



SUMMARY

Climate Protection Action Committee
Monthly Appointee Meeting
Friday, August 1, 2025
9:00 a.m.
Hybrid meeting: In-person & Zoom

Appointees Present: Josey Cline, Joyce Rose-Harris, Gretchen Lambert, Benjamin Marosites, Caroline Nagel, Bob Petrusis, Dave Voyles, Dennis Wiehl, Angi Fuller Wildt.

Appointees Absent: Cameron Cohran (unexcused), Julie Seel (unexcused)

Guests and Staff: Robert Anderson, Mary Pat Baldauf, Samantha Cornell, Rebecca Haynes, Merrill McGregor, Priscilla Preston, Jen Tyrell, Samantha Yager.

Chairman Bob Petrusis called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.

Robert announced that Clint was occupied with the Mayor and would be unable to attend today's meeting.

Minutes from the June meeting were reviewed. Priscilla Preston's name was mistakenly listed as Priscilla Presley. Mary Pat will make that correction; the minutes were approved with said changes.

Mary Pat updated the group on the Bloomberg Youth Climate Action grant. Progress reports were due July 15, and all but one group submitted an application. Several groups stood out for the work they've already done, including the SC Wildlife Federation Cola EcoLeaders, the SC Public Health Association's Climate Action Resilience Week and the Cola Bike Collective Climate Friendly Mobility. She said they are monitoring the group spending so if there looks like someone will have leftover funds, they can be directed to another group and/or used to pay the intern.

Mary Pat reported that Speaking Sustainability went out on July 30 to 800 subscribers. So far, the open rate is 54%; the industry average is 41%. The click rate was 13%, a full 11 percent better than the industry average, and the most popular link was the Columbia Heat Mapping Availability Form.

While the group was on the topic of the Columbia Heat Mapping project, Bob asked Benjamin Marosites for an update on the project plan. Ben said that there are close to 30 registered participants. He also mentioned that they should have preliminary results in a few weeks after the project. When asked if they were using the same locations, he said that it wasn't so much the locations that mattered, but that the variety of locations.

Jory then updated the group on the Climate Pollution Reduction grant, starting with the implementation grant. There have been two recent meetings, one in Eastover, the other at the City's Waste Water Treatment Plant, both of which are solar projects. The planning grant is wrapping up toward the end of the year. In the fall, he'd like to bring to CPAC a list of greenhouse gas reduction measures and get their feedback.

Bob noted that the City's Climate Action Plan is 20 years old and needs to be updated. He hopes that the work he is doing can be folded in to such an update.

Next up was the urban farming working group update. Dave Voyles reported that the Urban Farming Committee discussed the possibility of becoming a Bee City because 1/3 of all foods are pollinated by a bee. The application has been started and once City Council approves the resolution, it will be sent in. Within a few weeks, the City will receive their designation.

Dave Voyles and Josey Cline are going to co-chair the committee; other members will include representatives from the City's Parks & Recreation and Forestry & Beautification departments. Columbia Green will also be represented on the committee as they will hold education events as part of Beat the Heat: The Sequel.

Next up was a presentation from Jen Tyrell with the state Audubon Society about their Lights Out campaign for South Carolina cities. After the presentation, Bob asked about the next steps. Rebecca Haynes said that perhaps a lights out resolution would be good. Robert Anderson suggested folks contact their City Council members about the issue.

Staff updates were next. Samantha Yager mentioned that the reroute was coming soon. Bob mentioned that Carolina Nagel presented an idea in last meeting's new business about cleaning up yard waste, and he wondered if perhaps a City water bill flyer might be a good idea to try. Sam said she would look into it.

Dennis announced that the City has received a large grant to study traffic in the City, and they are forming a subcommittee that will meet four times a year. Interested participants should contact leigh.deforth@columbisc.gov.

Dennis then went through his articles for the month.

In closing, the group was reminded that there will be a working meeting in August. The meeting was adjourned at 10:10 a.m.