

TOWN OF PORTOLA VALLEY
Sustainability Committee Meeting
April 18, 2024
7:00 PM

Scott Elrod, Chair
Jason Saleh, Vice Chair
Rebecca Flynn, Secretary
Leslie Field, Member
Ronny Krashinsky, Member
Loverine Taylor, Member
Anita Wotiz, Member

REGULAR MEETING

NOTE: This meeting will be virtual only, with the Zoom coordinates specified below.

ASSISTANCE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact the Town Clerk at (650) 851-1700 or by email at towncenter@portolavalley.net. Notification 48 hours prior to the meeting will enable the Town to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting.

VIRTUAL PARTICIPATION VIA ZOOM

To access the meeting by computer:

Zoom link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85292091165?pwd=zbBbVb0sqblppvyLcaB8GRXqZR7USr.1>

Meeting ID: 852 9209 1165

Passcode: 350471

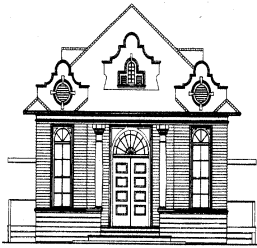
To access the meeting by phone:

1-669-900-6833 or 1-888-788-0099 (toll-free)

*Mute/Unmute – Press *6 / Raise Hand – Press *9*

- 1. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL**
- 2. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA**
Speakers' time is limited to two minutes.
- 3. INTRODUCTIONS**
- 4. PRESENTATIONS/ANNOUNCEMENTS**
- 5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**
 - a. Meeting of March 21, 2024
- 6. OLD BUSINESS**
 - a. Next Public Service Announcements
 - b. Climate Action Plan
 - c. HEA insert for Greenwaste newsletter
 - d. All-electric ordinances, legal challenges and alternative approaches
 - e. Update to PV Committee Handbook
- 7. NEXT MEETING AND PROPOSED AGENDA TOPICS**
- 8. ADJOURNMENT**
The next regularly scheduled meeting date is May 16, 2024.

The Town of Portola Valley acknowledges the colonial history of this land we dwell upon—the unceded territory of the Ramaytush (rah-my-toosh) Ohlone, Tamien Nation, and Muwekma (mah-WEK-mah) Ohlone, who endured a human and cultural genocide that included removal from their lands and their sacred relationship to the land. Portola Valley recognizes that we profit from the commodification of land seized from indigenous peoples and now bear the ecological consequences. We seek to understand the impact of these legacies on all beings and to find ways to make repair.



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1. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

7 pm

Scott Elrod, Chair, **Rebecca Flynn**, Secretary
Ronny Krashinsky, Member, **Loverine Taylor**, Member, **Anita Wotiz**, Member
Dave Cardinal, **Caroline Vertongen**, Community members

2. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

- Rebecca attended 3C-REN webinar on Detailing High Performance Walls and Roof Assemblies – provided resources to give contractors to make sure details are properly installed.
- Rebecca attended California Passive House Meeting with Bronwyn Barry about a house she designed in Carmel to passive house standard (super insulated, high efficiency windows, super smoke tight, super air tight, no thermal bridges, great ventilation). Take aways were: use a thermal bridge certifier to find issues in the structure before closing up the building to avoid problems with moisture and rot. Solar panels have a high embodied carbon due to the glass manufacturing. Best to build house to near passive house standard in order to be able to downsize the heating and cooling equipment and thus the PV array size. PH standard is very easy to do in the mild peninsula climate.
- Green waste and Water Meter PSAs did not get sent to PVForum separately. RF to send out over the next 2 weeks.
- Ronny spoke with Town Mgr Sharif about priorities for the Town Council – Asked for Climate Action Plan Town still thinking about hiring replacement for Brandi.

3. INTRODUCTIONS

4. PRESENTATIONS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- a. Meeting of February 15, 2024 – Approved with 1 change to date.

6. OLD BUSINESS

- a. Climate Action Plan: discussion of Climate Action Plans for San Mateo, Woodside and Menlo Park
 - i. <https://woodsideca.gov/229/Climate-Action-Plan>
 - ii. <https://www.cityofsanmateo.org/2769/Climate-Action-Plan>
 - iii. <https://menlopark.gov/Government/Departments/City-Managers-Office/Sustainability/Climate-Action-Plan>

Comments:

Inventories of GHG data

No mechanism for collecting personal consumption data.

Airplane travel not included in CAP.

SM has a few measures that provide most of their projected reductions: all electric construction for existing and new buildings, energy efficiency retrofits, EV charging infrastructure, garden equipment.

Many of the actions PV has already taken.

Woodside and SM had organization involved in creating their CAPs.
SMC has some data for Portola Valley:

[Climate Action Data – San Mateo County Energy Watch \(smcenergywatch.org\)](https://smcenergywatch.org)

Need to work with County organization and a climate consultant in the Town needed.

Do we need a CAP? The main things that are driving benefits (EVs and all-electric conversions). We've been able to make progress without a CAP. Useful to establish baseline data and tracking.

Menlo Park version seemed very approachable and easier to read, very practical steps they could take.

Trees for shade could reduce the need for cooling. Issue of fire safety.

Annual reporting is important for tracking.

Brandi was working on the CAP with an intern using Ricaps software program. We need to get hold of the data collected.

Need PV based measures.

Town center built to LEED standard. Better baseline.

Need to collect the data for the actions we have taken already.

Target: Electric conversions and tracking all electric homes and HPs installed.

How would be used? Who would write it?

Prefer an accessible document.

SM document was put in per capita units, easier to compare data.

Woodside's dominant contributions due to the state level mandates, ten fold difference compared to Town level contributions.

The CAPs seemed a bit out of data.

Many had rather aspirational measures.

MP called out personal consumption actions but no measurable actions for them.

SM, MP had an outreach to the public for ideas and public hearing.

More comments attached at the end.

Dave Cardinal: favors community input. VMT is huge. 1500 people come to work in PV, traveling 1-3 hours away. Affordable housing and addressing long commutes in ICE cars key to reduce GHG emissions. Our affordable housing plan would reduce VMT.

Caroline Vertongen: PV similar to Woodside. Concerned about finances. CA deficit. SMC deficit. PV deficit. Woodside getting PVs on their Town Hall. Has issues with Cal water, internet connections, infrastructure, utility apps, electrical outages, etc. Practical issues need addressing before committing to new rules such as all electric. Need diverse communication to the Town.

Next steps:

Get update from Sharif and Jeff A. to see if they obtained Brandi's CAP data.

Ronny and Scott to send an email to Sharif to check on the Town's goal for CAP and timing of the effort and SC role. Pursue half hour meeting.

Continue to pursue the reach codes, legal constraints of all electric.

Create CAP package for Town Council and Sharif.

7. NEXT MEETING AND PROPOSED AGENDA TOPICS

Electrification

Old topics

PSAs

8. ADJOURNMENT at 8:36 pm.

The next regularly scheduled meeting date is April 18, 2024.

The Town of Portola Valley acknowledges the colonial history of this land we dwell upon—the unceded territory of the Ramaytush (rah-my-toosh) Ohlone, Tamien Nation, and Muwekma (mah-WEK-mah) Ohlone, who endured a human and cultural genocide that included removal from their lands and their sacred relationship to the land. Portola Valley recognizes that we profit from the commodification of land seized from indigenous peoples and now bear the ecological consequences. We seek to understand the impact of these legacies on all beings and to find ways to make repair.

Jason Saleh, Climate action plans

These are just some things that stood out to me.

My major concern here is that the inventories that these town did (and I think we should have one if not done already) are inaccurate, and they would results in greater inaccuracies the more affluent the town. They took into account transportation (280 passing through your town is not something that should be counted against you), building etc...but they did not take into account personal lifestyle issues ie purchases, diet, flights. It's been shown repeatedly that these factors are significant and become more so the more money people have, especially around here where there's a 40ish % chance you already have a tesla. If PV really wants to cut back, it first must know exactly how much GHG its residents are responsible for and exactly where it's coming from. We/they can choose to only include certain categories in an action plan, but we should not bury our heads in the sand regarding other sources of GHGs that are directly attributable to residents.

Woodside

- Page 15. Looks like they have existing reg requiring recycling/diversion of construction materials. Do we have this?
- They have hybrid/low emission vehicles. Not sure we even have any vehicles though.
- Their 2012 general plan emphasized sustainability.
- They completed a GHG inventory with the majority of emissions coming from vehicular traffic on highways. Seems questionable. Might be more valid to look at how many miles residents drive, regardless of if they drive those miles within town limits. The town can't do anything about 280 going through it.
- Also, regarding GHG inventory, it doesn't look like the accounted for building materials, purchases, automobiles, air travel etc... They accounted for electricity (produced outside the town of woodside) but not lifestyle choices that also create emissions that might be outside of town. In my opinion, if you want to evaluate your town on sustainability and create a baseline number, you measure all emissions attributable to people from that town. If you go to all the trouble to measure this number, it should be valid.
- They mention walkable/bikable streets. I have spoken to many people, especially visitors, who are surprised at our lack of formal bike lanes and feel unsafe biking here. Bike lanes may encourage less utilization of cars
- I love that they included hitching posts in their plan. As if owning a horse and riding it to the post office is somehow sustainable.
- Encouraged farmers markets/local food
- "preservation of embodied energy." This is probably one of the most important but weakest parts. Encouraging people to utilize existing structures rather than build new ones. They don't say how they'll accomplish this so it doesn't seem to have any teeth. If this could be done it would make a huge difference. Example,

my neighbor just moved out. Lived in his house 50 years. Not updated but a fine home. New people bought it and have referred to it as “unlivable” in their justification for planning to demolish it and build new. Seemed livable to me

- Sustainable purchasing policy. This is a good idea.

San Mateo

- Similar to woodside, their inventory of GHG-producing categories is lacking. They include GHG’s from landfill decomposition but don’t include purchases or food (a big one). These are just as much part of “the town” as anything else. If you want to influence how someone behaves, which a lot of this stuff is, you can include purchases and eating habits.
- I like that they solicited ideas from the community
- Some good ideas from their resident post-its on page 33
- Good summary of their strategies on pages 50-51
- Several of their efforts involve outreach/education of residents. As I have said before, I think this is a less effective technique in PV where the average resident is already highly educated and highly informed on issues that matter to them. Therefore, we should be careful in assuming that the existence of a program will enable the town to convince its residents to utilize it.

Menlo Park (love that this was 200 pages shorter than San Mateo’s!)

- They mention purchases and diet at least. But abandoned these ideas due to covid.