**Date:** Monday, February 12, 2024

**Time:** 6:30 PM

**Location:** Town Council Chambers, 30 Main Street, Freeport, Maine

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**In attendance:**

Valy Steverlynck (Co-chair), Bob Stevens, Jim Reinertsen, Megan Shore, Susana Hancock, Meddy Smith (Sustainability Coordinator) Eric Smith (Town Council Liaison)

**Minutes – the meeting was recorded and can be viewed on youtube** [**here**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NnJ11RoA9_I)**.**

* **BEGIN MEETING** 6:30 PM
* **APPROVE MINUTES:** 5 min

Susana made a motion to approve the Minutes of 1/22/24, Jim seconded the motion and it passed unanimously (5/0 – 2 absent).

**INTRODUCTION TO DRAFT CLIMATE PLAN:** 15 min

Sustainability Coordinator and FSAB co-chair Valy spoke about the Climate Action Plan process and gave a brief overview of the purpose and scope of the Plan.

**CLIMATE ACTION PLAN DISCUSSION:** 60 min

FSAB presented the strategies for each topic area of the Plan through a slideshow and invited feedback on the following topic areas:

* **Connected Mobility and Land Use**
  + Question on the percent of emissions from transportation and how it compares to the national and state average. And what does this Plan do to address this sector. Meddy responded that while methodology for measuring emissions varies, Freeport is higher than the State and also higher than some neighboring communities. FSAB employed GPCOG for a further analysis that will be an appendix to the Climate Plan. She noted that FSAB recognizes this priority to address transportation emissions through not just EVs, but active mobility solutions. It was also noted that the commercial activity could be one of the drivers of transportation emissions compared to other communities. Bob noted that Freeport is different kind of community because we have a lot of employees, shoppers, and commercial activity – and we have tried to address that by including actions that aim to involve businesses in solutions to reduce car trips. He noted that this will take a lot of work and collaboration in the coming years.
  + Another question clarified the timeframe for short term actions, as drafted currently, was defined as years 2024-2026.
  + There was a question about how many emissions can be attributed to tourism. Bob noted that there was no way to measure that exactly through the data we have, but our analysis does indicate higher amounts of vehicle miles in the summer months which points to tourism activity as contributing to transportation emissions. Susana noted that we know that a large portion of employees commute in about 10-24 miles, and a similar portion of residents commute out of town that distance to work. The majority of transportation emissions come from light duty cars, so we have additional breakdowns but we can’t get at the granular level of intention or origin of vehicle trip. Susana also noted that this Plan does not apply to the RSU, as a follow up to a question from an attendee related to school bus emissions.
  + There as a statement read by Mason Morfit, of Freeport Climate Action Now (FCAN) that urged the Town to continue to support the initiatives of FCAN that educate, inspire, and support the wider community to take action through means not encompassed in this Town process.
* **Efficient Buildings and Clean Energy**
  + There was a question about how transparent the energy benchmarking data would be (related to the draft action proposing initiating a benchmarking pilot). Meddy responded that the typical intention for these programs is that the data is internal for business use, but in conversations in this process people have noted that transparency in energy data reporting could be effective for consumer knowledge and business behavior change. The respondent noted he would encourage the Town to make data accessible for this benefit.
  + Another question was why the Municipal Power Purchase agreement would be a medium timeframe action. Valy noted that the Town already has a PPA and this action would be about exploring enhancing this.
  + Another question was centered around how the Town can support resilient energy systems without relying on generators that use fossil fuels. Meddy noted that why a lot of grid improvements are out of the Towns direct control, there is a role for the Town to play to leveraging the emerging technology of microgrids, batteries, and supporting back up power at critical facilities.
  + There was a comment from Naiome of PassiveHaus Maine about where the Town landed on adopting stretch codes in perpetuity. She noted that the next iteration of the building energy stretch code will be adopted very soon and wants the town to consider adopting it. There is another option to adopt an energy score system that would offer transparency at point of sale and give us a better understanding the baseline of efficiency in our buildings. She also pointed out how big of a challenge retrofitting buildings at a community scale will be and that solutions will need to be community-driven. A further point she made was that she hopes the Town is able to be coordinated to leverage all of the external funding streams available. Meddy noted that FSAB is keeping a running list of funding opportunities, and next steps will be integrating funding opportunities into actions in a timeline. Mapping funding onto actions will support project management of this Plan through implementation. Naomi asked if FSAB thought the Town is positioned well to leverage grants. Valy noted that FSAB is in conversation with Town staff about being prepared with staff resources and the community can support the Town as well. Community members are welcome to pass along funding opportunities to Meddy at [msmith@freeportmaine.com](mailto:msmith@freeportmaine.com)
  + There was a comment that this section of the plan is redundant with the adopted stretch code, private interests, and efficiency maine that incentivizes energy efficiency through operational energy savings. Meddy noted that this plan hopes to leverage that momentum and that there are actions that aim to go further than efficiency and get at powering more renewable energy.
* **Smart Waste Management and Circular Economy**
  + There was a comment about how we can reduce emissions from the trips taken to the transfer station.
  + Another comment noted that FCAN has been working to develop a library of things, but the attendee feels the idea has run its course without additional space being found. Meddy noted that this action is still important and through implementation we can try to find a way to get it done. A further comment was about FCAN’s difficulty in getting an electric equipment loan program off the ground.
* **Healthy natural Lands and Waters**
  + Carrie Kinney, of Freeport Conservation Trust, noted that her initial estimation of land conserved in Freeport is around 16% (including FCT easements, town owned lands, and other category with properties such as Wolfes Neck). Total acres of this estimation is 3,492 but maybe a bit higher including some smaller parcels. She noted that how you describe conserved land is another conversation. She noted that there are some inaccuracies in the draft Plan she can provide clarity on.
  + Another attendee noted the multiple benefits that natural environment provides. She noted that conservation needs to be specified, how is it conserved, does it include farmland, etc. She noted that the 30% goal should be defined more. Meddy noted that the intention in that goal statement is meant to refer to total land available. Meddy noted that one of the actions is to update the Freeport Open Space Plan, which would be a process to get into the details and priorities of conservation and recreation. The attendee asked how zoning intersects with this Plan. Meddy noted that her perspective is that the goal is to find the balance of conservation, growth, zoning, and housing needs. The Open Space plan update can support these conservations and decisions. The attendee noted the confusions in the current zoning.
  + Valy noted the Comprehensive Plan is an opportunity for detailed discussions and input on zoning and land use.
  + A question was asked about what the tree ordinance action entails. Meddy noted that the Tree Task Force is currently working on this ordinance. Valy clarified that the intent of that process is focusing on municipal trees in planting and maintenance. There is a hope to include trees in the parking requirements. Nothing has been brought to council yet. The attendee noted that there are tree bylaws around that could be used to support mature trees and canopy. Valy noted that Portland has this bylaw and Freeport Tree Task Force is modeling their work of Portland. The attendee noted that outreach and enforcement will be important.
  + Carrie Kinney said that updating the Open Space Plan would be a high priority for the FCT and that the implementation considerations should remove ‘easements’ as a mechanism because they are not the only tool.
* **Public Health and Resilient Community**
  + An attendee spoke to his experience in the recent storms and the amount of stormsurge and high tide creating extreme damage. One of his concerns is seeing the rush to rebuild in these areas that will be flooded again.

**CLIMATE ACTION PLAN NEXT STEPS:** 10 min

The community is invited to share more feedback at FSAB’s next public meeting in February and then the Board and staff will finalize the draft before presenting it to council. Opportunities for feedback will be available online and in person.

* **OTHER ITEMS**: 10 min
  + Update from Tree Task Force - TABLED
* **ADJOURN BY 8:00 PM:**