



TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL

Town Hall
405 Martin Luther King Jr.
Boulevard
Chapel Hill, NC 27514

Legislation Text

File #: [19-0782], Version: 1

Adopt a Resolution Committing to Plan for Chapel Hill to Transition to 100% Clean, Renewable Energy Community-wide by 2050.

Staff:

Maurice Jones, Town Manager
John Richardson, Community Resilience Officer

Department:

Manager's Office

Overview: The Town received two petitions in support of a clean energy future for Chapel Hill. The [petition by the Climate Reality Group <https://chapelhill.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=7146473&GUID=15BECB45-AEE9-41D0-B13D-EF59A368D4FC>](https://chapelhill.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=7146473&GUID=15BECB45-AEE9-41D0-B13D-EF59A368D4FC) points to the overwhelming body of scientific evidence that climate change is real and that the time to act is now in order to avoid the worst of it. The Group also cites a study out of two California universities which provides a roadmap for how the country can reduce emissions 80% by 2030, and reach 100% by 2050, through the use of existing renewable energy technology.

The [petition from the Orange-Chatham Group of the Sierra Club <https://chapelhill.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=7334257&GUID=E369FF88-024D-4568-8332-A5C99B30C3F7>](https://chapelhill.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=7334257&GUID=E369FF88-024D-4568-8332-A5C99B30C3F7) is part of the Club's "Ready for 100" campaign, also pointing to the need for a transition to 100% clean, renewable energy by 2050. In addition to goal-setting, the petition provides a list of carbon reduction strategies for the Town to consider as it develops a Climate Action and Response Plan.

UNC Chapel Hill has made a similar commitment to net zero greenhouse gas emissions as part of its [Three Zeros <https://threezeros.unc.edu/about/>](https://threezeros.unc.edu/about/) initiative. The Town's Environmental Stewardship Advisory Board reviewed both petitions and expressed support for transitioning to a clean energy future and for considering the ideas proposed as part of the Climate Action and Response Planning process.



Recommendation(s):

That the Council adopt a resolution, committing to create a Climate Action and Response Plan by 2020 to begin transitioning to 80% clean, renewable energy community-wide by 2030, and to reach 100% by 2050.

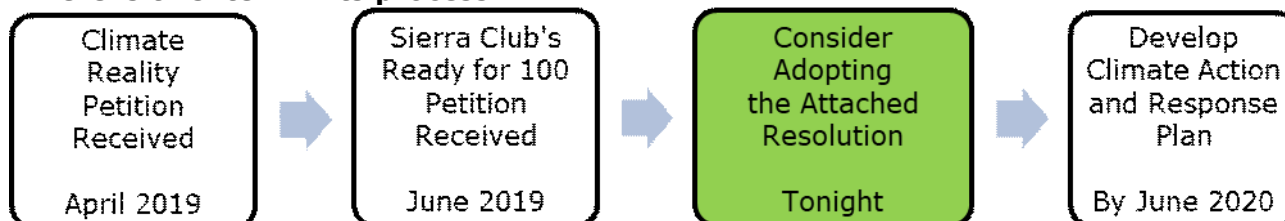
While the Council has already made the commitment to creating a Climate Action and Response Plan, this Resolution connects the plan with new long-term goals for the community.

Key Issues:

- Achieving these aspirational goals will require support, investment and action from all levels of government and industry. It will also be the work of everyone who lives in, works in, plays in, goes to school in and visits the Town of Chapel Hill.
- The Town of Chapel Hill operation is about 2% of the community's total carbon footprint and the Town can make significant investments to reduce its share of carbon emissions. For the remaining 98%, the Town can lead by example: advocating for stronger state and federal policy, forming key partnerships within the community, and enabling everyone to act.
- It will also be important that the Town and the community commit to achieving equity, affordability and access in the transition to carbon neutrality and a renewable energy future.

Fiscal Impact/Resources: The fiscal impacts of a full transition to 100% clean, renewable energy will be borne by the Town, the University, the residents, local organizations and the business community. The Climate Action and Response Plan will begin to outline these costs for the Town. Partnerships, state and federal clean energy policy, collective action and community-wide investment will all be needed in order to achieve carbon neutrality and a clean energy future for Chapel Hill.

Where is this item in its process?



Attachments:

- Resolution
- Draft Staff Presentation

**A RESOLUTION TO TRANSITION TO A 100% CLEAN, RENEWABLE ENERGY COMMUNITY BY 2050
(2019-09-25/R-11)**

WHEREAS, climate change is real, and increasing levels of greenhouse gas emissions are having adverse effects on both the natural and built environments; and

WHEREAS, these physical effects are expected to lead to water scarcity, increased numbers of refugees, food insecurity, more poverty and disease, and mass extinctions of species; and

WHEREAS, low-income communities and communities of color in North Carolina and the United States are disproportionately exposed to extreme heat and the hazardous pollutants released by fossil fuel burning that can lead to serious health problems such as cancer and asthma exacerbation; and

WHEREAS, clean, renewable energy is defined as energy derived from ongoing natural processes that rapidly replenish and is sustainably collected from renewable sources such as solar, wind, and geothermal; and

WHEREAS, a Stanford University and University of California-Davis study concludes that the United States energy supply could be based entirely on renewable energy by the year 2050 using current technologies and 80% renewable energy by 2030, while creating numerous jobs; and

WHEREAS, leading economists, policy experts, and business leaders conclude that transitioning to a clean energy economy would create millions of green jobs nationally, improve living standards, and boost economic growth; and

WHEREAS, energy efficiency is also an essential strategy in lowering the nation's energy use and emissions; and

WHEREAS, in 2017, the Town Council resolved to uphold the Paris Climate Agreement by proportionately reducing greenhouse gas emissions in Chapel Hill; and

WHEREAS, the Town Council has committed to creating and implementing a Climate Action and Response Plan to help mitigate the effects of climate change and to create a more resilient and adaptive community; and

WHEREAS, in October 2018, Governor Roy Cooper signed an executive order, "North Carolina's Commitment to Address Climate Change and Transition to a Clean Energy Economy", which states that North Carolina with honor the 2015 Paris Agreement goals and the state's commitment to the United States Climate Alliance, and requires the state to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions to 40% below 2005 levels by 2025; and

WHEREAS, the urgency of climate change is real and the time to act is now in order to one day tell our young people that we did everything we could to make their future better.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the Town of Chapel Hill that the Council commit to creating a Climate Action and Response Plan by 2020 to begin transitioning to 80% clean, renewable energy community-wide by 2030, and to reach 100% by 2050.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that achieving these aspirational goals will require support and action from all levels of government and industry, and will be the work of everyone who lives in, works in, plays in, goes to school in and visits the Town of Chapel Hill.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Town commits to achieving equity, affordability and access in the

transition to carbon neutrality and a renewable energy future.

This the 25th day of September, 2019.

The Agenda will reflect the text below and/or the motion text will be used during the meeting.

PRESENTER: John Richardson, Community Resilience Officer

RECOMMENDATION: That the Council adopt the attached resolution, committing to creating a Climate Action and Response Plan by 2020 to begin transitioning to 80% clean, renewable energy community-wide by 2030, and to reach 100% by 2050.