



ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

September 2, 2009

Burgess Recreation Center
700 Alma Street, Menlo Park

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM.

Commissioners Present: Mitch Slomiak (Chairperson), Lawrence Byers, Kristin Kuntz-Duriseti, Jeanne Durnford, Megan Gutelius, and Daniel Kocher.

Commissioners Absent: Douglas Scott

Staff Present: Regina Wheeler, City of Menlo Park, Environmental Specialist and Whitney Loy, City of Menlo Park, Engineering Technician

Public Present: Argus Teter and Robin Powar

A. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- a. Argus Teter's family supports Menlo Park's Heritage Tree Ordinance. Argus attended the Commission meeting to observe, and see how he can become more involved with environmental issues in Menlo Park.
- b. Robin Powar objects to City's Maintenance Department practices at Sharon Hills Park. Seedling trees are being eaten by goats. Recently three young oak trees were removed and she is worried about that practice. She also suggested a City sponsored tree planting/re-vegetation project.

B. REGULAR BUSINESS

1. Approval of July 1, 2009 Minutes
There were a couple of editorial corrections to the minutes. Minutes were approved as corrected.
2. Introduction to New Staff Liaison
Regina Wheeler announced that she is our liaison, but does not know if that will continue after a new Environmental Coordinator is hired. Regina has been with the City of Menlo Park for eight years. Her work has focused on recycling and the management of Menlo Park Municipal Water District's conservation programs. She is picking up a few other things, such as the Commission, for now.
3. Street Tree Management Plan
Whitney Loy, with the Department of Public Works, specializes in heritage trees permits. He will be our contact for the Street Management Plan and has been working on building a better data base that will give timely updates on City work.

The commission wanted to emphasize two concerns:

1. Oversight of workers and successful pruning techniques
2. Funding of the reforestation project.

These items will be brought back no later than the November meeting agenda (October meeting if there is time).

4. Environmental Quality Awards

Three applications have been received, and several more are coming in later in September. The Awards will be the focus of the October meeting.

5. Climate Action Plan

No City staff member is currently responsible for moving the Climate Action Plan forward, although Lisa Ekers has temporary custody. Lisa, Regina and Mitch will have a meeting to discuss the role of the EQC. Kristin, Megan and Mitch will then provide volunteer help as appropriate.

6. Menlo Gateway Project

Some Commissioners commented that this project was well designed and would be a boon to Menlo Park. Some Commissioners expressed concern about climate change related impacts, such as the project's carbon dioxide footprint and risk of flooding with sea level rise. Individual Commissioners with questions and comments will bring them to additional public meetings or submit in writing.

7. Franchise Agreement/SBWMA Contract for Shoreway Recyclery

Dan Kocher moved and it was seconded that the EQC supports the staff report for the SBWMA contract. The motion passed by unanimous vote

8. EQC Report to Council

No report this month.

C. REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Environmental Program Responsibilities

In the aftermath of Dianne Dryer's recent retirement as Environmental Programs Coordinator, some of Dianne's responsibilities have been parceled out to other staff, and her job description is being reviewed. For now, Lisa Ekers will be responsible for the South Bayside Waste Management Authority, SBWMA, and Climate Action Plan. Whitney Loy is responsible for the tree program. It is anticipated that someone will be hired for the Environmental Coordinator position by December.

2. Water Conservation

Regina has several great water conservation programs. She alerted us to classes being held on drought resistant/native plants and other water conserving landscaping.

3. Green@Home Program

Acterra has completed house calls to 50 homes in Menlo Park and is looking for more homeowners to sign up for audits. Sixty Menlo Park volunteers have been trained to work on house calls for this program.

4. El Camino Real/Downtown Project

Dan, Kristin, Doug and Mitch all attended the last downtown visioning meeting and felt the plans for El Camino were looking good.

5. Marsh Road Landfill/Methane Capture

Butch was not sure who had taken on the CAP and now knows it is Lisa. He will be in contact with her to inform her of his efforts to date before moving forward with additional research.