

Environmental Quality Commission



REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Date: 1/15/2025
Time: 6:00 p.m.
Location: Teleconference and
City Hall Downtown Conference Room, 1st Floor
701 Laurel St., Menlo Park. CA 94025

A. Call To Order

Vice Chair McKenna called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

B. Roll Call

Present: Hedley, Kissel (arrived 6:08 p.m.), Meyer, Vice Chair McKenna, Pelegri-Llopart,
Absent: Hill
Staff: Sustainability Manager Rachael Londer

C. Public Comment

None.

D. Regular Business

D1. Approve the November 20, 2024 Environmental Quality Commission meeting (Attachment)

ACTION: Motion and second (Hedley/ Pelegri-Llopart), to approve the November 20, 2024 Environmental Quality Commission meeting minutes, passed 5-0-1 (Hill absent).

D2. Review and discuss recommendations related to artificial turf and landscaping from the impact of plastics on the environment ad hoc subcommittee (Presentation)

Vice Chair McKenna introduced the item.

Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter Plastic Pollution Prevention Committee Chair Susan Hinton made a presentation (Attachment).

Vice Chair McKenna made a presentation (Attachment).

- Brian Schmidt spoke in support of collecting a fee related to cumulative impacts from developments and artificial turf.
- Dorene Martinez spoke in support of pausing Kelly Field artificial turf installation to allow time for research.
- Ben Eiref spoke in support of banning the use of artificial turf and an outreach program ahead of any process.

The Commission discussed the risks of artificial turf, local examples of policy actions to ban artificial turf and options for banning artificial turf within the City of Menlo Park.

ACTION: Motion and second (McKenna/ Meyer), to recommend City Council:

- Adopt an ordinance prohibiting the use and installation of synthetic grass and artificial turf within the City of Menlo Park (applies to all properties and property types), using the City of Millbrae ordinance as model and including provisions for existing installations to remain in place under certain conditions for a period of up to four (4) years; and
- Engage the Environmental Quality Commission early in the replacement of Burgess Park (or any other park) fields; and
- Consult with experts in order to implement organic maintenance program for natural grass athletic fields, passed 3-2-1 (Kissel and Pelegri-Llopart dissenting, Hill absent).

The Commission took a recess at 7:55 p.m.

The Commission reconvened at 8:00 p.m.

- D3. Review and discuss the recommendations to reduce single use plastics from the impact of plastics on the environment ad hoc subcommittee (Presentation)

Commissioner Hedley introduced the item and made the presentation with support from a representative from the Youth Advisory Committee (Attachment).

- Ben Eiref spoke in support of a single-use plastic ban.
- Dorene Martinez spoke in support of party packs with sustainable materials, hydration stations and following the models of other cities.

The Commission discussed the trade-offs and considerations for the nine presented opportunities to reduce single-use plastics in the community.

ACTION: Motion and second (Hedley/ Kissel), to recommend that the City eliminate single-use plastics in City activities/events, ban sale of plastic water bottles on city property, add Climate Action/Zero Waste as Community Need for community grant program, develop plan to adopt the countywide foodware ordinance, and further consider the entire list of opportunities as priorities when implementing zero waste plan, passed 5-0-1 (Hill absent).

- D4. Review and discuss recommendations from the distributed energy resources ad hoc subcommittee (Presentation)

Commissioner Pelegri-Llopart introduced the item and made the presentation (Attachment).

The Commission received clarification on portable batteries, grant spending and future technologies.

- Brian Schmidt spoke in support of distributed energy resources (DERs) and mitigating electricity cost increases to help electrification and improve resilience.
- Dorene Martinez spoke in support of a clear recommendation and leveraging resources from other cities.
- Ben Eiref spoke in support focusing on high-need residents for battery distribution and additional education.

The Commission discussed options to advance the deployment of DERs in the community.

E. Reports and Announcements

E1. Reports and announcements from staff and Commissioners

Sustainability Manager Londer reported out on heritage tree ordinance administrative guidelines, upcoming Jan. 28 City Council meeting items, Burgess Campus electrification and the preliminary results of the municipal greenhouse gas inventory.

Commissioner Pelegri-Llopart reported out on electric bicycles and pedestrian infrastructure examples from Paris.

Vice Chair McKenna provided an update on Peninsula Clean Energy's Home Upgrade Program soft launch and data on the number of assessments and projects moving forward countywide.

F. Informational Items

F1. 2024-2025 Environmental Quality Commission work plan

G. Adjournment

Vice Chair McKenna adjourned the meeting at 9:42 p.m.

Sustainability Manager Rachael Londer

Minutes approved at February 19, 2025 Environmental Quality Commission Meeting

Menlo Park Plastic Ban

- 16/20 cities in San Mateo County already have a plastic ban, including San Mateo, Foster City, & Burlingame
- Surveyed 20+ restaurants in San Mateo
 - Many were unaware of the ban & the resources available to them
- CCL San Mateo Youth would love to see Menlo Park implement the existing ban, with a couple of amendments to make the ordinance more effective
- CCL San Mateo Youth would help:
 - Make amendment suggestions
 - Raise money to fund grants to help businesses transition away from plastic foodware
 - Complete city-wide outreach to raise awareness