



# CITY OF NORMAN, OK CITY COUNCIL CONFERENCE

Municipal Building, Executive Conference Room, 201 West Gray, Norman,  
OK 73069

Tuesday, January 23, 2024 at 5:30 PM

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## MINUTES

The City Council of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met in Special Session in the Executive Conference Room of the Norman Municipal Building on the 23rd day of January, 2024, at 5:30 p.m., and notice and agenda of the meeting were posted at the Municipal Building at 201 West Gray Street 48 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

### CALL TO ORDER

#### PRESENT

Mayor Larry Heikkila  
Councilmember Ward 1 Austin Ball  
Councilmember Ward 2 Lauren Schueler  
Councilmember Ward 3 Bree Montoya  
Councilmember Ward 4 Helen Grant  
Councilmember Ward 5 Michael Nash  
Councilmember Ward 6 Elizabeth Foreman  
Councilmember Ward 7 Stephen Holman  
Councilmember Ward 8 Matthew Peacock

#### ABSENT

NONE

### AGENDA ITEMS

#### 1. FIVE YEAR UPDATE ON THE MAYOR'S CLIMATE PROTECTION AGREEMENT.

Ms. Michelle Loudonback, Environmental & Sustainability Manager, stated that an update has been ongoing from 2022 to today to the Mayor's Climate Protection Agreement. The Environmental Control Advisory Board has put in a lot of work going through each of the elements and looking at what the City has accomplished through the years. The City of Norman staff has been amazing and always made themselves available to the ECAB members when they had questions or needed information. ECAB members will be reaching out to Department heads to talk about recommendations and how to make those a reality.

The National Environmental Information Center provided statistics regarding the billion dollar natural disasters that have occurred from the 1980's to today. In the decade of the 1980's, there were 33 billion dollar disasters and in 2023 there were 28, \$1 billion dollar disasters. These events were some of the reasons why the Mayor's Climate Protection Agreement was created.

Item 1, continued:

The Mayor's Climate Protection Agreement began in 2005 and the U.S. Conference of Mayors endorsed this plan. In 2005, former Mayor Haralson signed this document.

At this time, Council tasked Environmental Control Advisory Board to review, make a plan and update it over time. The formal recommendations were presented in 2007 and were adopted by Council in 2009 under former Mayor Rosenthal. In 2018, former Mayor Miller recognized it had been nine years since this plan was reviewed. Therefore, ECAB reviewed the plan and presented a revised plan in 2018.

Originally, there were twelve elements included in the plan for energy conservation as well as reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Currently, there are ten elements. Implementing these changes made the plan more efficient and there may be more updates in the next five year cycle.

Item one was Energy conservation and Greenhouse emissions. Staff conducted a Greenhouse Gas emission inventory.

The Mayor's Climate Protection Agreement from 2018, the original document from 2005 and the greenhouse gas emission inventory have been included in the information provided. Greenhouse gases are methane, nitrous oxide, carbon dioxide, etc. In the year 2000 there was a baseline emission inventory. The reduction shown is actually greater because traffic signals that were transformed into LED traffic were not included. This can reduce consumption by 90%. The original number does not have the traffic signal data from 2005-2021. The comparison was 2021 instead of 2020 due to COVID. The forecast year is 2026 and that is when the next update of the greenhouse gas emission inventory is recommended. Street lights and traffic lights are much lower than other cities and that is due to our Public Works Department changing to LED. This is not just for traffic signals; this is also for street lights as well.

Due to the Phase II improvements that were voted in, the Water Reclamation Facility decreased their energy consumption and emissions by 88%.

One of the top three recommendations are that we complete the inventory every five years with this methodology.

Another recommendation is to continue the creation of renewable, dedicated parking spaces throughout Norman. This has already been a priority and the ordinance has been passed. The City has installed electric vehicle charging stations.

The types of gases nationwide that comprise emissions are mostly carbon dioxide but also methane. Methane is 80 times more heat trapping than carbon dioxide. Nitrous oxides and other gases comprise the remainder of emissions.

Norman's emission inventory shows that most of it as carbon dioxide but there is also a substantial amount of methane.

Item 1, continued:

The majority of our sources of emissions are from wastewater treatment and buildings and facilities. The building and facilities staff have been doing energy audits and assessments to try to reduce this as well.

Action Item two is to adopt and enforce land policies. Land policies should encourage the use of nature based solutions and low impact development. This manages growth in a way that will not create the kind of urbanization issues that we see in core Norman. These policies should keep eco-system benefits, stormwater management, wildlife preservation and climate regulation.

AIM Norman is a huge undertaking but when it is accomplished and finally completed, the City will take these new ideas and put them into action for all over growth. This allows a way to move forward that preserve our resources.

The Center City Form Based Code revision allows for a wide variety of housing types and eliminates unit maximums. The lot size requirements will keep the rural nature of east Norman intact.

There are three top recommendations:

1. Adopt and enforce land use policies that reduce sprawl and creates and preserves open space.
2. Refine the Center City Form Based Code to enhance walkable and bikeable areas of core Norman.
3. Expand and define development rules to prioritize nature-based solutions.

Regarding alternative transportation, the City has great bike trails, a wonderful transit system that just underwent a huge overhaul to optimize the system overall, sidewalk improvements and installations that are expanding throughout the City. The City has a commitment to Embark and we should continue to support them and hopefully bring the transit system further out to the southeast side of Norman. Continue bicycle expansion along Legacy Trail so the businesses in that area can be more accessible.

Renewable Energy & Efficiency- The City has two solar projects, one is at the Water Treatment Plant and one is at the Water Reclamation Facility. These locations are the two biggest consumers of energy. The City also has electric vehicle charging stations throughout Norman. Norman Public Schools has created an energy use guideline and that is what they follow to help them promote energy conservation and reliance on renewables. ECAB would like the City to create a renewable energy employment program initiative. The City of Norman will be doing a Solar Initiative, which encourages the installation of solar panels on private homes, businesses and municipal buildings. Also, the City will work with Homeowner Associations to reduce the laws stating that home owners cannot install solar panels. Request the utility companies to purchase back the power that is generated from solar panels, which does not currently happen. Additionally, pricing structure is something to discuss because it is more expensive during the day and that is when we are creating energy so citizens should get paid for the energy being created during that time.

Sustainable building practices are those practices within buildings themselves. We have 23 certified buildings in Norman and four of those are owned by the City of Norman. Fire Station

Item 1, continued:

No. 8, Fire Station No. 9, East Side Library, Central Library are all LEAD certified. There are 19 other buildings that are LEAD certified, some are privately owned and some are owned by the University of Oklahoma.

The City has Building Codes that were updated to 2018 except for one notable exception, the Energy Conservation Code which is the only thing from 2006. The recommendation is to adopt the most current Energy Conservation Code. After speaking with Greg Clark, Development Services Manager, ECAB was told that the City uses the Oklahoma Uniform Building Code. The City of Norman Code Officers are members of these Boards and they lobby and encourage the adoption of higher standards.

Municipal Fleet Vehicles- the City of Norman had 15 hybrid police cars added to the fleet. The Fleet Division is constantly looking for alternative fuel sources, efficiency, technology, etc. The City has 133 Compressed Natural Gas vehicles now and the two Electronic Vehicle buses. Installation of EV chargers at Fleet and other public places is under way and we should hear from Association of Central Oklahoma Governments very soon about the grant for the other three EV charging stations. The recommendation from ECAB is to continue to monitor and explore alternative fuel sources, continue to invest in alternative fuel infrastructure, implement an internal education program about reducing fuel consumption and how to go accomplish that goal.

Efficiencies at the Water and Water Reclamation Facilities – Purchases of higher efficiency motors. City staff is fiscally responsible and are constantly finding ways to make things more efficient. There are solar projects at both facilities and the Phase 2 Plant upgrades at both facilities with some of the changes involve using gravity.

Top three recommendations:

- Installation of a covered area for storage of dewatering sludge.
- Devise a new method for using recovered methane as the primary fuel source for the boilers.
- Explore more efficient biogas generation and alternative funding sources for implementation.
- Recycling in the city and the community - Recycling is very important but the best thing is to refuse. We should reduce, reuse then recycle.

The City now has the Household Hazardous Waste Facility and there is 88% curbside participation in recycling based on statistics from 2022. There is diversion of 27.5% of our waste stream due to recycling. This equals about 1/3 of our entire waste stream that was diverted from the landfill for use as compost or mulch, etc.

Top three recommendations for recycling:

- Work to reduce our contamination rate in Norman. We can accept plastics #1, #2 and paper and cardboard and there is a market for this type of recycling. We do not have a market for #3-#7 plastics. The City has a market for glass if you bring it to the kiosk at the transfer station but there is not a market for the larger contractor. The focus should be to educate the public on bringing things that we can recycle and not putting other items in the recycle bins. Plastics should be washed before you put

Item 1, continued:

them into the recycle container. Any small substance inside of a plastic container will ruin the entire load to recycling. The contamination rate is 28%, which needs to be reduced to at least the national average of 18%.

- Explore and implement recycling opportunities for apartment and business.
- Work to improve recycling participation rates. 88% participation is great but we would want to strive for 100% participation.
- Maintain Healthy Urban Ecosystems – The City of Norman collaborated with OU and Ideal Homes for Trailwoods Addition to design a paired watershed and this made a difference in the discharge from each side of the street. The difference in the discharge came from bio swells in the front and rain barrels. In March 2022, the City hired a full time Forester. There have been several capstone designs and a lot has been done with graduate research efforts.

One of ECAB's top recommendations are:

- Update the Forestry Master Plan and the Community Forest Management Plan. This is underway and we should meet this goal within the next year.
- Refine the Engineering Design Criteria to explicitly call out nature-based solutions and encourage or eventually require their use.
- Increase departmental coordination on projects.
- Public Education – collaborate with outside experts. An example would be the Compost Bin Workshop the City held to show residents how to build a hot bin and a cold bin compost pile. Increase environmental content on the City website and the amount of environmental information on our social platforms. Employ or contract with a public employee professional to expand and enhance current efforts. Develop and implement a strategy to utilize social media to promote environmental content.

Councilmember Holman stated the Water Reclamation Facility decreased emissions by 88%, but still makes up 48% of our total emissions. This is the number one source of emissions so there is still work to be done. There are neighborhoods near there and proposed projects to be built in that area. People have concerns about health issues that could stem from living next to a facility with these type of emissions. This is something that needs to be considered moving forward.

Councilmember Holman said the 15 hybrid police cars do not include the 92 hybrid police cars that were budgeted for this year.

Mr. Pyle stated the ability of Canoo to manufacture these cars in Oklahoma is becoming more of a reality. Canoo will begin having offerings that cost less than your typical S10 pickup truck, etc. Most of the City's fleet never leave town or go over 50 miles per hour.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 6:14 p.m.

ATTEST:

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City Clerk

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Mayor