

Green New Deal Oversight Board (GNDOB)

Meeting Minutes

MEETING SUMMARY	Date: 4/17/2023	
	Time: 5:00pm – 7:00pm	
	Location: Zoom and In-Person at Othello Commons	
MEMBERS PRESENT:	Keith Weir Syris Valentine Ken Workman Maria Batayola Peter Hasegawa Debolina Banerjee Hibo Sahal	Andrea Ornelas Emily Myers Jess Wallach Tomas Madrigal Eunice How Matt Remle Nina Olivier
MEMBERS ABSENT:	Rachel Heaton, Kristina Chu, Dennis Comer, Deepa Sivarajan	
GUESTS:	Akshay Iyengar, City Budget Office Jessyn Ferrell, Office of Sustainability and Environment	

DECISIONS MADE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting Minutes Approved for March 13th Meeting
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FOLLOW-UP ACTION ITEMS			
#	ITEM	RESPONSIBLE PERSON(S)	TARGET DATE
1	Akshay to return during the May meeting to share more information on how the City has spent the PET funding to date.	A. Iyengar	May 15
2	Revise and finalize BEPS letter	S. Valentine and J. Ornelas	Early June
3	Make appointment for the Social Housing PDA	T. Madrigal, N, Olivier, A. Ornelas, H. Sahal, S. Gelb	April 25

Meeting Notes

M. Batayola, S. Valentine, & D. Banerjee Green New Deal Oversight Board Executive Committee Members and Sara Cubillos, Green New Deal Strategic Advisor, facilitated the meeting.

Notes taken by Elise Rasmussen, OSE Climate and Environmental Justice Associate.

Welcomes and Introductions

- Maria started the meeting, facilitated introductions of members, and said the land acknowledgement.
- Sara introduced Elise Rasmussen, OSE's New Climate and Environmental Justice Associate. Elise started on April 12 and will be primarily responsible for staffing and supporting the Board. Elise said a brief statement about looking forward to working with the Board.
- **BOARD ACTION Motion:** Keith moved to approve the notes from March 13, 2023. Andrea seconded the motion.
- **Motion to Approve the Minutes:** Unanimously approved.

Public Comment

- No one registered for public comment.

Presentations

City Budget Office (CBO) Presentation: Payroll Expense Tax Update & Next Steps

Sara shared that the Board has a retreat from April 20-21 and will be going more in depth on the budget process and budget recommendation development during the retreat.

Akshay Iyengar (CBO) presented the City's budget timeline, revenue forecast for the Payroll Expense Tax (PET), and considerations for the Board's role throughout the City's budget process.

- Budget Process Timeline: Departments submit their budget proposals in June, the Mayor transmits a proposed budget update to Council in September, Council passes the budget in November, then the Mayor signs the adopted budget, unless in the rare instance, there is a veto.
- Revenue forecast: The actual PET revenue for 2022 was \$27 million less than what was originally forecasted. We expect the PET revenue to be \$31 million less than we expected for both 2023 and 2024. There will be future revenue forecasts, so these estimates are subject to change, but PET is a somewhat volatile revenue source given recent layoffs in the technology sector, inflation, and other factors.
- Debolina asked about the City's timeline for when it makes its budget forecasts. Akshay responded that the City has two more forecasts this year, one in the summer and one in November. Syris asked about what happened to cause the 2022 downward shifts since much of the layoffs in the technology sector occurred in 2023. Akshay responded that it was largely because of these layoffs, even in 2022, and that some of the spending in 2022 has been reauthorized where carryforward was requested. He said that other revenue is going up, but the PET revenue is generally going down.
- Akshay then shared that if the Board wants to make budget recommendations to the Mayor or Council, it would be best to communicate those recommendations in early June or July. Syris asked if there's an estimate for when the Mayor or Council might modify the 2023 budget. Akshay said that CBO does not know yet.

Board members then had a broader conversation about the PET budget, including requests for more information.

- Tomás and Maria then asked if the Board could get information on how the City budget has been spent to date, and Akshay said he would be happy to share that information at the May Board meeting. Debolina also asked if CBO is tracking federal and state funding or revenue streams. Akshay said he could get that information as well and arrange a briefing on the federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Inflation Reduction Act funds. Maria added that the Board would love to know which City departments are applying for which federal funding sources as well as the revenue from the state's Climate Commitment Act. Sara shared that the OSE's Director can brief the Board on which federal grants OSE is going for.
- Jessyn, OSE Director, said that while we are in somewhat of a volatile environment with the PET, we are also in the midst of big funding opportunities. She said that OSE is prioritizing flexible funding sources and wants to be guided by community priorities when applying for funding. Jessyn said she is happy to come to next month's Board meeting to continue this conversation.
- Maria asked for the City to track these funding opportunities because it is difficult for communities to track. Jessyn shared that OSE is working to hiring someone to track these various funding opportunities at the federal and state level and committed to keeping the Board updated on OSE's processes for these funding opportunities.
- Steve brought the Board's mission into the conversation and stated that the Board should focus on fighting for the principles of the GND, not around any one piece of funding. Syris added that the Board should think about how they can leverage funds to advance what a GND in Seattle should look like in accordance with their priorities, goals, and principles.
- Emily asked if the City is looking for other, more stable revenue sources. Akshay said that the City is actively discussing how to address this budget gap, but these conversations are ongoing. Jessyn shared that the Mayor signed an executive order on trees that also includes possibilities for creating a local carbon market to generate funding, which could be one avenue for sustainable funding. Jessyn recognizes that we need to think creatively to address the budget gaps. Debolina responded and said there are pros and cons to carbon markets and would want to discuss this further with the Board.
- Steve shared that it is not the Board's responsibility find funding for the GND. That is the City's responsibility. The Board should not be limited by the funding they have to implement the GND. Instead, the Board's responsibility is to advise the City in a way that integrates the principles of the GND, no matter the current funding landscape. Tomás agreed and added that even if the Board secured more funding for the GND, it is not guaranteed that the City would spend it on the GND. Tomás stated that this budget gap for the GND brings up a concern around the City's accountability to implement the ordinance.

FIVE MINUTE BREAK

Building Performance Emissions Standard Follow Up

Building Performance Emissions Standards (BEPS) Updates:

- The BEPS State Environmental Protection Act (SEPA) Review will happen in June.
- The Chamber of Commerce and the Downtown Seattle Association are advocating against BEPS due to the impact it might have on commercial buildings and businesses.

Board discussion on BEPS:

- Syris spoke about eliminating negative impacts from BEPS on workers. Keith spoke about the need for people to keep their jobs, pay, and benefits while they train and get into new work.
- Jess spoke about others who have also been engaged in BEPS and spoke about how policymakers are only hearing opposition to these policies that center climate and environmental justice. Jess' organization has been organizing, writing letters, and doing grassroots base building to get the word out about BEPS.
- Eunice shared that her organization negotiates with the Downtown Seattle Association on behalf of hotel workers who are unionized.
- Tomás liked how the letter is community informed and outlines how we need to be mindful of false solutions even when it comes to renewable energy sources. For example, hydrogen production includes the use of fossil fuels. Matt added that we need think critically about what is considered a green energy source, and that green energy production can fall into the same harmful patterns of colonization. Matt called for the need to have a robust prior consent form for Tribes because green energy infrastructure will likely be built on tribal lands without their consent. The Yakama nation is experiencing this.
- Steve talked about the strategy that the oil and gas industry is using around green hydrogen and natural gas and asked the Board to think about what the best use of their time and capacity is. He is also thinking about what it may take to meet these decarbonization deadlines and is wondering if a feasibility study may be helpful. Jess responded by saying that there is a moral responsibility to ensure that fracked gas is not going through pipelines. Currently, once gas is going through pipes, Puget Sound Energy is not tracking whether or not the gas is fracked. Jess also stated that Seattle's plan for BEPS could be a model policy for other regions to move away from fossil fuels. Jess would rather push for a 2030 deadline and miss the mark by a few years, rather than creating, and then potentially missing, later deadlines.
- Tomás spoke about how many of these green energy policies and technologies are still perpetuating the same harm stemming from capitalism and exploitation. He shared the example of the money flowing to hydrogen energy that is likely not viable. He spoke about the need to think beyond whether policies are viable and focus more on ending the systemic inequities that come from capitalism and exploitation to get to clean energy. Debolina agreed with Tomás and added that often as environmental advocates, we don't talk about reducing consumption or advancing clean energy while also avoiding exploitation and oppression. She made the point that the same fossil fuel companies who are exploiting communities and the planet now are simply changing their technology, which does not get to the root problems we have with over consumption and environmental justice.
- Syris brought the conversation back to the BEPS letter and thanked everyone for their feedback. He shared that the Board may need to hold a few additional workshops to refine the letter before the SEPA deadline in June.
- Steve then pushed the Board to do more than just write a letter on BEPS. He said the Board has a much broader mandate and that they might be able to approach their advocacy differently than other advocacy groups. Syris responded and said it would still be good to have a letter so the Board can have a paper trail, but members could also set up a meeting with Jessyn and Sandra from OSE and they could also attend City Council meetings as well. Jess added that the Board has attended Council meetings together in the past. Steve and Matt thought attending a Council meeting was a great idea, and also thought the Board should be up front, rather than

just testifying. Sara reminded the Board that they need a timeline for their BEPS advocacy work, and also said that they can work to identify other avenues for advocacy aside from a letter. She also asked them to think about whether they would like to respond to the Seattle Chamber of Commerce's letter.

- Tomás asked if it would be possible for the Board to write legislation to get support, in addition to the Board's recommendations. He shared that Elise was successful at writing state-level legislation in a previous role, and now we have additional capacity with both Elise and Sara on staff. Sara responded that we can continue to have that conversation.
- Eunice asked when the BEPS letter is due, and Syris responded that the letter is due in May.

Board Business (Updates & Announcements)

- Sara shared more information about the Board retreat and answered questions from members.
- Sara asked for interested Board members to confirm their attendance for Circularity 23 Conference.
- Sara shared that the voting process to establish the Board's new Executive Committee is complete and that Debolina has moved from an at-large member to a Co-Chair, Peter is another Co-Chair, and Nina is the at-large member of the Executive Committee. Sara let the Board know that Debolina will be on sabbatical for three months so we may ask for support from others during that time.
- Sara attended a meeting with the Indigenous Advisory Committee. The Committee is looking forward to working with the Board on Indigenous led sustainability projects. Next steps are to create a subcommittee on the Board to decide how to deploy the money earmarked for these projects. The Committee may attend a future Board meeting. Matt is interested in working with the Indigenous Advisory Committee.
- The Board needs to appoint someone to the Social Housing PDA by April 25. The Social Housing PDA is a quasi-governmental system, so there is not likely to be much support or resourcing from the City. The appointee will be responsible for a big body of work and cannot be compensated.

Keith moved to adjourn the meeting; Matt seconded. Syris adjourned the meeting at 7:02pm.