



ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, February 2, 2011 at 6:30 p.m.

Arrillaga Family Gymnasium Conference Room

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

Commissioners Present: Lawrence Byers (Chair), Kathy Schrenk (Vice Chair), Doug Ross, Mitch Slomiak, Christina Smolke, Kristin Kuntz-Duriseti (from approx 7:00PM).

Commissioners Absent: Dan Kocher.

Staff Present: Rebecca Fotu, Environmental Programs Manager, Christine Ferry, City Intern Volunteer.

Public Present: Carole Taggart, Allan Bedwell, Davena Gentry, Kent Fields.

A. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

1. Carole Taggart. MP Resident. Concerned about (1) the use of pesticides at Bedwell Bayfront Park (BBP) to eliminate squirrels; feels raptors now gone as well without squirrels; (2) cutting down of the heritage tree at 240 University Avenue, feels City is not doing enough to save heritage trees; (3) exemption of school districts from compliance with Menlo Park's Heritage Tree Ordinance.
2. Allan Bedwell. MP Resident. Asked "how do we avoid future train wrecks like the ill-considered tree planting project at BBP?" Feels residents are anxious about the project, are concerned about the accuracy of the city's data. Interested in avoiding disconnects like this in future. Believes the City really needs a Master Plan for BBP.
3. Davena Gentry. MP Resident. Wanted EQC to be aware of "Energy Upgrade California" Program within San Mateo County. Target is to have 1,000 households in County upgraded by 2012. Interested in obtaining ideas and feedback from EQC and GRCC about how MP residents might be able to participate in the program.

B. BUSINESS ITEMS:

1. Approval of January 5, 2011 Meeting Minutes. M/S Slomiak/Schrenk to approve prior meeting's minutes. Motion carried unanimously.
2. Review Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for 2012-2016. Ms. Fotu provided an overview of the City's proposed CIP. She answered a question the EQC previously posed to the effect the EQC would not be able to review the RFP to be sent out to contractors to

assess/evaluate the BBP gas collection system (ref first line item, Env Section, page A.1-2 of CIP).

EQC members discussed the Tree Planting Area 7, Parking Plaza renovations, LED streetlight conversion projects, solar power conversion projects. Commissioner Kuntz-Duriseti commented that there seemed to be many projects and funds devoted to street resurfacing, without any funds specifically earmarked for cycling/pedestrian improvements and/or canopy improvements. Commissioner Byers commented that there were projects the EQC had previously identified as desirable (additional street tree recommendations, Canopy programs/partnerships, additional street light conversions to LED systems) that were not necessarily detailed in Appendix C, Index of Non-funded Project Requests.

M/S Byers/Kuntz-Duriseti that “The EQC fully supports the following 10 projects listed in the CIP: the six projects listed in the “Environment Section” on page A.1-2, and the following four projects listed in the “Other/Miscellaneous Section” on page A.1-4:

- Bedwell Bayfront Park Gas Collection System Repair;
- Bedwell Bayfront Park Leachate Collection System Replacement;
- El Camino Real Median and Side Trees Irrigation System Upgrade; and,
- Parking Plaza 7 Renovations.

Motion carried unanimously.

3. Review and Make Recommendations on Climate Action Plan Assessment Report. Ms. Fotu gave a brief introductory presentation to introduce the topic.

The City Council adopted the Menlo Park Climate Action Plan (CAP) in 2009. At that time, direction was given by Council to staff, and to EQC, to prepare further improvements to the Plan and bring it back before the Council as quickly as time permitted.

An EQC subcommittee (comprised of Commissioners Slomiak, Kuntz-Duriseti, and Byers) was formed and prepared a report dated April 5, 2010 that addressed topics including reduction targets, best practices, goal-setting processes and public engagement, as well as making a series of recommendations. The full EQC reviewed and accepted the report and submitted it to city staff. Staff subsequently retained CGS Consultants of San Mateo and prepared a report entitled “Climate Action Plan Assessment Report” (the ‘supplemental report’). The supplemental report was given to the EQC subcommittee on Dec 14, 2010, and subsequently Commissioner Slomiak prepared comments on the subcommittee’s behalf that were incorporated into the staff report for this agenda item.

Commissioners thanked staff for their efforts, Commissioner Slomiak noting the supplemental report is a major step forward and Commissioner Kuntz-Duriseti noting how hard the staff worked to circulate the supplemental report through all departments to come up with a document that had the full support of all the various parts of the City.

Extensive discussion of the supplemental report by all Commissioners ensued. Particular questions were asked about:

- the reporting of diversion rates;
- rental unit recycling versus owner-occupied unit recycling;
- the lack of any proposals for goals other than the state-mandated targets associated with AB32;
- quantitative emissions reductions expected from the proposed measures;
- value of utilizing a \$ per CO2 equivalent reduction metric to more formally compare alternatives;
- inconsistencies in how the supplemental report addresses the Marsh Road Landfill/BBP, and concerns over why actions regarding it were left out;
- whether the supplemental report had gone back to the original GRCC report (40 participants making 132 suggestions), and which had been considered but not judged favorable for inclusion;
- the value judgments embedded in the prioritization ratings for the various reduction strategies;
- what are the 20% of the emission reduction strategies that could be expected to lead to the 80% of achievable community-wide emission reductions
- the specific data the city consultant considered for the prioritization criteria “provides significant GHG reduction potential” (first bullet on page 10 of supplemental report)

Staff confirmed that no changes to the supplemental report had yet been made in response to Commissioner Slomiak’s comments submittal (e.g., the version being reviewed is the same version as that released for review on Dec 14, 2010). Staff discussed some community-wide metrics that it is considering for inclusion (community-wide utility usage and associated emissions data from PG&E; vehicle miles traveled on local roads; etc.).

Commissioner Slomiak stated his preference that he “would rather be late [responding to Council] than deficient”.

By consensus the EQC decided to take no action regarding the supplemental report at the evening’s meeting. Rather, city staff proposed to make some changes to the supplemental report and bring it back to the EQC for further consideration at its April meeting, ideally having a meeting with the subcommittee prior to that.

4. Sustainable Building Introduction and Evaluation Timeframe. Staff proposed that the EQC form a subcommittee or designate one member to prepare sustainable building recommendations to Council to achieve the goals of the EQC workplan. As a specific example, should Menlo Park consider going beyond the mandatory new state green building codes and adopting either Tier 1 (15% above CEC efficiency standards) or Tier 2 (30% above CEC efficiency standards). Several commissioners expressed interest but were reluctant to commit at this time due to meeting time issues. By consensus the EQC agreed to take no action at this time, in hopes some of the external time issues would resolve by the next meeting.

C. REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

1. Status of Climate Action Plan. See discussion for agenda item B.3 above.
2. Bedwell Bayfront Park Update. A brief review of Council decision to certify the mitigated negative declaration (3-2 vote in favor) for the Highway 84 offset tree planting was given. Staff stated that the mitigated neg dec had already been filed with the City Clerk and sent on to the State.

MEETING ADJOURNED APPROXIMATELY 08:45 PM.

Meeting minutes prepared by Commissioner Byers.