



ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, March 7, 2012 at 6:30 p.m.
Arrillaga Family Gymnasium
600 Alma Street, Menlo Park

The meeting was called to order by Chair Slomiak at 6:34 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. Approve November 2011 ([Attachment](#)), January 2012 ([Attachment](#)), and February 2012 ([Attachment](#)) minutes

Commissioners Comments

Kristin Kuntz-Duriseti indicated that November 2011 minutes should be modified to indicate prepared jointly with Kuntz-Duriseti. Also, voiced support for request that staff presentation be included with February 2012 minutes.

Mitch Slomiak indicated that the January 2012 minutes should be modified to put 'use' after 'private' in David Alfano's comments and that 'Wilkes' should be changed to 'Alfano'. In addition, Kuntz-Duriseti needs to be indicated as preparer under C4 public comment for this portion of the minutes. Further, corrections to the February 2012 minutes were indicated as 'gold' should be changed to 'golf' under Steve Zales' comments and the text in the action should be changed from 'citing' to 'siting'.

Scott Marshall indicated that staff presentation should likely be included with February 2012 minutes.

Christina Smolke indicated that her comments should be added to the February 2012 minutes.

ACTION No. 1: Motion and Second (Scott/Smolke) to approve November 2011 minutes with indicated changes passes 5-0-2 (DeCardy and Marshall abstain).

ACTION No. 2: Motion and Second (Scott/Levin) to approve January 2012 minutes with indicated changes passes 5-0-2 (DeCardy and Marshall abstain).

The February 2012 minutes will be edited and brought to the commission at the April meeting for approval.

B2. Honor the service of Dan Kocher on EQC

Rebecca Fotu indicated that she has learned a lot from Dan and it was a pleasure working with him.

Commissioners Comments

Kristin Kuntz-Duriseti indicated she values the respectful, open, and gracious tone Dan set for civil discourse.

Doug Scott shared the progress he and Dan made on trees and city canopy over their time of service on the EQC and also what was still left to focus on, including plan for tree replacement.

Adina Levin indicated it was an honor to learn from Dan during her time on the commission, particularly regarding preservation and value of city trees.

Mitch Slomiak shared a passage from The Lorax and indicated that we were losing one of our lorax's on the council.

ACTION: None

B3. Review City Arborist Quarterly Report

Mrs. Fotu indicated the City Arborist Brian Henry had jury duty and did not have an opportunity to work on the materials and was unable to attend the meeting. The City Arborist will give a report on last quarter and the current quarter at the April meeting.

ACTION: None

B4. Review of EQC Work Plan and review with potential modifications to the subcommittees and/or task assignments associated with the Work Plan ([Attachment](#))

Commissioners Comments

Mitch Slomiak indicated that the EQC forms subcommittees around issues that members are passionate about, with the goal of trying to proactively get ahead of issues to best serve City Council. He also shared that the City Council gave approval last month of the three areas that were highlighted in terms of the Commission's priorities. He indicated that the EQC work plan is a revolving document that will be updated next month.

1. Community-wide environmental sustainability policy:

EQC has previously looked at this as a whole, including reviewing other city policies. Currently no subcommittee for this, but it may require a subcommittee to bring more focus to this topic.

Mitch Slomiak indicated that it is important to put in place an overarching policy to give a framework to decision makers. Highlighted that in 1-2 years the city will be conducting an update of the General Plan, and that this policy could be used to guide Council and staff on integrating new strategies into the City plan.

Kristin Kuntz-Duriseti indicated that a consistent regulatory environment is helpful for guiding consistent decisions and judging project proposals.

Adina Levin indicated interest in participating in this subcommittee with a primary angle of addressing environmental issues for the General Plan.

Chris DeCardy indicated a potential interest in this particular subcommittee (but needed to weigh it against other interests) with a particular interest in how this might influence issues mainstream in City policy.

2. Sustainable building policies and programs:

Last year the City Council approved a local energy amendment that required new construction to be 15% more efficient than required by the State. The City is continuing to explore standards that may be stricter. A subcommittee has been formed (Slomiak, Smolke) to work on sustainable building policies with Ron LaFrance (building official). Currently the subcommittee is planning to meet with LaFrance to discuss the second stage of policies that might be implemented. There is a possibility of forming a task force to help identify what requirements might be feasible and reasonable.

Scott Marshall indicated that a lot of builders are using green building as an advertisement and that it would be good to have some sort of certification for buildings that meet requirements.

Doug Scott requested information on the inventory of current housing, apartments, etc. and how they would rank against requirements.

Mitch Slomiak indicated he has had conversations with a venture capitalist invested in clean tech around possible strategies for motivating people to improve building, including making information about actual energy efficiency performance and ratings publically available.

Chris DeCardy indicated that it is important not to look at these things in isolation as they are ultimately linked. He also, indicated interest in being on this subcommittee.

Christina Smolke indicated interest in staying on this subcommittee.

3. Urban canopy program and policies:

Staff has completed a review of appeal process when the appeal does not go through planning, and is currently looking at the appeal process when it does go through planning. A subcommittee has been formed (Scott, Smolke) which was tasked to look at the tree appeal process and policy regarding health of tree canopy.

Doug Scott indicated that a large issue was that there is not a strategic plan for the City's canopy and it is unknown how many trees there are (either private or City). He also expressed concern that many of the City's trees were planted at the same time and are of limited diversity, and it is of interest to take action to remove the sickest trees and replace them with better species. He further indicated that east of Highway 101; tree planting has failed largely due to the need to have property owners cooperate, but that Facebook might bring a new facet to this. He indicated an interest to stay on the subcommittee until his term is up in August.

Mitch Slomiak indicated that East Palo Alto had a successful tree planting program and was able to obtain a grant for planting trees. He also indicated that one of the planning commissioners (John Kadvani) has indicated interest in collaborating with the subcommittee on these issues.

Christina Smolke indicated her interest in staying on this subcommittee.

Scott Marshall indicated his interest in serving on this subcommittee.

4. Climate action plan:

The subcommittee (currently Kuntz-Duriseti, Slomiak, Levin) formed when initial CAP went to City Council, at which time the EQC endorsed the plan but also indicated concerns with elements of the plan. The subcommittee has been working with staff to improve the plan, including more strategic goals and cost-benefits analysis. The amended plan was passed by the City Council and the Council has directed staff and commissioners to prepare Council Members and the public to explore establishing a specific GHG reduction target through outreach and forums. The EQC issued a report recommending a specific GHG reduction target, and a study section is scheduled for March 13.

Adina Levin indicated the importance of incorporating transportation strategies for reducing GHG. She also indicated interest in staying on the committee.

Kristin Kuntz-Duriseti indicated her interest in staying on the subcommittee.

Mitch Slomiak indicated his interest in staying on the subcommittee.

Chris DeCardy indicated his interest in the topic and that he will continue to follow it.

5. Resource conservation and pollution prevention programs:

There has been a lot of activity with particular policies including polystyrene foodware and carryout bag policies. Based on new requirements for reduction of trash in storm drains (40% in 2014) it seems likely that the ban on polystyrene food containers and single use bags will go a long way in meeting this reduction (~20%). Council will provide guidance at upcoming study session as to whether staff should pursue these options. As a commission there is support that can be offered, e.g., looking at County versus City ordinances for polystyrene ban.

Kristin Kuntz-Duriseti indicated that other options, such as making compost more widely available and a City grey water plan, also feed in to this. Also, indicated that these issues should be framed more broadly, for example, in terms of the cost incurred more broadly for people using bags.

Chris DeCardy indicated that there seems to be momentum behind these policies, and questioned whether there was a need for a subcommittee.

Mitch Slomiak indicated that a previous commissioner (Schrenk) was doing research on the issues, connecting with people, and educating the commissioners on the topics.

NOTE: Adina Levin left the meeting at 8:17 p.m.

Mitch Slomiak summarized the following interests from the discussion:

- #1 – DeCardy, Kuntz-Duriseti (hold off), Levin
- #2 – DeCardy, Slomiak (may drop off), Smolke
- #3 – Marshall, Scott, Smolke
- #4 – Kuntz-Duriseti, Levin, Slomiak
- #5 – Leave as is, without a point person, as specific issues come up it may need a point person or subcommittee formed

Chris DeCardy indicated that in terms of #1 he is interested in understanding the scope and if there is something there to form a subcommittee around.

Mitch Slomiak suggested that 2-3 of the interested commissioners, on item #1, get together with staff and see if there is a desire to form that subcommittee.

ACTION: Motion and Second (Slomiak/Scott) reform the ad hoc Heritage Tree Subcommittee with Commissioners Scott Marshall, Doug Scott, and Christina Smolke and add Chris DeCardy to the ad hoc subcommittee on Sustainable Building passes 6-0-1 (Levin absent).

C. REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Updates presented and received by Commission:

C1. Update on Council meetings regarding environmental topics

C2. Discuss 2012 Arbor Day event

C3. Update on polystyrene food service ware education

C4. Update on the Environmental Quality Awards presented at the February 28, 2012 Council meeting

C5. Update on staff action regarding Nealon Park Well proposal

C6. Discuss potential future agenda items

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Christina Smolke