



ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, March 3, 2010 at 6:30 p.m.
Burgess Recreation Center
700 Alma Street, Menlo Park

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 6:35 PM.

Commissioners Present: Kristin Kuntz-Duriseti (Chairperson), Megan Gutelius, Mitch Slomiak, Lawrence Byers and Douglas Scott.

Absent: Jeanne Durnford and Daniel Kocher.

Staff Present: Lisa Ekers, Engineering Services Manager and Regina Wheeler, Environmental Programs Specialist.

Public Present: Randy Craig, Bicycle Commission Staff Liaison and Chuck Kinney, Trees for Menlo.

A. PUBLIC COMMENTS: None.

B. BUSINESS ITEMS

1. Approval of Past Minutes

The Commissioners suggested several corrections and points of clarification to item B.2 on 2/3/10. Changes to the recommendations on the five-year CIP were noted for the record (not forwarded to Assist. City Manager, Starla Johnson). Final approved continued to the commission meeting on April 7, 2010.

There were several corrections suggested by the Commissioners to the minutes from 1/6/10. Minutes were not approved due to oversight; continued to the commission meeting on April 7, 2010.

2. Trees for Menlo

Former Mayor, Chuck Kinney, updated the Commission on the Trees for Menlo project progress since November 2009. With assistance from a Home Depot Foundation Grant, Trees for Menlo is working with the City to complete the planting of the median of El Camino Real from Middle Ave to Oak Grove, the final phase of the project, begun in 1999, that stretches from San Francisquito Creek to Valparaiso. Commissioner Scott asked if we could enlist the help of Trees for Menlo for future volunteer efforts beyond El Camino Real (e.g., Bayfront Park).

The Commission thanked Mr. Kinney and Trees for Menlo for their efforts. Commissioner Scott motioned a resolution of support for the planting of Crapemyrtles by Trees by Menlo commencing this spring. Commissioner Slomiak seconded the motion.

3. High-Speed Rail

The 45 day comment period following the release of the revised draft EIR for High Speed Rail Bay Area to Central Valley on March 4, 2010 ends April 26, 2010. The EIR can be found at the California High Speed Rail Authority website:

<http://www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov/library.asp?p=9274>

Commissioner Byers asked what we can learn about grade separation and track alignments from San Carlos and Belmont. Commissioner Slomiak asked what might be the alternative projects and associated environmental and economic costs and benefits for \$42 billion.

4. Governance issues

In preparation for developing its Two-Year Work Plan, the commission discussed ideas for improving Commission functions:

- Request for regular staff reports, scheduled conveniently for established staff proceedings and accounting (e.g. twice a year), on commission related projects, including, but not limited to:
 - Street trees (budget, updates on survey, number of trees planted, pruned and removed)
 - Heritage trees (permits filed, granted, approved)
 - Green at Home Program
 - Water/landscape ordinance, particularly evaluation of water usage
 - Recycling, particularly evaluation of goals as we transition to single-stream
 - Methane gas capture and other CAP projects (for future)
- Recap of council decisions related to the Commission
- Take advantage of Commission meetings as a forum for public comment on relevant topics
- Establishment of institutions for monitoring and learning, e.g., calendar
- Invite City Council Liaison and draft report; continue Reports to Council
- Update job description for EQC (make sure this input is included in recruitment) to include additional voluntary opportunities to serve on ad-hoc sub-committees and support EQC projects (Environmental Quality Awards and Arbor Day preparation), contribute to summary meeting minutes, and respond to council direction on topical issues.

5. Climate Action Plan

The ad-hoc Sub-Committee is vetting the CAPs from local communities and leading national cities to evaluate their emission reduction targets, strategies for achieving those targets and processes for determining the targets, mechanisms and metrics. Previous efforts focused on targets. Currently, Commissioners Slomiak and Kuntz-Duriseti are researching processes and Commissioner Byers is drafting a summary chart. Once completed, this information will be provided to the city and shared with participating municipalities. The subcommittee expects to present the final draft at the April EQC meeting.

C. REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Arbor Day Coordination

Principal Ibarra, kindergarten students and teachers assisted City Arborist, Juan Alvarez, and City Staff in Arbor Day tree planting on March 5th at Belle Haven Elementary School. Mayor Cline presided; Commissioners Byers and Kuntz-Duriseti and Ms. Wheeler attended.

2. Landscaping Ordinance

Commissioner Kuntz-Duriseti presented the Commission's report at the City Council meeting on February 9, 2010. Discussion reflected the importance of preserving the Commission Reports as a specific agenda item.

City staff received council direction; draft report to Council in April to include more "user-friendly" BAWSCA version of ordinance guidelines based on Santa Clara Valley Water District. Final reading to be scheduled for Council Consent calendar.

3. ECR/Downtown visioning

Work continues on the Draft Specific Plan, which will be available for review this spring, followed by the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and Fiscal Impact Analysis (FIA) in late spring, 2010. Public review process scheduled for the summer and fall. Expected completion of the target is October, 2010. Commissioners Scott and Kocher serve on this ad-hoc sub-committee.

4. Water Rates

Council study session scheduled for 3/23/10 to evaluate Five-year rate adjustment to address San Francisco Public Utilities Commission rate increase over next 2-3 years.

5. Environmental Program Manager

Budget hiring freeze has not affected this position, although a candidate has not been selected.

6. Menlo Gateway

Final EIR delayed until spring to review further greenhouse gas study; decision expected in June (update from Commissioner Slomiak).

7. Drive Less Challenge

The Drive Less Challenge, sponsored by the Menlo Park Green Ribbon Citizens' Committee, will commence on Earth Day, April 22, 2010. Following last year's success, the program has expanded to neighboring cities, Palo Alto, Mountain View and Burlingame. Funds are being raised to improve the quality and capacity of the web-based interface (update from Commissioner Slomiak).

8. Refuse collection

Early roll-out of single-stream recycling did not work out. Recology will distribute carts next fall in anticipation of January 2011 transition.

9. Green-at-Home

Due to budget cuts, the extension of the Green-at-Home program has been eliminated.

10. California First

A recently funded grant will provide this program to 20 cities in San Mateo County that will allow clean energy upgrades to be assessed in the property taxes. This program was adopted by City Council on February 2, 2010.

11. Five-year CIP

The EQC recommendation to include methane capture at Bay Front Park has been included. The CIP was presented to City Council on March 23, 2010.

Minutes submitted by Commissioner Kuntz-Duriseti with assistance from Ms. Wheeler.