



City of Wilmington Ad Hoc Clean Energy Policy Task Force

Summary | Meeting 4
Zoom Virtual Meeting, Wilmington, NC
July 28, 2020 | 6-7:30 PM

The City of Wilmington held the fourth meeting for the Wilmington Ad Hoc Clean Energy Policy Task Force (Task Force) on July 28, 2020. All Task Force meetings continue to be conducted in accordance with North Carolina public meeting statutes. The meeting was held virtually over Zoom. The meeting objectives were to 1.) hear from each subcommittee after their first meetings, and 2.) explore how to support one another, as well as what resources are needed to make the virtual format successful moving forward. The July meeting had 33 participants.





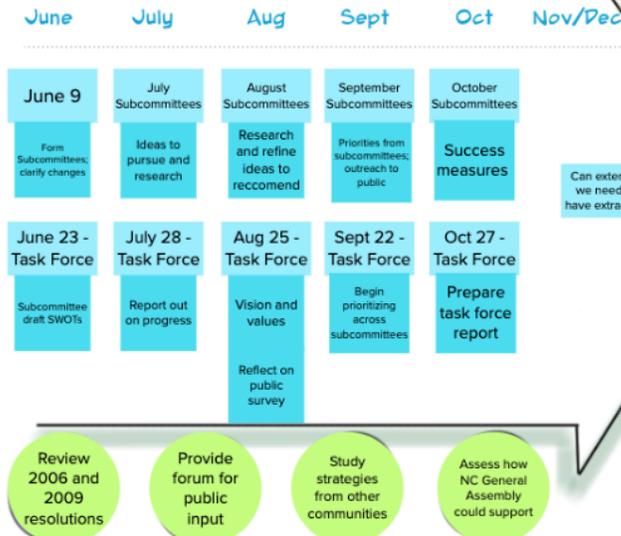
Opening Remarks

Warren Miller of Fountainworks began meeting by reviewing the agenda and road map for the Task Force (shown below).

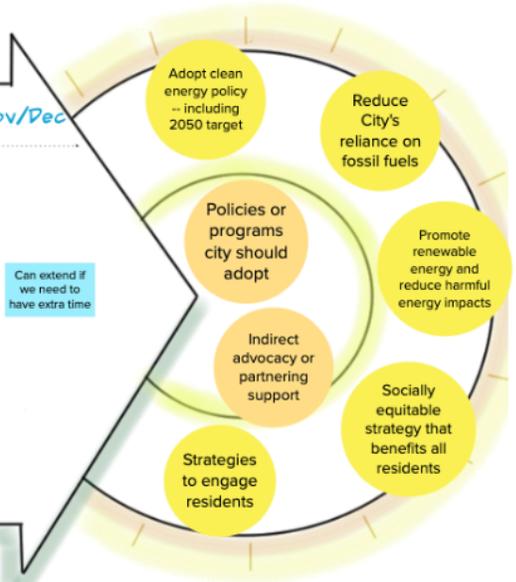
Resources



Timeline



Objectives



Supports



Next, Mayor Bill Saffo and Councilmember Kevin Spears addressed the group. In his remarks, Mayor Saffo thanked Task Force members for their work and dedication. Councilmember Spears remarked that in driving around Wilmington, he saw the community this group would have an impact on, and also expressed his appreciation to the members.

Report from Subcommittees

Julie Brenman from Fountainworks noted that the four subcommittees have been busy, some meeting more than once. The co-chairs of each subcommittee were given about five minutes to report on the following prompts:

1. What's going on?
2. Three things they want the other groups to understand about their topic/issue
3. Anything else? – ideas they're interested in exploring, where they might need help with research and resources

A synopsis of each group's discussion points is below. The Mural board, used for note-taking, can be found [here](#).



NC Clean Energy Policy & Legislation

What's going on?

- The group is looking at policies and regulations at both the local and state levels. They're considering which of these are feasible for the City of Wilmington to adopt (vs. at the state level); they want recommendations to be easily adopted.
- They're also considering partnering with neighboring cities to speak to the General Assembly, or partner with other organizations.

Three things for other groups to know:

- Many programs would need state or federal funding, so they may need to partner with other cities.
- Their recommendations would relate to what the other subcommittees are working on, so they'll need to be in conversation.
- Policy is incremental, and this will take time. They're considering creating a long-term guide that can be adapted in the future.

Additional comments/considerations:

- They want to figure out the power capacity for solar that the City has
- Want to know key buildings the City wants to have back-up power in case of a hurricane or emergency (ex: retirement home)
- Net metering
- Updating building codes
- Lots of programs may involve the state
 - C-PACE (Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy)
 - NC Green Energy Bank

Clean Energy Technology

What's going on?

- The subcommittee has met more than once. At the first meeting, they met with guests, including Duke Energy
 - Duke presented on what work they can do with municipalities
- Met with Cape Fear Solar and learned about the challenges they're facing

Three things for other groups to know

- They want to focus on what's viable
- They are lacking knowledge of what the City's usage and capacity is
- They first want to focus on "low-hanging fruit" (ex: lightbulbs with automatic shutoff)

Additional comments:

- Desire to have additional conversation with David Ingram on what audits have been done and can be done
- Are there regulatory burdens for individuals or businesses who want to put solar on their roofs?



Transportation and Fleet Operations

What's going on?

- The group looked at ~15-20 reports from the most sustainable cities in the US, as well as comparable and “sister” cities, then condensed these into 10 ideas. Over the previous week, the group ranked the ideas based on the SWOC analysis. They currently have 4-5 recommendations, and are exploring about 3 more. They will focus primarily on carbon and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

Three things for other groups to know

- In reviewing other cities, they have not come across anything that's super innovative be successful.
- When it comes to electric vehicles, if you don't have renewable source to charge that, it can be more detrimental to GHG and carbon emissions than regular cars.
- Some recommendations are very costly, some are nearly free – this may affect how they prioritize their recommendations

Additional comments:

- Their top four recommendations are:
 - 1. Transition to electric vehicles & implement charging stations
 - 2. Fleet resizing: do we have correct # of vehicles? Encourage walking/bike; does vehicle match job?
 - 3. Be creative to reduce miles traveled
 - 4. Telematics (Equipment on vehicle that tracks speed, quick stops, idling time, etc.) – the city already has these, but want to look into how the city uses the data

Social Equity & Community-Wide Adoption

What's going on?

- Identified 8 broad opportunities to improve social equity in context of clean energy
- Coordinated additional distribution of survey - directly to community orgs - begin conversations, increase buy-in
- Duke Energy just reached partial settlement with NCSEA that may provide Wilmington with opportunity
 - Not yet approved by Utilities Commission
 - \$6 mil contribution to Helping Home Fund - emergency repairs, develop programs for low-income customers, updates to grid

Three things for other groups to know

- It's well documented that communities of low-income & POC suffer disproportionately from climate change & GHG emissions
- There are real opportunities to help improve community's wellbeing



- Their recommendations will likely span all topic areas that the Task Force is addressing. They'll help other subcommittees view their own recommendations through a social equity lens.

Additional comments:

- They would love additional assistance with breaking down data to contextualize it for public engagement
- They want to explore how climate change affects people with disabilities & senior citizens, to make sure the Task Force is inclusive.
 - Clean energy dovetails with health issues
- They want to customize a plan that leverages Wilmington's unique position between the river and sea.
- How can we commit adequate city resources and staff to these; what systems and programs are already in place? Can they partner with New Hanover County and other organizations to avoid duplication?

Cross-Pollination Discussion

After each subcommittee had a chance to hear from the others, the Task Force discussed 1.) how they can support each other's work while avoiding duplication, and 2.) what additional interaction would be helpful. This gave the group a chance to weigh in on the themes of current events, research, tools and resources, and connections and outreach. Many of the bullet points could fit into multiple categories, but are collapsed here for simplicity.

Current Events

- The recent decision by Duke & Dominion Energy to withdraw their pipeline project
- A large project in Wilmington that is struggling to move forward because of a tree ordinance
 - Should there be a cost-benefit analysis when two policies, both working toward the same goal, actually conflict with one another? (ex: can't install solar because of trees)
- There is a general desire by the group to stay informed with news and current events surrounding clean energy

Research/Questions

- The subcommittees could look into the Department of Energy's resources that show, by state, what a state's fuel mix is.
 - One Task Force member noted the Duke Energy 2020 Climate Report that might be a useful resource as well.
- Some Task Force members were curious why the year 2005 is used as a benchmark for so many climate goals
 - Members speculated that many international agreements, such as the Montreal Protocols, originated around this time. The US Conference of Mayors signed their pledge around 2005 as well.



Tools & Resources

- The Clear Path Tool uses the E-grid emission factor by the EPA as its measuring stick.
 - This provides the current resource mix. Solar has more than doubled from 2016 to 2018 data.

Technology

- The Transportation & Technology subcommittees will definitely cross-pollinate, as well as with the Social Equity subcommittee when it comes to implementation re: what is feasible for City.
- One question that arose was how the public can be notified as the energy grid gets cleaner? How can they know, at any given time, what energy sources the grid is made up of, and how can they view changes over time?

Connections & Outreach

- The Social Equity and Community-wide Adoption subcommittee has begun a running list of organizations to spread the word about the clean energy plan and gain buy-in. Andrea Bennett invited Task Force members to contribute the names of any organizations they are connected with.
- Wilmington Industrial Development may be a good contact for industries/companies looking to conduct business in Wilmington.
- The Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is a federal program that provides direct assistance for help with electric bills, and tends to have money left on the table.
 - Figuring ways the city could partner with/spread the word about this program may be a consideration.

Virtual Format

As the subcommittees and full Task Force have been meeting virtually, the Task Force meeting split into breakout groups to discuss how virtual meetings are going, and how they can be more successful. Warren Miller led a brief report-out, summarized below:

What's working:

- Inviting “big players” such as Duke Energy and those with subject matter expertise can be helpful for subcommittees

How to optimize virtual meetings:

- Drop-in office hours between formal meetings for informal conversation
- Extending virtual meetings for people to “hang around” for informal discussion afterwards so that people can get in their comments and questions

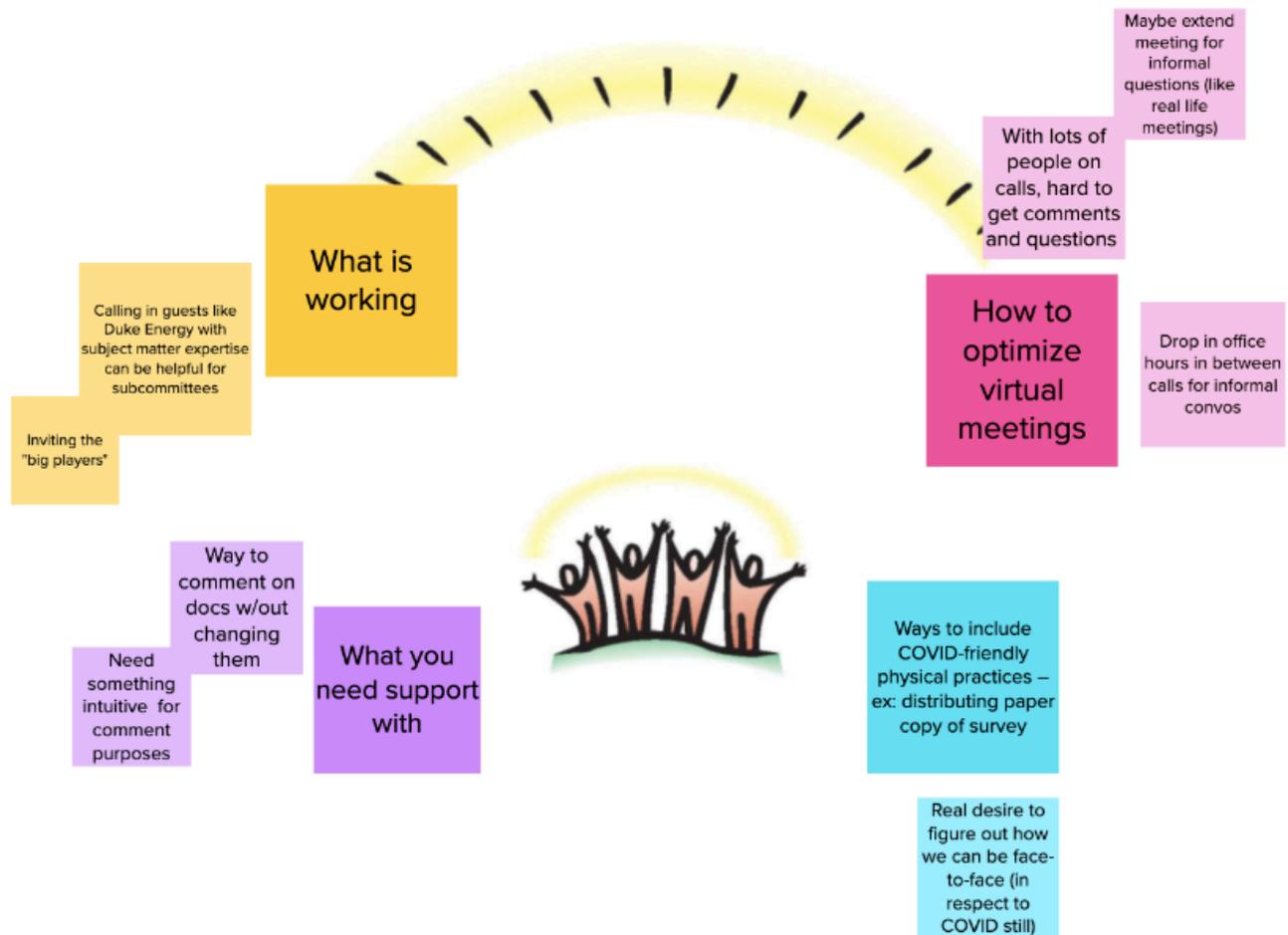


What groups need support with:

- An intuitive way to comment on collaborative documents without changing them
 - Google Docs has a comment feature that was suggested

Ways to include COVID-friendly physical practices in the Task Force's work:

- A great example by the Social Equity subcommittee was making sure paper copies of the public survey were distributed
- The group has a real desire to continue figuring out ways they can meet face-to-face while still social distancing
 - Ex: using the Convention Center as a meeting space and sitting far apart



Presentation of Resources

David Ingram, Sustainability Program Manager for the City of Wilmington, shared a spreadsheet of City facilities. He noted that it's square footage (vs. building footprint), so they may have to dig deeper to find footprint data for the purposes of exploring solar potential. The spreadsheet is shared under the Dropbox under the [Wilmington Documents folder](#) (direct link to spreadsheet [here](#)). David noted there are existing solar arrays on three facilities.



Paul Reinmann noted that the city could explore solar options that are not necessarily on roofs – maybe ground space or empty city-owned properties. David Ingram noted that certain buildings, such as the police headquarters, use energy most intensely (using kbtu/sq. ft metric) due to the 24/7 operations and equipment. Dave Mayes, Director of Public Services for the City of Wilmington, added that the city’s facilities have an extremely wide variety of usage – even parks, which are typically low usage, use lots of energy when stadium lights are turned on. One comment was made about using parking lots/decks for solar, which could also provide carport-like protection to police vehicles, etc.

Julie noted Thom Moton had shared a report from ICMA (International City/County Management Association) on social equity and sustainability report with the Social Equity Subcommittee. It is available in the [Social Equity Subcommittee folder](#) on Dropbox. It is also available [here](#) as a direct link.

Closing Announcements

Julie Brenman noted that the subcommittees each have their next meetings scheduled for the second week of August. The groups were reminded about how they can stay within compliance of open meeting laws. They must provide at least 72 hours notice of any changes so that the City Clerk may advertise the meeting properly. The co-chairs have been keeping notes to stay in compliance as well. The groups are encouraged to meet as often as they feel comfortable, so long as they are in compliance with public meeting laws.

David shared that the Task Force now has a webpage on the City of Wilmington’s website, linked [here](#). The page shares the group’s charter, a list of the subcommittees and Task Force members, as well as an archive of documents, recordings, etc.

David Ingram provided an update on the public survey. The survey was available online, as well as in a physical paper format. It closed on July 27th.

- The online version was viewed 2,826 times and received 621 submissions.
- 77% of respondents were city residents, and the most comments were received from the 28403 ZIP code.
- Some data analysis still needs to be performed. Overall, the group was pleased with the response rate, especially the additional comments from respondents.

The meeting closed by Julie Brenman, Ron Sparks, and Natalie English thanking the group.

Next Steps & Other Announcements

Upcoming meetings:

Subcommittee meetings in August:

- **Clean Energy Technology:** Wednesday, August 12th from 6-7:30 PM
- **Transportation and Fleet Operations:** Tuesday, August 11h from 7-8:30 PM
- **Social Equity & Community-Wide Adoption:** Tuesday, August 11th from 6-7:30 PM
- **NC Clean Energy Policy & Legislation:** Tuesday, August 11th from 6-7:30 PM



Full meetings:

- **August 25** 6-7:30 pm: Full Task Force Meeting
 - (Subcommittees meet)
- **September 22** 6-7:30 pm: Full Task Force Meeting
 - (Subcommittees meet)
- **October 27** 6-7:30 pm: Full Task Force Meeting

May be extended 3 months due to COVID-19

Task Force Initiative Dropbox Folder where we will be sharing documents and other updates throughout the process: [Dropbox](#)

- Consolidated Agendas and PowerPoints
- Consolidated Summary Reports

Preparation for next meeting: If participants have suggested ideas or background information in preparation for our next meeting, feel to contact:

- David Ingram, Wilmington Sustainability Manager (also a voting member of Task Force) david.ingram@wilmingtonnc.gov/910-341-1602
- Fountainworks, meeting facilitators (Warren Miller, Julie Brenman, or Maddie Shea) warren@fountainworks.com, julie@fountainworks.com, or maddie@fountainworks.com

The next full Task Force meeting is August 25th. Meeting materials will continue to be shared and posted in the [Dropbox folder](#).