

ADVISORY COMMITTEE SUMMARY ANNUAL REPORT

NOTE: Attach current list of members and identify officers.

Name of Committee:	Chatham County Climate Change Advisory Committee	
Date of Presentation:	December 18, 2023	
Time Period Covered:	July 1, 2022, to June 30, 2023	
Name of Chairperson:	Robbie Cox and Charlie Cooper (Co-Chairs)	
# of Meetings Held During Period (including any special meeting or community input)	10 Monthly meetings and one half-day retreat, with a quorum present. In addition, several small working groups met during the year.	
MISSION & GOALS – Summarize concisely the committee’s mission (charge), key goals, objectives, and measures below. You also may attach as a separate document, but limit to no more than one page single-spaced.		
<p>The purpose of the Committee [is] to make recommendations to the Board of Commissioners ... regarding likely climate change impacts in Chatham County and ways to adapt to and mitigate these impacts, including: (a) reducing emissions of greenhouse gases (primarily CO₂) with related improvements in air quality, (b) promoting the use of renewable energy, (c) promoting carbon neutral/green building standards for new and existing buildings public and private, (d) encouraging resilient conservation-oriented land uses and residential and commercial land development standards that foster climate change mitigation and adaptation, and (e) seeking best practices to retain County’s tree cover.</p>		
ACCOMPLISHMENTS & ACTIVITIES – Summarize concisely below the committee’s major accomplishments and activities of the past year. This should include reports, research, projects, public input, etc. Be sure to identify how they relate to specific goals, objectives, or measures. You also may attach it as a separate document but limit to no more than one page single-spaced.		
<p>NOTE: In response to Commissioners, the Committee developed the Chatham County Climate Action Plan (2021) specifying 10 actions, short and long-term. The Committee’s Accomplishments & Activities are listed by their relationship to these 10 Action Steps:</p> <p><i>Sequestration and Regeneration Recommendations:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conserve, Protect Sensitive Lands—develop strategy for 20,000 acres <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consulted with Senior Advisor, The Conservation Fund in NC re. land protection, acquisition. • Developed “land conservation” metric in draft “Climate Dashboard.” (Superseded by the Planning Dept. tracking project of environmental goals in the Comprehensive Plan.) 2. Protect County’s Trees—Develop Tree Protection Ordinance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participated in Tree Protection Ordinance Working Group. Recommendation to Commissioners, Dec. 5, 2022. 3. Promote Sustainable & Regenerative Agriculture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Committee’s working group continued research on regenerative land use for sequestering carbon, incl. consultation with agriculture groups and County Extension Agent 4. Learning Areas in Parks—Establish 10 carbon demonstration gardens (No action this period) 5. Green Space in New Developments (No action this period) 		

Reducing Greenhouse Gas Pollution Recommendations:

- Researched NC Utilities Commission rulings re. HB 951, requiring a 70% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions by 2030 and net zero by 2050.
 - Two CCAC members attended NCUC public hearing (July 2022) re. potential carbon ruling
 - Researched Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) “direct payments” to local governments for clean energy projects
 - Researched Rewiring America clean energy “Savings Calculator” for potential tax credits and rebates for Chatham County residents
6. **Cleaner County Fleets**—increased Use of EVs and Hybrids
- Formed Electric School Bus working group to research feasibility of ESBs for County.
 - Received report on school children’s health benefits and improved academic performance from riding electric buses
 - CCAC members interviewed Assistant Superintendent of Operations and Director of Transportation for Chatham County Schools re. their concerns about electric school buses
7. **Accessibility of EV Charging Stations**
- Received report on sources of Federal funding for EV charging stations
 - Began investigation of energy infrastructure for future County heavy-duty EV vehicles
8. **Reduce Emissions with Green Buildings**
- Researched IRA funding for energy efficiencies in low-income homes per the Comprehensive Plan: “Require energy efficiency in affordable housing.”
9. **Green Jobs Summit** (No action this period)
10. **Climate Perspective in County Decisions and Progress Measurement**
- Appointed two CCAC members as ex-officio members of the UDO Subcommittee
 - Drafted “Climate Dashboard” for tracking progress of actions toward Chatham County environmental goals. (Superseded by Planning Dept. proposal)
 - Recommended Commissioners’ support for Planning Dept. budget proposal to track the environmental goals in the Comprehensive Plan (letter, April 5, 2023).

BARRIERS & CHALLENGES – Identify any barriers or challenges that make it difficult for the committee to achieve goals or objectives. Limit to the space provided below.

1. The primary challenge continues to be the rapid pace of development in the county. As natural lands are converted to commercial and residential purposes, efforts at sequestration suffer with the loss of trees, the county’s major source of carbon sinks.
2. A second challenge is that the Inflation Reduction Act’s implementation may take longer, delaying the ability of local governments to obtain bridge loans for electric infrastructure and solarization projects or assist County residents in securing tax credits and rebates for weatherization and energy efficiencies.
3. A further challenge are plans by Duke Energy and EMCs to reduce payments for residential solar panel energy generation; the Committee has not found ways to challenge these plans.
4. Finally, the challenge from climate change may worsen as nations fall behind in meeting their emissions goals: “Contrary to pledges to cut fossil fuel production, government policies worldwide will add up to a **doubling of production** in 2030, “a new report from the UN environment agency (UNEP) concludes, Nov. 8, 2023.

RECOMMENDED CHANGES: Please list any recommendations to the Board of Commissioners related to the changes in the advisory committee’s membership, mission, goals, objectives or other related issues.

During 2022-2023, the Committee focused principally on clean energy, electric vehicles, energy efficiency, and benefits from the IRA climate law. Are Commissioners satisfied with this emphasis? Or are additional or other subjects (e.g., green jobs summit) desired for the Committee’s objectives in 2024?

Because Greenhouse Gas Inventories have implications for staff time and potentially may inform Commissioners’ decisions, the Committee intends to begin planning for a new Greenhouse Gas Inventory in late 2024, particularly as VinFast, Wolfspeed, and other developments begin production in 2024 and beyond.

Siler City has appointed Pam Hawe as its representative to the Climate Change Advisory Committee

OTHER INFORMATION: Provide any other information or observations that the Board of Commissioners should know about. Provide in the space below.

The membership position on the Committee representing the town of Goldston remains vacant.

ATTACHMENT A: LIST OF CCAC MEMBERS FOR 2022-2023

MEMBERS	ROLES - CURRENT AND PAST
Charlie Cooper	Co-Chair
Robbie Cox	Co-Chair
John Graybeal	Former Chair
Mike Petruska	Former Chair
Keith McLaurin	Former Vice Chair
Ed Beroset	Member
Alicia Koblansky	Member
John Bonitz	Pittsboro Representative
Nita Dukes	Former Co-Chair
Vickie Atkinson	Member
Town of Goldston Rep	Currently vacant
Siler City Rep	Pam Hawe
David Delaney	Commissioner Liaison
Kevin Lindley	Chatham County Environmental Quality Director