



ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, February 1, 2012 at 6:30 p.m.
Arrillaga Family Recreation Center
Elm Conference Room
701 Laurel Street, Menlo Park

The meeting was called to order by Chair Slomiak at 6:33 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Chris DeCardy, Kristin Kuntz-Duriseti, Adina Levin, Scott Marshall, Douglas Scott, Mitchel Slomiak (Chair), Christina Smolke (Vice Chair)

Absent: None

A. PUBLIC COMMENT: None

B. REGULAR BUSINESS

- B1.** Discuss a recommendation to the City Council to allow further consideration for a groundwater irrigation well, pending environmental review and approval through the CEQA process, as an alternative water supply to reduce the City's use of Hetch Hetchy water ([Attachment](#))

Staff presentation by Matt Oscamou, Engineering Services Manager and Pam Lowe, Associate Civil Engineer ([Attachment](#))

Public Comment

Mary Kuechler expressed concern about placing the well in an open space zone and the precedent set in using zoned open space for this type of project, and requested that an alternate site be found to locate the well. (Against Project)

Bob Wilkes expressed concern about the proposed use of the city's important resources (recreational-use parks) and the possibility of water costs going up over time. (Against Project)

Marjorie Zimmerman expressed concern over the use of the city's precious resources (water, open space) and the allocation of water and public park space in the proposed project. (Against Project)

Don Ellis expressed concern over the proposed use of Nealon Park for commercial or private use and the disruption to city during the construction time for the proposed project. (Against Project)

David Alfano emphasized the importance of preserving natural resources in city (water, open space) and expressed concern that the proposed project sells vital natural resources to a private source. Also, suggested that the proposed pipeline infrastructure to obtain recycled water in Palo Alto and/or Redwood City should be more formally considered and suggested the

development of an ordinance banning private development in open space zoning should be considered within Menlo Park. (Against Project)

John Reiner, an engineering consultant for Sharon Heights Country Club, was present to speak to the project as needed.

Brielle Johnck expressed concern over the prioritization of water for golf and where the incentives for the proposed project were coming from (BAWSCA or SHGCC). Also, mentioned the differences in county-level policies regarding regulations of aquifer water and suggested the city examine this more carefully regarding future planning of its natural resources. (Against Project)

Andrew Boone expressed concern over prioritization of water for golf, whether any residents of Menlo Park are in favor of this proposed project, staff time already devoted to this project, and whether the city might get revenue for this precious resource in the currently proposed plan. (Against Project)

Robin Driscoll conveyed that the SHGCC has implemented numerous conservation measures to be a good steward of open space and water and has gone through extensive studies to get the project (which addresses pressures from SFPCU and BAWSCA) where it is today. (For Project)

Joe Francesconi donated time to Robin Driscoll. (For Project)

Steve Zales expressed belief that the golf course is acting in a responsible matter and that the proposed project has important benefits to the city, with the challenge of locating the well. (For Project)

Steve Schmidt expressed concern that the project is not about water conservation and that continued use of aquifer water without any regulation may lead to (i) salt water intrusion, (ii) ground subsidence, (iii) settling of the water table such that certain users may no longer be able to tap into it. Also, suggested that the discussion of the project be tabled until the County of San Mateo comes up with regulations or plan for use of ground water. (Against Project)

John Rayner expressed support for Menlo Park exploring solutions to water demands that are economical and sustainable. Also, expressed support for this project since it is no cost to the city, occupies a small footprint, and uses a third of the aquifer water. (For Project)

Elizabeth Houck expressed concern that the proposed project is not a good use of the city's natural resources as: (i) the water leaving the ground would belong to CalWater and a price not negotiated, (ii) water conservation is not part of the project, (iii) the water used in the project could be used to serve 4,000 residents per year, and (iv) cone of subsidence around the well. (Against Project)

Commissioners directed questions to staff around the proposed irrigation well project.

Commissioner Comments

Kristin Kuntz-Duriseti expressed belief that the city needs to address grey water issues and how to handle grey water access within the city. Also, recommended that the two issues be separated from each other: (i) a grey water plan for Menlo Park and a policy for accessing water

from the aquifer, and (ii) the proposed irrigation well for the SHGCC and payment around that project.

NOTE: K. Kuntz-Duriseti left the meeting at 9:00 p.m.

Adina Levin expressed concern that the proposed project takes a scarce resource that is currently not being managed at the city or county level and offer this resource to a private business. Indicated belief that the city should have a strategy in place for its groundwater resources prior to considering projects of this nature, and pointed to examples of public-private partnerships (such as transit shuttles) that can benefit all residents.

Douglas Scott expressed concern that to drop the project would limit the city's options and result in the city missing the opportunity to take advantage of this resource. Also, expressed concern that waiting for a county-level plan to be in place would result in the city missing out on this proposed opportunity.

Chris DeCardy indicated general support for projects that include private-public partnerships and support for further considering this specific project. However, indicated the following points should be addressed: (i) the time urgency to move forward is unclear, but it does not appear that there is immediate time urgency around this project; (ii) there are nested sets of questions, e.g., what particular arrangement of public-private partnership should be in place, can the well be located in the right place, can a financial arrangement be put in place that is beneficial to the city; (iii) the city should have in place a broad grey water plan before moving forward with considering these types of projects; (iv) the county should have a plan around this resource (and the city should engage with the county around developing such a policy).

Scott Marshall indicated he is not comfortable recommending that the city pursue this project given the lack of information available at this stage and the numerous questions being raised. Also, indicated belief that a project of this nature should benefit all residents of Menlo Park and that it is a priority for the city to develop a larger plan for water resources.

Christina Smolke indicated support for the need to have a broader city plan in place for grey water in order to evaluate these types of project proposals and expressed concern around using zoned open space for these types of projects.

Mitch Slomiak indicated support for good partnerships between public-private entities and having a broader policy in place prior to considering and weighing this opportunity.

ACTION: Motion and Second (DeCardy/Levin) to recommend to the City Council that any specific proposals for groundwater use, including the cost, siting, or the like should be considered after:

1. A city grey water plan is developed; and
2. The city engages with San Mateo County to clarify long term water rights for the San Francisquito Creek Aquifer.

The motion passes 6-0-1 (Kuntz-Duriseti absent).

B2. Discuss and Approve Comments on the Draft Capital Improvement Plan for 2012-13 through 2016-17

Staff presentation by Rebecca Fotu, Environmental Programs Manager

Public Comment

Andrew Boone requested that the CIP include funded projects for increasing bike infrastructure and alternative modes of transportation.

David Alfano expressed concern that the city is accepting funds to offset congestion and requested that the CIP include funded projects for increasing bike infrastructure improvements and encouraging alternative modes of transportation.

Commissioner Comments

Mitch Slomiak suggested inclusion of the biggest difference makers (six projects) in the projects that were left out; in particular, the biggest sources of GHG are commercial and institutional energy use and transportation

Douglas Scott noted that tree canopy and planting is out of the current plan.

Scott Marshall expressed concern from the bike community regarding the CIP and emphasized the importance of including funded projects directed to encouraging bike transportation.

Adina Levin suggested amending the General Plan to include tools to prioritize alternative forms of transportation and tools to manage transportation.

ACTION: Motion and second (Slomiak/Levin) to recommend six specific projects identified in the five year strategies of the Menlo Park's Climate Action Plan Assessment Report's (2011) as funded in the Capital Improvement Plan according the timeframe identified in the Climate Action Plan, which are seen by this Commission as the biggest difference makers in that they address commercial and institution energy use and transportation, the biggest sources of GHG emissions in our community:

- i. Green Business Certification Program
- ii. Bike sharing program
- iii. Install Electric Plug In Recharging Station for vehicles
- iv. Amendment of the General Plan to include a GHG reduction strategy in CEQA guidelines and Transportation Demand Management goals
- v. Educational program and/or local ordinance to limit vehicle idling
- vi. Commercial Energy Efficiency Program

ACTION: Friendly Amendment by Adina Levin regarding item iv. to include adoption of mitigations such as TDM and other measures facilitating alternative transportation modes was accepted by Slomiak and Levin.

ACTION: Motion and second (Slomiak/Levin) to recommend six specific projects identified in the five year strategies of the Menlo Park's Climate Action Plan Assessment Report's (2011) as funded in the Capital Improvement Plan according the timeframe identified in the Climate Action Plan, which are seen by this Commission as the biggest difference makers in that they address commercial and institution energy use and transportation, the biggest sources of GHG emissions in our community:

- i. Green Business Certification Program
- ii. Bike sharing program
- iii. Install Electric Plug In Recharging Station for vehicles
- iv. Amendment of the General Plan to include a GHG reduction strategy in CEQA guidelines and to include adoption of mitigations such as Transportation Demand Management and other measures facilitating alternative transportation modes

- v. Educational program and/or local ordinance to limit vehicle idling
- vi. Commercial Energy Efficiency Program

VOTE: Motion passes 5-0-1-1 (Scott abstaining/Kuntz-Duriseti absent)

B3. Select Environmental Quality Award winners for 2011 ([Attachment](#))

ACTION No. 1: Motion and second (Scott/Marshall) to award 1205 Lemon Ave the award for education and sustainable building passes 6-0-1 (Kuntz-Duriseti absent).

NOTE: Commissioner Slomiak announced he is recused from the discussions involving Facebook due to potential business associations and left the meeting at 10:30 p.m.

Commissioner Slomiak returned to the meeting at 10:44 p.m after the action was made.

ACTION No. 2: Motion and second (Scott/DeCardy) to decline award for Facebook at this time due to ongoing construction that relates the award category. The EQC strongly encourages Facebook to reapply next year and also submit an application on their transportation demand management program passes 5-0-1-1 (Slomiak recused/Kuntz-Duriseti absent).

B4. Discuss upcoming report to City Council regarding the Environmental Quality Commission Work Plan progress

ACTION: Motion and second (DeCardy/Marshall) the Chair will provide an update report to the Council on February 14, 2012 regarding the progress on the Work Plan, including climate action plan implementation, resource conservation, and heritage trees passes 6-0-1 (Kuntz-Duriseti absent).

C. REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

- C1.** Update on Council meetings regarding environmental topics: Report by staff and received by Commission.
- C2.** Update on Facebook process: Report by staff and received by Commission.
- C3.** Update on Grand Boulevard plan: Report by A. Levin and received by Commission
- C4.** Quarterly arborist reports: Report by staff and received by Commission. D. Scott requested January report be presented in March.
- C5.** Update on Arbor Day event: Report by staff and received by Commission.
- C6.** Update on polystyrene food service ware education: Report by staff and received by Commission.
- C7.** Discuss potential future agenda items
By consensus, the Commission would like to discuss the following at an upcoming meeting.
 - Heritage Tree Process
 - Receive Quarterly January Report from City Arborist
 - Discuss Work Plan subcommittees for potential appointment of new members

The meeting was adjourned at 11:08 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Commissioner Christina Smolke