

02-22-2023 Town Council Meeting

Responses to Council Questions

ITEM #6: Authorize the Mayor to Execute a Memorandum of Understanding Creating the Intergovernmental Climate Council of Orange County

Council Question:

The MOU is very specific in assigning membership. What is the mechanism if a jurisdiction or other entity wished to change its representation? Can we estimate the cost to the Town of supporting this council? Why is Mebane not included in this?

Staff Response:

For one or more jurisdictions to change their representation, all parties to the MOU must agree in writing. Assuming that each meeting would be supported by 2-3 staff members from the Town (including the possibility of multiple Town departments), we estimate as much as \$2,000 annually. The true cost will depend on the number of staff and the number of hours outside of the meetings. Regarding the City of Mebane, they did not have elected officials or staff who participated in the first iteration of the climate council. If it's helpful, staff can reach out to the County to try and learn more.

Council Question:

What is thinking behind nominating someone from the ESAB rather than the general public?

Orange County Staff Response:

The recommendations for the Climate Council membership were made by the subcommittee (comprised of three Orange County Board of County Commissioners) that was formed to review the charge and purpose of the Climate Council as reflected in this MOU. The overall goal of the subcommittee was to have representatives who could have the most impact on operations and behaviors that can drive climate change. Since our advisory boards are made up of volunteers with a vested interest in climate/the environment, have some area of expertise, and can be a conduit to relay information from the advisory boards they serve on to the council and vice versa, it was deemed they would be valuable contributors who could represent their community's interests.

Council Question:

Given our recent conversations, I am concerned about adding another board to staff workload. Could Sustainability staff comment on the estimated amount of time this will take and the value to Chapel Hill of participating?

Staff Response:

We estimate that staffing will entail about 4-20 hours a year, depending on how much time is

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needed to prepare for and support the agendas for two annual meetings. The potential benefits for participation include: (1) the sharing of climate action projects/programs/communications; and (2) the possibility for impactful collaboration that requires a greater scale.