

Citizen Climate Advisory Committee
Annual Work Plan and Accomplishments Report: 2023/2024

FY2023 Chair: John Nix

FY2024 Chair: Jennison Kipp Searcy

Committee County Liaison: Stephen Hofstetter

City of Gainesville Liaisons: Dr. Dan Zhu and Jennie Ford

Brief History of Board: The Citizen Climate Advisory Committee was established by Resolution 20-68 on July 14, 2020.

Responsibilities and Duties:

The CCAC provides an opportunity for citizen involvement in climate change issues and concerns affecting Alachua County, City of Gainesville, and the surrounding municipalities. The committee will advise the Joint Water and Climate Policy Board on bold and innovative climate adaptation and mitigation strategies, policies, and target goals. The committee will also engage with relevant stakeholders, agencies, non-profits, and the community to ensure that neighborhoods and communities that are most impacted or disadvantaged by climate change are taken into account in the development of policy recommendations and action strategies. The committee will also assist the County, Gainesville, and other municipalities within Alachua County in the promotion of greater community awareness of climate-related issues and involvement in government climate resiliency initiatives.

Accomplishments for FY2023:

- Held meetings or workshops on November 7, 2022; December 19, 2022; January 23, 2023; February 20, 2023; March 20, 2023; April 17, 2023; May 15, 2023; July 17, 2023; August 21, 2023; and September 18, 2023.
- Held a climate workshop and fair on June 2, 2023, at the Cuscowilla Nature and Retreat Center. An estimated 130 people and 30 vendors attended the event.
- Presented an annual update to the JWCPB and Alachua County Board of County Commissioners.
- Identified community groups already working on issues related to climate change. These groups have deep knowledge of our community, its strengths, its vulnerabilities, and its concerns related to climate change impacts, and therefore have the potential to be powerful allies in this work.
- Received presentations on the GRU initiatives and challenges, GRU electric grid, Sunshine Law, rental assistance program, Kausal Ltd climate platform, County landfill diversion strategies, city and county climate related grant applications, review of climate data platform options, City's 'Race to Zero' efforts, EMPOWER Project, summary of past CCAC actions and activities, Solar-for-All grant, Introduction to GRU, and IRA grant funding opportunities.
- Provided a letter of support to the JWCPB for the approval of a web-based platform like Kausal Ltd to provide climate information to the public.
- Provided a chair letter to the JWCPB requesting that the city oppose rebates and incentives for the direct use of natural gas.
- Make a recommendation to support updating County Comprehensive Plan Solid Waste Policy 1.2.5 and other related policies to include alternative landfill diversion options that would apply to the Eco Loop.

- Made a motion to support the City of Gainesville’s contract with Origis to build the Sandy Bluff Solar facility.
- Elected a representative to the GRU Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) Committee.
- Provided a letter of support for the Solar-for-All Project application.

Goals for FY2024:

- Establish and maintain relationships with identified community groups.
- Identify new members of the CCAC to be in a leadership/point of contact liaison role to collaborate with community groups and other interested parties on specific issues related to the development of a climate action plan.
- Utilize a platform to communicate activities, events, and accomplishments of CCAC. This platform may be a list serve, website, or some other social media tool.
- Develop a plan that allows the CCAC to regularly and productively engage with the community (including the aforementioned community groups) on climate-related issues. Such engagement will shape CCAC’s recommendations around local climate mitigation and adaptation actions. Primary challenges include Sunshine Law restrictions on members of the CCAC interacting outside of official meeting as well as pandemic-related concerns around large gatherings/meetings.
- Continue to work with Staff to interpret the City of Gainesville’s and county’s greenhouse gas emissions inventories (GHGIs) to identify the next steps and prioritize sectors for emissions reduction.
- Work with Staff to interpret the results of the county vulnerability analysis completed by Jones Edmunds consultants and to identify and prioritize sectors/areas/issues for climate adaptation and resiliency action.
- Help coordinate a fall FY24 climate summit to educate policy makers, and gain feedback from citizens, community groups, and local businesses to help develop and finalize action items.
- Remain actively informed about climate-related issues and current events in our community and engage in conversations around those events and issues, where appropriate.
- Help with the marketing and community engagement of the Climate Action Plan
- Have someone talk to the committee about barriers to climate change
- Assist with engaging the smaller cities with the development of the climate action plan