

**Charter Commission Public Hearing
November 19, 2022, 6:00 p.m.
Minutes**

Attendance

Commissioners					
Name	Present	Absent	Name	Present	Absent
Amira Streeter	X		Debbie Kitchin	X	
Andrew Speer		X	Debra Porta	X	
Anthony Castaneda		X	Gloria Cruz		X
Becca Uherbelau		X	Hanna Osman	X	
Brenda Ketah	X		Raahi Reddy		X
Bryan Williams Lewis		X	Salome Chimuku	X	
Candace Avalos		X	Yasmin Ibarra		x
Dave Galat		X	Vacant		
David Chen	X		Vacant		
David Knowles		X	Vacant		

Staff Present			
Julia Meier	Sofia Alvarez-Castro	Diana Shiplet	Raihana Ansary

Welcome

Sofia welcomed everyone and provided meeting logistics and outlined the rules of conduct for the public hearing.

Co-Chair Porta provided a presentation on the fifteen current Phase II proposals.

Public Comment

Annabelle Valdini – 15-year-old student. Thanked the Commission and asked for stronger and enforceable climate language in Proposal 12 to regulate fossil fuels. Annabelle shared the current effects of climate change and that we can't wait until 2026 to address climate changes. The changes being proposed will affect the years to come.

Adah Crandall – 16-year-old co-founder of Portland Youth Climate Strike. Adah urged the Charter Commission to add binding, clear and specific language to Proposal 12 regarding the fossil fuel phase out. Adah continued to share that climate is happening now, don't have time to wait another year 10 years to address climate change. Adah shared two possible scenarios of what society could look like if climate change was addressed now or if it wasn't. Adah urged the Commission to help create an equitable and just community and require a fossil fuel phase out in the charter

Mary Peveto – Executive Director of Neighbors for Clean Air. Has been active in the climate movement for several years. Support the creation of a transparency advocacy position. As an advocate for clean air, Mary shared she's worked with government at all levels to address clean air. The advocacy community

has been confronted and felt the City's unwillingness to work with the advocate community to address community needs. The climate work has been done in secrecy and without community buy-in, referencing the most recent air quality proposal. Community feels discourage to work the City, as they are often told that they already have the answer. Mary urges that an advocacy position would allow for an more democratic process.

Edith Gillis – Shared general support for Proposal 12 and asked the Commission to add additional technical specifications, which include but not limited to: expand who is required how climate was assessed; expand how they are communicate and what they communicate; expand with who and how climate solutions are addresses; expand general criteria for decisions; expand the specific component criteria, and more.

Michaela McCormick – Member of Extinction Rebellion PDX. Thanked the Commission regarding Proposal 12. Michaela shared that proposal 12 lacks enforceability, is not actionable, or binding. Michaela shared the latest United Nations climate report shared that the event if all government upheld their climate commitments, we still would not be close to achieving our goals, meaning the current commitments would increase climate emissions. Michaela shared various resolution. Proposing needs to apply to all city decisions, so all bureaus can have a coordinated comprehensive and exacting emission reducing plans.

Mark Darienzo – Represents Climate Jobs PDX. Has been active in the climate movement for several years. Believes it is important for the Charter Commission to include a fossil fuel phase-out amendment that's bold and binding. Believes it should serve as an overarching policy directive that applies to all city bureaus, future orders, budgets and other city decisions. Recommends that the amendment apply to all city decisions to the maximum extent allowed by law. Encourages taking advantage of federal dollars available such as through Biden's Inflation Reduction Act to help phase-out fossil fuels.

Susan Palmiter – Co-Founder and Co-Lead of Divest Oregon, a statewide grassroots coalition of individuals and 99 organizations who aim to get the Oregon Treasury to stop investing in the declining fossil fuel industry and to shift Oregonians funds to support a livable future and get better long-term financial returns. Urges for the city of Portland to be a leader and give the charter real teeth in blocking the expansion of fossil fuel infrastructure. Portland needs to position itself for an alternative energy future.

Luke Ramsey – Student at Franklin High School. In support of a stronger climate commitment in Proposal 12 to regulate fossil fuels. States that past Portland City Council measures on fossil fuels are not enforceable by law. Believes that a lack of charter support for climate legislation makes marginal progress difficult and that Portland City Council budgets do not reflect climate change as a priority. States that Fossil fuel infrastructure is becoming more expensive and taking stronger action could mitigate future budgeting pains. Urges the adoption of a more binding Proposal 12.

Eloise Smith – 17-year-old member of Sunrise PDX. Thanked the Commission for their hard work and time. Advocates for a stronger proposal 12 and a binding fossil fuel phase-out. Recommends binding language to prevent the expansion of fossil fuel infrastructure, manufacturing, storage and transport. The city has been committed to the prevention of expansion of fossil fuel infrastructure and use for many years, but that commitment has been unenforceable and has come primarily in the form of resolutions. Adding language on the prevention of expansion of fossil fuels to the charter will give the

city the means to achieve its current goals and commitments. Argues that transitioning away from fossil fuels is the smartest investment.

Sean Jacobson – In support of strong and binding language on Proposal 12 regarding fossil fuel reduction. Believes it is important to do an inventory of embodied energy including of pollution in all consumer products. Recommends establishing a subsidy program to facilitate more localized resource production in the Portland metro of energy of food and building materials. Argues that reducing embodied energy and establishing a localized production system is necessary to reduce fossil fuels.

Amy Sample Ward – chair of the Portland Elections Commission. In support of creating an Independent Elections Commission with Small Donor Elections running underneath it. Testified that once established, the Independent Commission should not be reassigned to the Mayor, City Council or a City Manager. It should remain completely independent in order to protect it from political interference.

Jonathan Cobb – works for Transitions Projects. Proposals 13 and 14 need stronger, more robust language and teeth. Also, recommends having popular assemblies that are open to all where policy is deliberated and developed rather than public hearings with up or down votes.

Karol Wai – PSU honors student, daughters of immigrants, and member of Youth Voice Youth Vote. Karol supports proposal 14 and asks the Commission to allocate 1% of the City's discretionary resources and to refer ballot directly to the ballot. Karol shared her experiences with participatory budgeting and how youth has been able to engage and empowered. Karol urges to Commission to establish adequate funding and investments in participatory budgeting and suggests 1 million per 100k residents.

Kristiana De Leon – Co-Executive Director of the national Participatory Budgeting Project. Supports proposal 14 and urges the Commission to establish a minimum budget and to consider an implementation budget. Kristiana suggested at minimum of a \$10 range per capita. Kristiana shared examples of participatory budgeting processes, including the Seattle Washington example which included a \$27 million participatory budgeting budget and a separate implementation budget.

Ty Wilkins – co-founder of Participatory Budgeting Oregon. Thanked the commission for their hard work. Stated he offers support for the climate-related proposals. Stated he is here to urge the Commission to send the participatory budgeting proposal directly to voters and allocate at least 1% of annual general fund discretionary resources to ensure a per-capita allocation in line with participatory budgeting best practices. The participatory budgeting proposal advances nearly all of the Charter Commission's stated goals. The use of discretionary funds helps limit barriers to actualizing the creativity of community to solve problems and needs. He stated that participatory budgeting will benefit all Portlanders. One of it's strengths is about learning together, and it should be complementary with the transition to a districted, multi-member Council and can build on the momentum of a more participatory and responsive government. Through participatory budgeting, elected officials and staff can learn about the needs of the community while community can learn about the roles and function of government. Participatory budgeting is also a tool which can be used to combat the effects of climate change and a move to a more just transition away from fossil fuels.

K. Rambo – is Vice President of the Oregon Society of Professional Journalists and editor at Street Roots. Stated he is here to support a transparency advocate in the office of the Auditor. Currently, Portland as among the worst public records systems of all major cities in the US. He stated that no amount of ranked choice voting or geographic representation or redefining elected officials duties can address this

problem. Instead, it requires explicit oversight in the form of a transparency advocate. Any government that is to achieve the goals the commission has set out through this process must be subject to a higher level of scrutiny regarding public records. He provided examples of the costs and challenges he's faced in recent public records requests. Unfortunately, the only recourse for these challenges is lawsuits, which is available only to members of the public with resources and is ultimately costly to taxpayers. He stated that nothing can account for structural, systemic problems other than a structural systemic solution such as a transparency advocate.

Terry Harris – stated he is here to talk about the environmental rights language proposed. He believes that it's the most consequential two sentences in all of Phase II. The important part of this language is that it's a right, conferred to residents, which takes future generations into account. It's a simple statement which can fill gaps in ordinance and resolutions with a new baseline for analysis by courts. He doesn't think that the commission wants the second sentence in the proposal, as it could be red to imply that only the city is responsible for protecting rights and the word "equitably" doesn't add anything but unnecessarily qualifies the protection. He stated that because this language is so consequential, he recommends that it be considered for stand-alone amendment, if sent to voters.

Jenny O'Connor – volunteer with 350PDX. Stated she is here to encourage the commission to forward the language created by the 350PDX, Sunrise Movement, PEACE, and others. She asked that when the commission considers these proposals they keep in mind that the language has been authored by people, many of whom work for the City and understand the way it operates. The City has been in the planning phase on climate action for 30 years, with many resolutions, without any real actions being taken. City employees have been working on and thinking about these actions but have no authority to actually complete the actions.

Anna Kemper – thanked the Commission for their thoughtful work in Phase I and encouraged the Commission to amend the Charter to prevent the expansion of new fossil fuels infrastructure and ensure that the City undertakes a decline in fossil fuels to net zero. She stated that she hopes the proposals gain at least 15 votes to that they can surpass City Council and go directly to voters. She stated that climate justice equals housing justice. Portland is facing a humanitarian crisis with the high number of houseless individuals living on our streets and these rates will only increase as the impacts of the climate crisis worsens. The cost of housing is rising and as people are forced to move away from areas most impacted by climate change, this will only get worse. She stated that we can't wait until the next Charter Review process.

Chanda Evans – thanked the Commission for their work they have done. She is speaking on behalf of Participatory Budgeting Oregon and she urged the Commission to support the Participatory Budgeting proposal and to increase the funding allocation to 1.2% of the General Fund per 100,000 residents. Participatory Budgeting is a tool for recognizing the urgency of change and can make real grassroots impact in community. It can uplift and highlight the needs of community that policy makers may fail to recognize. She stated that Participatory Budgeting puts the power in the hands of the people to effect real policy and change based on community designs, which can bring us together to work on a more viable civic engagement process. She urged the Commission to look at New York City and Boston, whose residents overwhelmingly supported including Participatory Budgeting in their city charters. It fulfills the unmet needs of bureau policy by uplifting, supporting, and funding projects which have voter support through the bureaus.

Lisabeth Marquez-Delgado – member of advocacy and communications cohort with Participatory Budgeting Oregon. Encouraged the Commission to refer the participatory budgeting proposal directly to voters. She stated she joined Participatory Budgeting with the intention to support youth in her community and is proud of the civic engagement skills she has gained while advocating for Participatory Budgeting. Establishing Participatory Budgeting in the Charter is crucial to helping underrepresented communities feel heard. It gives communities the power to decide for themselves where money is spent because they understand what their community needs and is the key to developing equitable communities who can thrive. She urged the commission to allocate at least one percent of General Fund annual discretionary resources through Participatory Budgeting and refer the amendment directly to voters.

Ethan A. Scarl – commended the Committee for its work. He stated that the Commission needs to consider that the environment is subject to threats not entirely of human making but by events beyond our control such as volcanic eruptions or earthquakes. We have a geologic history of earthquakes of magnitude 8 or 9 but have never experienced one ourselves. The possibility of an earthquake this large is exacerbated by the presence of the CEI hub in Portland, with approximately 650 tanks of fuels, which represents 90% of the fuels budget of all of Oregon. If a major seismic event were to occur without any mitigation there will be supply chain disruptions, fire, and extinction of all life in the Columbia River between Portland and Astoria. The City needs to do what it can to mitigate these concerns such as require insurance by hub owners, insist that fire suppression devices be installed, and required that they reduce fuels stored to 25% of capacity.

Adrienne Aione – employee for the Bureau of Environmental Services and she manages the team which updates the city's codes and policies. She recommended changes to Charter Sections 2-105, 11-301, and 11-302. These are in addition to the changes that the bureau submitted in April of 2021 for Commission consideration. These recommendations have been approved by BES Director, but not yet approved by the Commissioner-in-Charge. These sections cover the City's role in providing sanitary sewer and storm drain services and its ability to charge for those services. The changes would clarify the distinction between sanitary sewage and storm water and provide support to the City's ability to charge for storm water services. She stated that the original language was written to cover sewage disposal and purification but does not address storm drain services as directly as it should, based on laws passed since the 1970s.

Liam Castles – is an organizer with Sunrise PDX and policy lead for Portland Youth Climate Strike. He stated he does not want to have to be an organizer and does not want to have to testify before commissions such as this, but the decision made here will affect his ability to have a livable future. He encouraged the Commission to consider that every youth who testified today did so because they are terrified of what will happen to themselves and the rest of their generation if the city is not willing to take immediate and bold action. He stated that while working on climate issues, he's heard many promises from elected leaders but when it comes to actually making necessary policy, they are not willing to take the necessary steps to end climate change. Without strict, binding wording in the Charter politicians will return to business as usual without consideration of the effects of their decisions. He urged the Commission to forward definitive, binding wording of a fossil fuels phaseout. We've all already seen the effects of climate change and this will only get worse unless we take immediate action.

Commission Closing Remarks

Commissioner Streeter thanked all the people who came to provide public input. She provided a short overview of what she heard throughout the testimony.

Next Steps

Next full commission meeting will be held on November 29, 2022.

Meeting adjourned, 1:39 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted,
Diana Shiplet, Executive Assistant to the CAO and CFO