

LARIMER COUNTY | ENVIRONMENTAL & SCIENCE ADVISORY BOARD

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The role of the Advisory Board is to advise the Board of County Commissioners and appropriate departments on environmental and science-related issues that affect Larimer County.

MINUTES

Date: September 13th, 2022

Time: 6:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Location: Rm. 333 Lake Estes, 200 W. Oak Street, Fort Collins, CO and Virtual by Zoom

Contact: Shelley Bayard de Volo, sbayard@larimer.org or 970.498.5738

MEMBERS		STAFF		GUESTS
Rodger Ames	X	John Kefalas*	X	
Daniel Beveridge	X	Shelley Bayard de Volo [¥]	X	
John Bleem	X	Heidi Pruess [§]	X	
Tasha Carr	X	Eric Tracy, Engineering	X	
Jim Gerek - Chair	X	Lesli Ellis, Community Planning	X	
Ted Hendrickx	X	Daylan Figgs, Natural Resources	X	
Allyson Little		Carol Block, Finance	X	
Barry Noon	X			
Kaitlin Rainsberger	X			
George Rinker				
Travis Rounsaville	X			
Shelby Sommer	X			
Catriona Smith				
Katrina Winborn-Miller				
Chris Wood	X			

X = present; * = Commissioner Liaison; ‡ = Speaker; ¥ = ESAB Liaison; ° = Facilities;

§ = Environmental and Sustainability Program; ° = Fleet

Call to Order: 6:05 p.m.

- Amendments or additions to the agenda** – None
- Introduction of members, staff, and guests** – The members introduced themselves with an extended introduction by new member Barry Noon
- Public Comment** – No public comment.
- Discussion Items**
 - Introduction to Larimer County Purchasing Policy and Procedures** – Carol Block, Finance Director for Larimer County and Heather MacMillian Purchasing Manager, presented on how purchasing is conducted within the County's organization. As part of the Internal Climate and



Sustainability Plan, the Purchasing and Procurement Goal “Establish guidance for the procurement of goods and services which are consistent with the strategies and goals outlined in this plan” has two actions:

- P1 (Short Term) Explore options, action, and costs of developing a sustainability purchasing program, that may include criteria for vendor selections, consider product life cycle analysis, and buying products with sustainability certifications.
- P2 (Long Term) Develop a sustainability purchasing guide or policy that supports the County’s climate and sustainability goals, while also meeting economic realities and service needs of the community.

Right now, the focus is on the first action P1. In doing their research, Carol and her team have had difficulty in finding another municipality or local government that has built a successful purchasing program. Most have reported having difficulties. Carol explained how purchasing at Larimer County works. She stressed that “Purchasing” does not actually purchase anything, but rather facilitates the procurement process for departments. Only purchases over \$50K go through a formal bid process and that is when the purchasing department is involved. Otherwise, departments handle their own purchases. Carol went through examples of sustainable product purchases that departments within the County currently make (i.e., alt fuel vehicles, reclaimed asphalt, compostable eating utensils).

Purchasing has a current Purchasing Policy that “encourages an awareness among customer departments for the evaluation of cost versus natural resource impacts/community benefit in the purchasing process” that also includes 10 guidelines such as recyclability of product, reduction of energy/water consumption, minimization of packaging. Purchasing Department also encourages departments to consider established environmental standards when selecting products and services (i.e., EnergyStar, LEED, SaferChoice). Departments can also specify in their solicitations for goods and services that selection criteria will include consideration of community benefit and/or natural resource impacts versus cost.

Carol noted that her team considers the P1 action item as their next step beyond what they currently have (the policy, guidelines, and department actions). She turned to asking the Board members the question of “What does a sustainability program look like in their organization?” and “What works and what could be improved?”. Ted discussed his previous work as a consultant for certifying wood and paper products. He noted that the landscape changes frequently and to be aware that just because a company and its products are certified in one year does not mean they are in subsequent years. There are different levels of certification, and deciding on what is important to your program is important for weeding through all of the different options. Travis noted that maybe the ESAB could provide a list of certifications that they thought were reputable and worth considering. Jim explained the email dialog he previously had with Commissioner Kefalas and the link (<https://www.naspo.org/sustainability/>) he sent along to the National Association of State Procurement Officials’ (NASPO) webpage for Sustainable Purchasing. He encouraged Carol to look at the website because it hosts a lot of tools. Commissioner Kefalas noted that it might be worthwhile to check with the State of Colorado to ask how they approach these questions and what tools they might use. Jim referred Carol to the State of Colorado’s Green Purchasing program. Jim will provide Carol an email with links to the resources they discussed tonight.

Commissioner Kefalas noted that he is still interested in learning about how to include consideration of environmental benefits into ROI calculations for capital investments. Jim

noted that he sent the Commissioner via email several links to resources on SROI calculations, including reference to several municipalities that have utilized specific tools. Daniel noted that the Colorado State Forest Service has a link on their website for a Colorado Wood products database that lists companies selling wood products from at least 50% locally sourced wood. Heather noted that she appreciated the comments tonight and will follow-up with more research. She was not sure the NASPO website provided more than what they already doing.

- Colorado Water Plan 2023 Draft, ESAB Comments – The sub-committee presented their review. Shelby led the discussion, along with Travis, Ted and Chris. They presented the review comments and referred to the Plan document as they discussed. Shelby looked at the plan from a land use and development, and planning perspective. Travis focused on the South Platte Basin chapter, the introduction, and the challenges and solutions section, and particularly looked at references to agriculture. Ted had previous experience of working on the water plan for another state, from its inception to adoption and 5 years of post-adoption revision, so he brought that perspective and looked at the Colorado Plan from a process standpoint. He noted that unlike the other state's plan, the Colorado Water Plan includes funding to support its implementation. He noted that although Larimer County is not a water provider, there are still opportunities to receive state funding through the Plan. He also considered how inclusive the process was and how inclusive the plan itself is. Chris focused on environmental policy, energy, and development process. He noted that he was happy to see the diversity of stakeholders that were involved in development of the plan. The committee noted the strengths of the Plan:
 - Improved organization and readability from the last plan
 - Wonderful educational tool and excellent graphics
 - Basin-based approach is a leading way to drive collaboration and impact
 - Clearly a collaborative, inter-disciplinary process (especially through basin-based approach)
 - Thorough resource and helpful real-world examples of actions and successful approaches
 - Useful in the way that it links to funding resources
 - Climate change is an elevated and integrated concept throughout entire document.

They offered the following general recommendations of topics to explore and/or address in more detail throughout the Plan:

- Refine the scenarios to include potential shifts in agricultural use
- Expand and encourage creative and cooperative interpretation of water law in order to use water more beneficially and efficiently (e.g., p. 3-33 highlights a few programs including Expansion of Voluntary Loans Process for Instream Flows HB 20-1157, but more focus on this)
- Provide a shorter, more digestible list of agency actions ("cheat sheet" for entities like Larimer County to quickly reference)
- Better cross referencing throughout the document would be useful, especially between challenges and solutions sections
- Provide more discussion and examples of the inherent equity, diversity, and inclusion challenges associated with a seniority-based system
- Buy-and-dry is a consequence of tension between value of water used for agriculture and value of water for other uses; there should be more focus on basin wide

prioritization of highly productive lands over marginally productive lands (p. 6-28 gives a good example of this in the Bessemer Farmland Conservation Project on a small scale).

The Committee also went over some of the detailed suggestions, that consisted of page-by-page comments. One key comment was the assumption for future planning scenarios of increased agricultural water demands, and they questioned whether that was realistic in all cases. There were questions about the process of how these recommendations get moved forward. Jim noted that the ESAB responsibility is to agree by vote on this set of comments and then present them to the BOCC in worksession. The BOCC could pass these comments on, with a cover letter if they wish, to the Colorado Water Conservation Board. Commissioner Kefalas noted that he had approved of this review and that he also asked Natural Resources (DNR) and Planning whether such review would benefit those departments. He wanted to make sure that the ESAB's work wouldn't be redundant to work that was already underway. Daylan Figgs, DNR director and Lesli Ellis, Planning director, both commented that they were not conducting their own reviews and that they welcomed the ESAB's analysis.

Daylan noted that he represents Larimer County on the South Platte Basin roundtable. He said all of the comments discussed tonight are totally appropriate. While this plan is an improvement over the old plan, including the incorporation of climate change in the modeling, the modeling is not perfect, and it's appropriate to note that fact on the record. As well, antiquated water law is not going to work with the new realities of climate change and there is a need for creative solutions to address that fact. Daylan discussed the Bessemer Farm scenario and how that can be replicated in Larimer County, but one also needs to consider the fact that often the least productive lands are owned by the more vulnerable farmer, so removing their opportunities impacts equity. Daylan noted that the ESAB's comments tonight were spot-on and he appreciated the effort that went into their review. He said that he was not sure the County would receive comments from other Advisory Boards.

There was more discussion on modeling, growth projections, and the Colorado Water Compact Call. Travis noted the Call is a risk not noted in the South Platte Basin chapter. Jim then asked the Committee to briefly go over the detailed suggestions, that consisted of page-by-page comments. As they went through the comments, they also referred to the Plan document. Jim thanked the committee for their thorough analysis. Jim asked for a motion that the ESAB pass along these comments presented tonight to the BOCC and request that the BOCC submit the comments with or without their own comments to the CWCB prior to the closing of the public comment period. Shelby asked whether staff should have the opportunity to review the comments? Shelley noted that relevant staff were present tonight (Lesli, Daylan, Eric Tracy). Lesli suggested how the BOCC can hear the comments in a Monday 9/26 worksession and approve passing them on the next day at Administrative Matters. Chris motioned, and Travis seconded. There was no more discussion and the motion passed with full approval.

- Designated representative to CSLC process – The BOCC requested by letter that the ESAB provide a member to represent the Board on a work group for the Phase 3 Climate Smart and Future Ready: Strategies for a Sustainable Larimer County initiative. After some deliberation, Tasha noted that she would like to serve in this role. There was also a request for someone to act as an alternate, and Ted said he would serve in that capacity. Jim asked for a motion to designate Tasha as the representative, with Ted as the alternate. Daniel made the motion and

Cat seconded. The motion passed by acclamation. Jim noted that he would make the appropriate notifications of the board's choices.

5. **Approval of Minutes** – John moved to approve the revised draft August minutes, and Travis seconded. The August minutes were approved by acclamation.

6. **Updates and Round Table**

- Commissioner's Update – Commissioner Kefalas noted his recent lunch with previous ESAB Vice Chair Kirk Longstein, who resigned his position. The Commissioner received feedback from him on how communications could be improved. The commissioner mentioned the American Rescue Plan (ARPA) – the County applied for a \$25M USDA grant to fund increasing electric and fiber distribution lines (PVREA) from Livermore to Crystal Lakes. The County has invested \$1.3M of ARPA funds, but there were additional needs that the grant would have funded. The County's application was not successful. The County did allocate \$800K on a PVREA fiber line project from Glacier View to Rustic. And another \$600K collaborating with CSU to get fiber lines to the CSU Mountain Campus. Inflation Deficit Reduction Act update at a webinar by the National Association for Counties, there is \$27B for GHG reduction, \$5B for climate pollution, and County eligibility for clean energy tax programs. Commissioner Kefalas inquired as to whether the Board was tracking these initiatives. Or whether the Board had interest or had suggestions on how to track these opportunities. RFPs have been issued for a new landfill, transfer station and waste diversion facilities. Commissioner Kefalas noted how the Wasteshed planning has been complicated by the acquisition of local haulers by national companies. Shelby noted the USDN mini guide and blog on all the Federal funding.
- Larimer County Pollinator Protection Resolution – Lesli explained that this initiative came up through the Agricultural Advisory Board, and the Department of Natural Resources. There was interest in establishing the fact the County recognizes the importance of pollinators for our environment and community. The resolution has already been approved by the Open Lands Advisory Board and Land Stewardship Advisory Board. It goes to the Agricultural Advisory Board soon. Lesli is asking the ESAB to look at it tonight, provide feedback and approve if they see fit. Once finalized it will go to the BOCC, who has already expressed that they approve of the idea. Lesli said there is openness to minor changes, but the draft as written is generally complete. Barry and Tasha noted that resolutions are great, but without teeth how effective can they be? There was discussion about the fact that the resolution is meant to be the first step in a process, and it's important that the BOCC formally acknowledge their views on this matter. It also brings awareness to the community and facilitates dialog with September being Pollinator Appreciation Month in Larimer County. Daniel noted he supported the idea and likes the language. Tasha noted for item 3, where it reads that the County "...invites input on those programs and determine if new programs and policies would help protect pollinators" that she asked if the programs and policies have been developed and whether there has already been discussion about this? Daylan noted that there has been a lot of discussion about the use of herbicides (neonics) that impact pollinators, but that those discussions are still ongoing. The County can limit their use on its open spaces, but that does not solve the problem when they are used elsewhere. There was further discussion about the language of item 3 in the resolution and Commissioner Kefalas invited Tasha to submit alternative language to him prior to the upcoming Agricultural Advisory Board meeting. She indicated she would.

- NFRMPO Draft GHG Plan – Heidi noted that she had provided to board members several presentations prior to the meeting that she thought members might be interested to see. She will not be discussing the NFRMPO GHG plan tonight, but she wanted to let members know that the draft plan is open for public comment now and that if members were interested, they could comment as individuals. She also noted that Eric Tracy, who serves on the NFRMPO GHG plan's Technical Committee is here tonight, so if members had questions, they should bring them up tonight. Commissioner Stephens represents Larimer County on the NFRMPO GHG Board Planning Board, and Heidi noted that the commissioner is in favor of the Plan. The outcome of the Plan is that if implemented, the region should meet the State's GHG reduction goals by 2045. But there are a lot of programs that will have to be implemented for that to happen. Heidi noted that many of those programs can happen in Larimer County, and she envisioned that the ESAB would be engaged as they are developed and implemented. She encouraged members to study the plan to know what is in there. Eric Tracy added that while the MPO is responsible for modeling GHG emission reductions within its region, the State does the modeling for areas outside the MPO. For those rural areas, they are having a more difficult time showing that they can meet the State's standards. Eric noted that he is seeing the GHG emissions reduction coming in as criteria for future grant funding. It's difficult to do projects that have a big impact in the rural areas of the County, as opposed to the cities. And it's impacting the County's grant funding opportunities for things like safety grants. Heidi noted that this is a problem across the State, and that the State's plan did not really account for the differences between urban and rural areas.
 - EV Charging Update – Heidi noted that stations are planned for throughout the County. The BOCC heard an update for all possibilities that are out there and decided to move forward with the Xcel Partners in Energy Format. They will work at gathering the pertinent players to develop a road map. They decided to not wait for the Climate Smart process, and to move forward on this now.
 - Open Position ESAB Vice-chair – Jim explained the different scenarios on how to move forward without a Vice Chair. ESAB can wait until elections in December or vote in someone now. Some board members noted that Rodger could make a good VC, and asked Jim to discuss this with Rodger prior to the next meeting. He agreed to do so.
 - Oil and Gas Update – Prospect Energy Krause Site – Jim provided the board a brief update on this site, and the fact that Prospect Energy was recently served a cease-and-desist letter from the COGCC. He reminded the board of what the County was planning as noted during the ESAB's June meeting when Matt Lafferty came to speak to the Board.
 - Reschedule November Meeting – Election Day – The ESAB meeting was rescheduled to November 15th due to a conflict with Election Day.
 - Team Building Event – There was discussion on some of the opportunities with the Natural Resources Department for National Public Lands Day. Trail building, fencing removal, litter clean up are some of the activities. The members felt that was too short notice. Shelley will inquire with Natural Resources to see if there are other opportunities.
7. **Issue Index** – Was updated with tonight's discussion
 8. **Agenda Topics for Next Meeting** – Next regular meeting will be October 11th, 2022. Discussion items TBD.
 9. **Adjourn** – The meeting ended at 9:00 PM.