma, Rob Jones, Andrea Almond, Irina Calos, Laura Greenleaf, Kevin Finity, Shauna Ely, Jenn Clarke, Ellanor Milkowski Dahlgren, Daniel Wagner

Call to order and Introductions

Emily Francis called the meeting to order at 12:04 pm and reviewed electronic meeting protocol—this meeting is in accordance with City Ordinance 2020-093 due to the COVID-19 emergency declaration.

GCC members introduced themselves followed by guest introductions.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Minutes from the previous meeting have not been edited and completed yet and were unable to be voted for approval and will be reviewed at the next meeting.

Nomination of new Positions for 2021

Emily is nominated as chair for 2021 by Maggie – Daniel seconded.

- Unanimous Vote:

Maggie Hopkins: aye	Bill Riggs: aye
Daniel Klein: aye	Alicia Zatcoff: aye
Mike Mather: aye	Emily Francis: aye
Bill Nickerson: aye	

Bill nominated Daniel for vice chair, seconded by Emily Francis.

- Unanimous Vote:

Maggie Hopkins: aye	Bill Riggs: aye
Daniel Klein: aye	Alicia Zatcoff: aye
Mike Mather: aye	Emily Francis: aye
Bill Nickerson: aye	

Daniel nominated Bill Riggs for Secretary, seconded by Bill Nickerson

- Unanimous Vote:

Maggie Hopkins: aye	Bill Riggs: aye
Daniel Klein: aye	Alicia Zatcoff: aye
Mike Mather: aye	Emily Francis: aye
Bill Nickerson: aye	

2021 GCC Priorities: Discussion on choosing new focus

GCC has been working in a google doc to rank and share ideas on new priorities

- In 2019, the Green City Commission went through a process to identify, rank and choose three priorities for 2020 – Net Zero Resolution; Envision Certification; Richmond Tree Committee. The purpose of this discussion is to identify where we will focus our attention for 2021. In order for any of these ideas to really take shape over the course of the year as a Commission priority, it will require that at least one Commission member chooses to lead it.
- General Commission agreement to continue efforts led by Daniel to advance tree policy and expand tree canopy in the City through the Richmond Tree Committee. Mike Mather will also help lead that work.
- As for additional priorities for 2021, Maggie initiated by pitching an idea on a new priority: Funding is always a huge issue. Some of the first environmental efforts are going to be linking people up with funding.
- Sandra was on the original task force for passing LEED programs for city owned buildings – utilities have brought this into private sector as well
- Work on putting together a group of stakeholders to pursue the GCC green building program expansion
- Alicia wants to include commercial and private sector (new state buildings are the only ones required to pursue LEED certification)
- Bill N, Sandra, Bill R will have a discussion offline about how to move forward
 - Keep Alicia in the loop on how to move forward
 - Bill R has agreed to spearhead the priority
- Ordinance for city government in reaching these goals and implemented (creating a net zero omnibus)
- The more we can reference different plans already produced, the better; look to Richmond 300 initiatives and RVA H2O goals, for example.
- Three priorities decided: (TREES, Buildings, RVA Green 2050)
 - Bill and crew will help define building goals and provide an update at the next meeting.
 - Daniel will continue to refine Richmond Tree Committee program for 2021
 - Overall support for the Sustainability Office's RVAGreen 2050 Plan will be 3rd priority.
- Maggie suggested bringing a transportation official in to discuss Richmond's plans and efforts to green transportation
- Maggie will work with someone to support a new priority but unable to lead in 2021.

Sustainability Office Update: Alicia

- Planning process is well underway
- 125 people in various working groups
- 13 people in equitable and racial justice working group (they all live and work in Richmond)
- Everyone underwent equity training
- Vision has been developed for the process
- Climate risk and vulnerability assessment is the next meeting followed by a community engagement meeting in April

- A lot of engagement and excitement from the community around the process
- Rob Jones mentioned the focus on equity are pretty significant – heavy lift but laying down a marker for how to include people from impacted communities. Important to focus on this. Especially important as communities continue to be affected through climate change.

Updates & Announcements

- We have two open seats on the GCC (the sustainability appointee formerly held by Katherine Jordan; the at-large appointee formerly held by Cat Long); when the two positions are posted on the Richmond City site, we should spread the word far & wide to encourage additional interested residents to apply.
- Daniel provided an update on a tree canopy bill that is in the Virginia General Assembly. And asked for support from the GCC for the improved policy, by signing onto a letter of support that will be shared with members of the General Assembly.
 - There is a law that requires a certain tree canopy 10% for commercial, 20% for residential. The canopy bill would allow localities to set their own requirements if in a formerly red lined neighborhood; additionally looking for someone to speak on behalf during Committee testimony.
Motion by Daniel to sign GCC onto letter of support; seconded by Bill Nickerson.
 - GCC voted to support the Bill
 - Voted unanimously
 - Groundwork will also support the bill

The Green City Commission Meeting adjourned at 7:04 pm.

Next meeting is scheduled for March 15th, 2021 from 5:30PM – 7:00 PM

March 15, 2021 Minutes

Members Present:

Emily Francis, Maggie Hopkins, Daniel Klein, Bill Riggs, Alicia Zatcoff, Bill Nickerson

Members Absent:

Michael Mather

Guests:

Shavon Peacock, Sierra Club; Charles “Todd” Woodson; Lee Williams, Green New Deal Virginia; Lisa Trapp, Capital Trees; Dironna Clarke, City of Richmond; Daniel Wagner, 1st District Council Liaison; Sandra Leibowitz, Sustainable Design Consulting LLC; Frazier Armstrong, Capital Trees; Karyn Vice, Enrichmond Foundation; Mary-Stuart Torbeck, Sierra Club; Devin Jefferson, Science Museum of Virginia; Irina Calos

Call to order and Introductions:

Emily Francis called the meeting to order at 5:34 pm and reviewed electronic meeting protocol—this meeting is in accordance with City Ordinance 2020-093 due to the COVID-19 emergency declaration.

GCC members introduced themselves.

Guest Presentations: Dironna Clarke, Richmond Office of Equitable Transit & Mobility

- “Achieving equitable transit and mobility solutions”
- Creation of the office of equitable transit and mobility in 2020
- Richmond has this new ability to plan its future for transportation.
- How to prioritize new projects through an equitable lens
- Cost benefit analysis vs distributive equity
 - Focusing on expensive can be consequential of equity.
 - Richmond’s modal shift (last 5-10 years)
 - More people pursuing active transportation (biking & walking)
- Reflected in the Richmond 300 master plan.
- Walking and biking strategies might be given more weight in areas where people cannot afford to own a car, which can dramatically improve quality of life.
- RVA bikeshare pilot program
 - Should have a rollout of the program by the summer.
- Equitable transit accessibility
 - Remove the unequal and potentially negative impacts on transport decisions on certain social groups.
 - Low-income and minorities constitute the majority of transit’s patrons.
- Transportation and policy decision making
 - “location matters”
- Reaching out and providing resources

- Utilizing RVA Green and Richmond 300 as guiding principals
- Move towards equitable methods instead of standard methods for policy decisions.
 - Socially relevant accessibility vs cost benefit analysis
- Develop a rubric to prioritize and equitable guide transportation.
- Already have a working Cost benefit Analysis model if it is necessary.
- GCC can align with and help alleviate any roadblocks that come up.
- Very close contact and relationship with GRTC – Dironna works as the liaison between the city office and GRTC
- Use some local CVTA funds that can make an immediate impact – focus on some “low hanging fruit” projects.
 - This year is a large focus on sidewalks and urban forestry.
- Dironna can be reached at dironna.clarke@richmondgov.com

Guest Presentations: Devin Jefferson, Science Museum of Virginia

- RVAir and Community Science at the Science Museum of VA
 - Community science catalyst
 - Citizen science
- Community science: a typology and its implications of social-ecological systems
 - Community driven, focuses on local knowledge
 - Conservation, improve livelihoods
 - Asthma, Richmond example and the challenges it poses
 - Looking for community driven solutions (air quality)
- Richmond Urban Heat Island Collective
- Richmond’s Urban Heat Islands – very large differences between different areas of Richmond
 - Can be put side by side with Ambulance responses for heat related illnesses
 - Often in historically redlined neighborhoods
- In 2016, 4.2 million people died from ambient air pollution (worldwide)
- Big focus on PM 2.5 (combustion particles, organic compounds, metals, etc)
 - Difficult to see
 - Asthma is a large side effect of ambient air pollution, big issue in Richmond
 - Allergies
- Used Stationary PurpleAir II sensors & AirBeam2 Mobile Sensors
 - Record info 24/7 and feed back to a map)
- There was some more noticeable smog in Richmond after the October 2020 wildfires in California as they made their way across the US.
- GRTC bus fire after protests led to a rise in PM 2.5 on local purple air sensors
- More variability between neighborhoods in PM 2.5 readings than previously thought
 - New paper in the works
- iThrive grant with UVA & VT
 - impacts of urban design on physical wellbeing
- Green Routes and Grey Routes

- Levels of PM 2.5 much higher on grey walk (down broad street) vs the green walk (a round a bout walk down Davidson and more neighborhood)
- Interesting visual and context for discussions about variability between different parts of Richmond
- Subjective results: overall benefit of green space on mood in all outcomes to the gray walks
 - Increased valence and decreased stress in green space
 - Heart rates were lower on less stressful walk with lower levels of PM 2.5.
- Shows Benefits of trees in our city.
- Devin can be reached at djefferson@smv.org
- Team is still looking to bring people to the table and keep conversations going.
 - Policy change will be likely a long-term goal.
- Is it useful for some tree assessment volunteers to join with and carry air sensors? Daniel will link up with Devin to discuss further.
- Does the speed of the travel affect the air quality readings? Readings are taken 4-5 every second.

Tree Committee Update: Daniel

- It's tree planting season
- New priorities have been discussed at other committee meeting
- Feeling like capacity may be an issue for all 3 priorities, 2 may be enough.
- Irina Calos will be leading the inventory priority.
- Early April, another meeting for a tree give away
- Strong response for a call to partners
- Not just giving away trees but more workshops and community engagement opportunities
- April 20th 6-8 PM, next tree committee
- Richmond tree lab just hired a new volunteer coordinator.
- Americorps positions available to assist arborists.
- HB 2042 – delayed for enactment until 2022 for a stakeholder group to study the issue.

Building Priority Update: Bill Riggs

- Sandra Leibowitz shared a bill that just passed for green building.
- The city has not taken an official stance yet.
- HB 2001
- The city is already doing what the bill will require.
- There's a requirement for electric vehicle charging infrastructure for any new construction or large renovation.
- Sustainability office already working on this.
- Will discuss with Alicia and Emily on how to structure the "awareness campaign."
- The GCC will be developing a standard catered towards the private sector.

Daniel Wagner update:

- Council member Addison is now the chair of the land use committee
- March land use committee meeting is 3/16/2021

- Wants to work with GCC over the next few months, work with the office of sustainability
- Want to know what to expect when selling or leasing city owned land
- Alicia will watch the meeting and take notes so that we can be engaged officially.

daniel.wagner@richmondgov.com

Maggie Hopkins: Updates

- New housing and land use meetings.
- More potential for future presentations.
- Grant between city and James River Association for additional trees and infrastructure
 - Will be sent to city council here soon.
- March 22nd will be a busy day, 3 meetings in one day.

Updates & Announcements

- We have two open seats on the GCC (the sustainability appointee formerly held by Katherine Jordan; the at-large appointee formerly held by Cat Long); we should spread the word far & wide to encourage additional interested residents to apply. People can apply here: <https://eservicesb.richmondgov.com/applications/boardsandcommissions/BCVacancies.aspx?mybckey=164>
- Daniel Klein will reach out to individual Council members asking for recommendations and also requesting meetings.
- April 13th is the next meeting for Sierra Club Falls of the James Group; will be centered around the VA Green New Deal. 7pm

Approval of Meeting Minutes:

Meeting minutes were approved at the end of the meeting. Motion to approve by Maggie Hopkins and seconded by Daniel Klein. Unanimous vote.

The Green City Commission Meeting adjourned at 7:16 pm.

Next meeting is scheduled for May 17, 2021 from 12:00 pm – 1:30 pm.

May 17, 2021 Minutes

Members Present:

Emily Francis, Daniel Klein, Bill Riggs, Robert Birdsey, Alicia Zatcoff, Bill Nickerson

Guests:

Barry O'Keefe, Jenn Clarke, Wyatt Carpenter, Lauren Bailey, Irina Calos

The meeting was called to order at 12:07 pm. And Commission Members and Guests introduced themselves.

Extinction Rebellion Richmond briefing: Barry O'Keefe

Barry provided an overview of a draft city resolution acknowledging our climate emergency, walking through the proposed content and upcoming activities to see the resolution passed.

The Commission asked questions and discussed the draft resolution.

General agreement to support the resolution and encourage City Council to pass it.

Additionally, the Commission agreed to draft and submit a letter recognizing our support for the Resolution to be sent to Council as soon as possible.

2021 Green City Commission Priorities - Updates

Updates from Daniel Klein from the Tree Committee

Updates from Bill Riggs on Building Efficiency

Updates from Alicia Zatcoff on RVAgreen 2050

Announcements

GCC has an open seat. Discussion and general agreement of the Commission that Districts 6, 7, 8, and 9 often lack representation on the Commission as well as representation by people of color.

Upcoming Land Use, Housing & Transportation meeting May 18 at noon. There will be a Richmond 300 presentation as well as additional topics of interest to GCC.

Meeting was adjourned at 1:33pm

Next Meeting is Scheduled for July 19, 2021 from 5:30 – 7:00pm.

September 20, 2021 Minutes

Commission Members Present: Robert Birdsey; Maggie Hopkins; Alicia Zatcoff; Emily Francis

Guests Present: Lauren Bailey & Sarah Barber, VCU; Glen Besa & Shavon Peacock, Falls of the James Group of Sierra Club; Justin Doyle, James River Association; Bennie Gates, Virginia Organizing, 9th District resident; The Honorable Katherine Jordan, 2nd District City Council Member; Sandra Leibowitz, Sustainable Design Consulting; Dawn Oleksy, Richmond Office of Sustainability; Sven Philipsen, 2nd District Council Liaison; Richard Sebastian; Sarah Shaughnessy, Richmond Health Department; Lee Williams, Green New Deal Virginia

The meeting was called to order at 12:05pm. Commission members and members of the public introduced themselves.

Green City Commission Priorities Updates:

RVAgreen 2050 – Alicia Zatcoff

The planning process continues with the Racial Equity & Environmental Justice Roundtable and the 5 topical working groups (Buildings & Energy, Community, Environment, Transportation, and Waste). The groups have identified 188 strategies to meet the City's goal of net-zero emissions by 2050 and 45% emissions reduction by 2030 – which have been further combined/prioritized to a list of 47 strategies at this time.

Additionally the Office of Sustainability and the RVAgreen 2050 planning group will be developing an Equitable Implementation and Accountability Framework that will include outcomes and indicators for meeting goals of the plan. There will be two different versions of the plan deliverable: online version & planning documentation.

A final round of engagement will take place in April 2022 and the plan will be submitted for Council adoption in 2022 as well. You can read more on the [RVAgreen 2050 website](#) and also sign up for monthly updates.

Reforest Richmond, Richmond Tree Committee –

No report. For updates visit [Reforest Richmond](#). The next meeting will be October 19 from 6- 7pm.

Energy Efficiency –

No report.

Discussion regarding recently passed [Climate Emergency Resolution](#):

The Resolution to declare the existence of a climate and ecological emergency passed City Council September 13 by unanimous vote. The resolution calls for more than a dozen specific actions/policies for the City to implement – the question at hand: how do we support the

implementation of those new policies? How can the Green City Commission also help demonstrate the interconnectedness of climate action and climate resiliency in all aspects of City Council decision making and City policy determination?

Discussion took place including:

- There was a long list of supporting organizations; so there are multiple partners who can engage in this work to support implementation.
 - Lee Williams agreed to coordinate/initiate small work groups including those multiple partners on each of the Resolution's action items. Green City Commission members can then participate and help advance specific items. ○ Those work groups can identify next steps and the details needed to move the ball forward—including sharing those details with the Office of Sustainability and the Chief Administrative Officer.
 - It might also be helpful to understand the priorities of those supporting groups; or which items they care most about.
- How does the Climate Emergency Resolution mesh with or interact with the RVAgreen 2050 planning process? As a follow up to the discussion, [this document was shared](#) that identifies the connections or overlap between the current draft RVAgreen 2050 plan and the Climate Emergency Resolution. This dynamic will continue to exist until the Plan is adopted; we want to continue to advance policies in the meantime that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and fund resiliency strategies.
 - Important to acknowledge the difference between mitigation and adaptation.
 - Mitigation = reducing greenhouse gas emissions
 - Adaptation = resiliency. Adjusting to the changing climate.
- Many decisions City Council makes impacts climate – development decisions, zoning, parking, procurement, energy use/sources, etc. How do we highlight that or educate around that reality??
 - Should there be Climate Impact Statements similar to Budget Impact Statements? How would that occur; who has the expertise for such a thing? ○ GCC should pay closer attention to the full City Council docket; Committee dockets and flag important decisions/ordinances that could have significant climate impacts. As volunteers, we only have so much capacity...so we will need to pick and choose places to engage.
 - GCC Members should pick a City Council Committee to follow and flag big climate-impacting decisions. Emily will ask all Commission Members to adopt a Committee as a starting place.
 - Engagement could include a simple paragraph to describe climate impacts generally (to increase climate literacy) and encourage Council to consider the broader implications of that specific decision/ordinance. We could have some general template language to augment the specifics.

Next Steps:

- Lee Williams will initiate action item work groups from the Resolution. •
- Alicia will share the [overlap of the Resolution with RVAgreen 2050](#).
- Green City Commission members will “adopt a Committee”

- All Commission members and guests are encouraged to read the [Climate Resolution](#) and review the [RVAgreen 2050](#) website.

Updates & Announcements:

**Council LUHT [Committee Meeting](#): Tuesday, September 21 at noon

**James River Association is hosting a few webinars to share plans for their new [James River Center](#) next to Great Shiplock Park. Check out the details on their website.

**City Council ARPA work sessions continue to decide where federal aid will be

spent. The meeting was adjourned at 1:35pm.

*****Next Meeting: Monday, November 15, 2021, 5:30 – 7:00 pm*****

November 15, 2021 Minutes

Commission Members Present:

Robert Birdsey; Emily Francis; Daniel Klein; Bill Nickerson; Sarah Shaughnessy; Alicia Zatcoff

Guests Present:

Jenn Clarke, City of Richmond; Adam Hohl, City of Richmond; Josephine Hooks; Tarana Jobin, Extinction Rebellion; The Honorable Katherine Jordan, 2nd District City Council Member; Becky Lakin; Sandra Leibowitz, Sustainable Design Consulting; Qui Nguyen, City of Richmond; Sven Philipsen, 2nd District Council Liaison; Lee Williams, Green New Deal Virginia

The meeting was called to order at 5:35pm. Commission members introduced themselves.

Alicia Zatcoff, Sustainability Manager, City of Richmond provided an update on Richmond's Renewable Electricity Purchase Project.

- In July 2020, the Green City Commission voted to support the city procuring off-site renewable electricity with the goal of 50% offset by Dec 31 2022 of city governmental electricity use.
- We also voted in July 2020 to support by 12/31/2021 the city developing a comprehensive energy management policy for City government to include a plan to improve efficiency of all city facilities; to install renewable energy on new city facilities and roof replacements of existing facilities; the purchase of off-site renewable energy to cover City demand after deployment of on-site solar and energy efficiency initiatives; and other strategies as appropriate.
- [Alicia's presentation can be found here.](#)
- Discussion regarding the terms of the agreement, the process and next steps took place. · The Commission declined to take action on a specific contract.

Katherine Jordan, 2nd District City Council Member provided an update on issues related to sustainability. · As recommended in the Climate Emergency Resolution, the organizational chart change of the Office of Sustainability will be introduced to Council at the Dec 13 Council Meeting.

- There is the potential for a Charter Review, which may create the opportunity for a Parking Utility that could advance electric vehicle policies and other projects related to sustainability.
- Procurement continues to be a priority – overall city process and purchasing decisions; including fleet improvements for the City and GRTC. Electric School Bus purchases.

Next Steps on Richmond's [Climate Emergency Resolution](#)

- There is movement in both Chesterfield and Henrico with respect to plastic bag fees.
- An online group has been formed, communication has been ongoing and the group has coalesced around a) Green Fleet advancement, b) Plastic Bag fee, and c) Gas Utility phase out

Relevant City or Council Committee Updates

- Thanks to Commission Members for following various committees and reporting back to the full Commission about activities and discussions associated with climate/sustainability.
- Sarah shared that Rezoning across the City has been a topic of conversation in the Planning Commission; the opportunity to update/re-write the Code. It will take a 2-3 year process. And could include more multi-modal and sustainable land use concepts. Affordable Housing and sustainable design overall.
- Additionally, conversations related to ARPA Funds are ongoing; and specifically the City Center development plans will be before the Planning Commission.
- Land Use, Transportation & Housing Committee meeting is tomorrow. Up on the agenda includes Park & Ride projects and the Development Scorecard concept.

Daniel Klein provided an update on Reforest Richmond, GCC's Tree Committee

- HUGE Arbor Day success – several hundred trees given away; 25 give-away events City wide; big partnership involvement allowed for the success.
 - Check out more details on the [Reforest Richmond](#) website.
- In addition to continued tree planting events, the Committee will focus on a City Urban Forestry Master Plan and Canopy Inventory.

Approval of September 20, 2021 Minutes

- Robert Birdsey made a motion to approve the September meeting minutes; Daniel Klein seconded. · Unanimous Roll Call vote included:
 - Robert Birdsey: aye
 - Daniel Klein: aye
 - Bill Nickerson: aye
 - Sarah Shaughnessy: aye
 - Alicia Zatcoff: aye
 - Emily Francis: aye

The meeting was adjourned at 7:05pm.