Sustainability and the City
Starting from Scratch

- 2006: Then Mayor Bob Coble signed US Conference of Mayors Climate Protection Agreement.
- 2006: Council member Anne Sinclair stepped up, encouraged action beyond “just making a pledge.”
- City Council appointed seven “local experts” to serve as leaders for planning.
- Diverse group of people recruited to create a climate action plan for City government.
Green Committee Initial Charge

- To develop an action plan detailing City government reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.
- Approximately 50 participants, including:
  - Seven City Council appointees.
  - City staff from 10-12 departments.
  - Environmental non-profit leaders.
  - Neighborhood association members.
  - Business leaders and local Chambers of Commerce.
  - Local university and college faculty and staff.
  - Representatives from county and state agencies, including DHEC, Natural Resources.
  - Surrounding local government officials and leaders.
  - Environmental professionals and engineers.
  - Anyone could join; no one was turned down.
Climate Action Plan Development

- City Council expectations.
- Meetings.
- Documentation, management.
- Adoption.
CPAC Becomes Official

- Ad-hoc “Green Committee” became Advisory Climate Protection Action Committee. (CPAC)
- CPAC branded.
- Committee makeup.
- Phase Two:
  - Monitored internal action plan.
  - Developed annual Green is Good for Business conference (2008 through 2014).
  - Created and promoted community-wide outreach and education programs.
Sustainability Facilitator Position
Created Mid-2008

Specific duties:

- Provide oversight and guidance of sustainability efforts consistent with the Climate Protection initiative.
  - Advise Public Works Director, senior management on City activities with an environmental implication.
  - Ensure senior management aware of environmental trends, standards, technologies.
  - Serve as a central source of environmental information, assistance to City departments.
  - Work with federal and state agencies to help establish and clarify environmental policies and standards.
  - Provide support to City advisory boards, commissions and subcommittees.
  - Chair sustainability committees and subcommittees.
  - Coordinate public information, outreach on Climate initiatives, including presentations, website, e-newsletters.
Where I Fit In

- Sustainability Office, staff of one.
- First ever, started December, 2008.
- Housed in Public Works Department.
- Background.
- Historian.
Post-Action Plan Activities 2009-2015

- Sustainability more broadly accepted way of doing business.
- CPAC generally a work in progress and tried several new things:
  - City facility energy audit.
  - Upgrade internal fluorescent lighting to LEDs.
  - Focus on low-hanging fruit.
  - Created CPAC subcommittees.
  - Transitioned away from council member chairman.
  - Expanded outreach through Green Congregations, other programs.
- Pursued and received STAR Community Rating.
CPAC 2019-Present (Rebellious Teen Years)

- 2019 Sea Change.
- Vocal, driven new chair, members.
- Most significant revision yet approved yesterday.
- New by-laws merge advisory and appointee into voting and non-voting.
- Sustainability Facilitator role changing from driver to staff support, monitor.
- Will assist with community outreach, but do more day to day work from internal government standpoint.
Advisory Councils

**PROS**
- Expertise to the table.
- Can get political.
- Push the staff/City out of comfort zone.
- Provide new ideas, insight.
- Expand engagement.

**CONS**
- Municipality government unfamiliarity.
- Can get political.
- Lack of communication between elected officials, staff and members.
- Delicate balance between staff and appointees.
- Attrition via frustration.
- Member experience lost in terms.
- Occasional loose cannon.
Sustainability Office Survival Tips

- Don’t re-invent the wheel.
- Flexibility.
- Communications.
- Support system.
- Expectations.
- Tough skin.
For Additional Info

(803) 545-2722
Mary.Baldauf@columbiasc.gov
www.ColumbiaSC.gov/CPAC