



SUMMARY

Climate Protection Action Committee
Monthly Appointee Meeting
Friday, May 15, 2026 9:00 a.m.
Hybrid meeting: In-person & Teams

Appointees Present: Cameron Cohran, Joyce Rose-Harris, Ben Marosites, Bob Petrulis, Julie Seel, Dave Voyles, Dennis Wiehl.

Guests and Staff: Mary Pat Baldauf, Councilman Sam Johnson, Priscilla Preston, Clint Shealy.

Cameron called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.

Dennis made a motion that the April meeting summary be approved. Bob Petrulis seconded it, and the motion was approved unanimously.

In Clint's absence, Mary Pat had an update from him and announced the following:

The City has entered in to contract negotiations with Schneider Electric to provide energy audit services.

On solar at the Wastewater Treatment Plant, the City has received and reviewed proposals and are in contract negotiations with one of the proposers. The contract is anticipated to go to Council for the first meeting in June.

The City continues to evaluate options for biogas treatment at the Wastewater Treatment Plant, and may engage Schneider Electric to assist with ideas and implementation.

The Canal Recovery is coming along nicely, with the Alternate Water Supply about ½ way through construction, the Headgate Replacement Project under contract, and the Embankment Repairs in Procurement and out for bid in June.

After Mary Pat reviewed the list, Clint entered the meeting virtually. Since Mary Pat had presented an update for him, he decided to take questions. Dennis asked if CPAC members were still going to be involved with the energy audit process. Clint explained that after the contract is in place, CPAC representation would be brought about, probably within about three months.

Clint also mentioned that there is a Health, Social and Environmental Committee meeting scheduled for Tuesday, May 26, and that if they still have it, he'd like to have a CPAC update presentation. Cameron said that he had been working on one.

It was then time to address CPAC Priorities, starting with a n update on the by-laws. Mary Pat reported that the by-laws have been waiting approval, and that the Health, Safety and Environmental Affairs Council subcommittee was meeting in May, and those would be made part of Cameron's presentation.

On the Bloomberg Update, Mary Pat reported that the next round of youth climate action grants will be going to cities that haven't previously participated, whci leaves the City of Columbia out.

The distribution list for Speaking Sustainability was increased by 15% during the Earth Day Climate Action Fair. In May, 986 people received the newsletter, and there was a 51% open rate. The link open rate was 10%; the most popular link was the Environmental Working Group's Clean Fifteen and Dirty Dozen produce pesticide rating list.

Jory was unable to attend this morning's meeting, but sent an update. The CPRG Climate Action Plan was released on Earth Day as planned. And the Climate Conversations Mini Grant is being re-released and is on the website.

Urban Farming subgroup chair David Volyes reported that the internal Bee City Committee met on Monday, April 13 and discussed seven initiatives:

1. Tabling at the June 27 Beat the Heat, Plant a Tree workshop
2. Linking to an established native plant list
3. Talking with other southeastern Bee Cities to see what they are doing
4. Participating in a regional Pollinator Census in August
5. Adding additional Bee City signage within the City
6. Particpating in World Bee Day, May 20 with social media posts on the City's channels
7. Creating a pollinator garden at Finlay Park

Julie Seel added the Columbia Fireflies had contacted her about the possibility of hosting a Bee City night at the park. Dave thought that would be a neat promotion, especially since fireflies are considered to be pollinators.

Dennis Wiehl reported for the Smart Growth subgroup that Bob Petrusis is developing a slide show to illustrate the 10 principals they are supporting to eventually present to the HSEA Committee. HE said it wouldn't be ready by May 26. Mary Pat suggested that Cameron might yield about five minutes of his presentation to give Dennis a chance to summarize the work of the subgroup.

Staff updates were short, as Mary Pat was the one staff member attending:

- She invited everyone out to Soda City for the Public Works Week Touch-A-Truck event in the 1700 block.

- She referred to a printed Sustainability Update for April/May 2026 that she handed out with the agenda and minutes. She mentioned that the Earth Day Climate Action Fair was a success, and that an estimate 1500-2000 people walked through the intersection. The CPAC booth received more than 200 Earth Day Pledge Forms, and added those individuals to the Speaking Sustainability distribution list, which increased it by 15%.
- She also noted that Bee City would be tabling at this weekend's Festival of Gardens; their table will be set up at one of the tour stops that has a pollinator garden.
- Finally, she mentioned that she had attended the SE Sustainability Directors Network in Tampa, May 4-7. She did a lot of networking with fellow directors and got some great ideas. Her favorite session was How to Influence Behavior via Communications, led by The Center for Behavior and Climate, which covered various messages that work to engage particular groups in climate action.
- In intern Samantha Cornell's absence, she announced that Samantha recently graduated from USC and has accepted a position at the SC Office of Resiliency, located at the Bull Street District, a stone's throw from Public Works.

In new business/old business, Cameron mentioned that he'd like to find out how the City's various programs impact emission. Mary Pat explained that the City has two Emissions Inventory reports which detail the City's emissions creation. One is a baseline from 2015; the other is one done for the year 2019. She will distribute a copy of the executive summary from each one of the group, and provide the full inventories to those who want to learn more.

Cameron asked Mary Pat if she would consider updating the group on the How to Influence Behavior via Communications at a future working committee meeting, that everyone would probably benefit. She will plan on doing that at the August working meeting as the June 26 working meeting has three speakers scheduled.

Cameron asked if anyone had anything they'd like to share. Bob Petrulis announced that he was in Nashville recently, where he helped train new Climate Reality leaders. At the training, a new tool was released: Climate Trace, a free tool to help calculate emissions. He will update the group on the tool at the next CPAC meeting.

Hearing no other announcements, Cameron asked if anyone had a motion to adjourn. Dennis made the official motion, seconded by Bob. The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 a.m.