

Information Item

Date: September 15, 2020

To: Mayor, Mayor Pro Tempore, and Members of the City Council

From: Johnnie Taylor, Director of Operations
Helen Peplowski, Office of Sustainability Director

Subject:

Information on the Resolution in Support of a Goal of 100% Clean Renewable Energy by 2050 and Creation of Green Jobs as proposed by the Community Sustainability Program Committee

Strategic Focus Area: Healthy Environment

Strategic Objective: Support Green Initiatives

Strategic Plan Action Item: Reinvigorate Sustainability Programs

Key Work Item: No



The Community Sustainability Program Committee (CSPC) is seeking input on a proposed Resolution in Support of a Goal of 100% Clean Renewable Energy by 2050 and Creation of Green Jobs.

In December of 2019, the Forsyth County Board of Commissioners voted 5-1 in favor of a similar resolution with language clarifying that the County will “strive towards” county operations becoming reliant on clean and renewable energy sources by 2050.

The CSPC amended the original resolution by adding three additional recommendations and five sub-recommendations, providing more detail related to climate goals and recommitting through specific actions and planning. The resolution advises that the city commits to achieving 80% clean and renewable energy for its operations by 2030, with a complete transition to 100% clean and renewable energy in all sectors by 2050. The resolution also calls for the community and the electric utility company to do the same.

Sustainability staff does not support the proposed resolution for review and presents relevant information and concerns below.

- The proposed goal of 80% clean renewable energy by 2030 gives the city and community nine years to accomplish the goal. City operations currently utilize roughly six percent clean renewable energy, as provided by Duke Energy. As a local government, we do not contribute any additional clean renewable energy systems at our operational or community level. If this resolution is adopted as proposed it means the city would need to install the full 80% in the next nine years.
- Resolution recommendation 7 references a Strategic Climate Action Plan. In place of the plan mentioned, sustainability staff has developed an Internal Sustainability Action Plan.

- Sustainability staff recommends the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Utilities Department and the City/County Utility Commission be consulted before passing the resolution. Implementation of short-term changes to their operations present financial and planning challenges.
- Sustainability staff recommends focusing on energy reduction before installing renewable energy systems, such as solar panels, in city operations. LED light bulb upgrades in city facilities would reduce energy emissions by 50%, therefore reducing the city's financial investment in renewable energy.

Attached are the proposed resolution by the CSPC and the Forsyth County resolution.