



Minutes

REGULAR MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, February 12, 2013, 7:00 p.m.
El Cerrito City Hall – Council Chambers

10890 San Pablo Avenue

This Meeting Place Is Wheelchair Accessible

Miner called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.

Roll Call:

Chair Miner, Vice-Chair Goudey, Members Krueger, Benjamin, Dandridge, Spitalnik, Pavel, and Weinstein

Absent: Members Solari and Doan

Also Present: Maria Sanders, Staff Liaison, Janet Abelson, Council Liaison, and Melanie Mintz, Environmental Services Division Manager

- 1. Comments from the public on non-agenda items – 7:00**
- 2. Approval of the Minutes – 7:05**
- 3. Climate Action Plan – Public Comment Kick-off Presentation – 7:10**

Staff Liaison Maria Sanders presented the Draft Climate Action Plan to mark the kick-off of the 30-day public comment period. The presentation will be given again, in similar form, at the next meeting of the El Cerrito City Council on February 19th, 2013. A few points of note from the presentation:

- The City has set a reduction target of 15% below 2005 greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) levels by 2020 and 30% below 2005 levels by 2035. This target is in keeping with State targets under Assembly Bill 32: The California Global Warming Solutions Act (AB 32).
- A portion of these reductions will be achieved through Statewide initiatives aimed to encourage renewable energy development and improve fuel efficiency of cars
- The City has proposed a number of strategies to address the major sources of greenhouse gas emissions in El Cerrito; a number of these are existing strategies that are already contributing to GHG reductions; proposed measures range in scope, cost and implementation timeline. The City will pursue outside funding wherever possible.

Upon completion of her presentation, Maria Sanders opened the meeting up for questions:

COMMUNICATION ACCESS INFORMATION

To request a meeting agenda in large print, Braille, or on cassette, or to request a sign language interpreter for the meeting, call Garth Schultz, Staff Liaison at 559-7684 (voice) at least FIVE (5) WORKING DAYS NOTICE PRIOR TO THE MEETING to ensure availability.

Chair Miner asked how the public will be involved in the implementation phase and Sanders explained that the City had proposed a number of incentives to increase the uptake of actions and behaviors needed to reduce GHGs. A Community Member asked how the City had set its goals and Sanders explained that the City had considered the profile of El Cerrito's businesses, residents and housing stock to determine what seemed reasonable. The age of El Cerrito's residences and high natural gas use hinder more aggressive targets; the high number of commuters in El Cerrito make it difficult to greatly reduce vehicle miles traveled and their associated GHGs. Krueger added that the targets were in keeping with AB 32. Sanders added that the CAP is a living document that will be re-evaluated every 5 years to determine if more aggressive targets are possible.

Weinstein raised concern about the EQC's review period of the CAP, stating that the next meeting had already been set aside for public comment. Melanie Mintz responded saying that they would be given time at the following meeting to voice their comments and that the EQC would be asked, at the April meeting, to recommend to City Council whether or not the CAP be adopted.

Community Member introduced herself as a new member of the City's Tree Committee who was interested in seeing information about carbon sequestration strategies and hoped there would be future collaboration with the Tree Committee on implementation. Goudey was interested in the rate of penetration for a number of the measures and how they had been accounted for in the numbers, given that some measures such as land use planning would take significantly longer than others; also was interested in how the City accounted for those measures that they could directly implement and those that they could encourage. Sanders responded that the City will be going to Council to determine feasible timelines for a number of the projects and that the 2015 GHG inventory would give the City a better sense of what was attainable in terms of actual reductions from the measures.

Spitalnik asked about the GHG reduction quantification and why there didn't seem to be 2035 quantifications. Sanders responded that these were projections based on available data and that the farther out the fuzzier these quantifications would be. Spitalnik then asked if there might be other, more aggressive scenarios that the City may consider and the measures that would be needed to achieve those.

Community Member stated that he supported a number of the measures presented, but that he had yet to see any signs of a changing climate. He added that there was a major omission in the strategies as there was no mention of recycled water coming from EBMUD. Sanders stated that the purple, EBMUD pipes did not come to El Cerrito, so it was not feasible for the City to consider this a reduction strategy. Miner added that the low-hanging fruit in recycled water was the washing-machine-to-garden grey water systems that had been presented to the EQC previously and that the EQC could consider presenting on again.

Community Member added that it didn't appear that the CAP considered the broader climate action context that the City existed in. He wondered what time of funding might be available to super charge the plan. Miner mentioned that City staff were diligent about pursuing grants. Another Community Member encouraged the City to be more aggressive, because other cities that have already begun implementation have found that they aren't seeing as large reductions from their strategies as planned; if the City sets a goal beyond its target then it is more likely to meet it. He added that this is a really good time for the City to be taking action as the State is adopting legislation that will support its implementation: new General Plan updates to include climate change, CEQA Guidelines being refined, the development of community plans under SB 37, and the availability of Cap and Trade funds that will favor cities with GHG Plans.

Community Member asked whether the full CAP was available online. Sanders and Mintz noted that it was available on the City's website and would be placed on the front page, that there were going to be copies available at the Library and City Hall and that the City could offer to print copies for residents at a fee.

Weinstein urged the City to place fliers for the next meeting at the Recycling + Environmental Resource Center and Sanders added that anyone interested in updates and event announcements should sign up for her CAP email list.

Community Member stated that we have 22 years until 2035, how did the City expect to see a 30% reduction in that time, when until now he hadn't seen any changes in the carbon density of the atmosphere. He was concerned that with no carbon, Earth's way of life would not be sustainable. Sanders clarified that the City was referring to sources of GHG emissions, not overall GHG presence in the atmosphere. Goudey added that there were many successful examples, particularly from the State, of addressing these sources. Community Member also emphasized that this was a discussion of public health, as well, and that the pollutants being discussed were proven to negatively impact human health. Sanders highlighted that the CAP focuses on strategies with numerous co-benefits such as improvement of public health and cost savings.

Miner closed discussion by thanking the community members for coming and encouraging them to come again next month to the March 12th meeting. Sanders added that people should feel free to email her any questions or comments at MSanders@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us. Paloma Pavel stated that she was very proud of the City for being engaged on this issue and for creating something like the EQC to join in the discussion; she discussed a new State document titled "Public Health in Climate Action Planning" and the development of a Cap-and-Dividend system, as an alternative to Cap-and-Trade.

Additional Notification

Upon publication, the Draft CAP will be posted to the City's website at <http://www.el-cerrito.org/climateactionplan> and also available at the following locations in El Cerrito:

El Cerrito City Hall, 10890 San Pablo Avenue
Recycling + Environmental Resource Center, 7501 Schmidt Lane
El Cerrito Library, 6510 Stockton Avenue

For more information on the Climate Action Plan and how to submit comments visit our website at <http://www.el-cerrito.org/climateactionplan> or contact msanders@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us.

4. Eco Film Series: Updates and Action Items – 8:10

Pavel announced the March 23rd showing of *Rising Waters* at the Rialto Theater, 10:30am, followed by refreshments at Nong Thon and small group discussion led by members of the EQC and representatives of the League of Women Voters (LWV). LWV is contributing \$500 for refreshments and Pavel proposed the EQC allocate \$3,000 for the next 2 films. Weinstein stated that he was in favor of the event, but had never heard of a request for such a large percentage of the budget. Pavel noted that the EQC had \$5,500 for the fiscal year, she clarified that the *Rising Waters* event would require \$1,700 for refreshments to serve 100. Miner noted that the upstairs theater only held 130, so 100 might be an ambitious number. Krueger was concerned what kind of message it would send for the City to provide free food when under serious budget constraints. Miner wondered what the timeline for approval was and Pavel emphasized the need to start getting publicity out sooner rather than later. Miner stated that the EQC could approve the budget and then ask for a \$10 suggested food

donation with the EQC budget to cover the difference. Goudey emphasized that the event itself should stay free to the public. Natasha Benjamin moved to approve the stated budget while encouraging the subcommittee to continue to pursue other funds including donations at the event, seconded by Weinstein. Motion passed unanimously.

5. Green Team: Updates and Action Items – 8:25

Miner reported on the January 19th Gateway cleanup event where one volunteer at the North location collected as much as 5 volunteers at the South location, leading him to believe that future Green Team events should be in the North where there appears to be more trash. Weinstein moved to create a subcommittee to develop a volunteer appreciate event in the summer. Krueger, Dandridge, Weinstein, and Pavel to comprise subcommittee, will report back at the April meeting. Weinstein motioned to approve the creation of a subcommittee, Benjamin seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Weinstein proposed that the next cleanup take place on March 16th.

Krueger reported about an ongoing 1st Saturday creek cleanup (10-12am) at the Baxter Creek Gateway site; Saturday, February 11th was the one year anniversary of the event and was a collaboration with Friends of 5 Creeks; there were 17 volunteers.

Goudey brought up the possibility of green teams performing graffiti abatement, but Krueger said that he didn't think it was appropriate. Councilmember Abelson stated that if you see graffiti, please contact the Maintenance Department immediately. Weinstein mentioned that he was interested in expanding the responsibility of the Green Teams to perform other tasks, such as tree maintenance, educational programs, and involvement in trail maintenance with the Trail Trekkers, which should expand as the City considers acquiring land. Community Member interested in opportunities for collaboration with members of the Tree Committee on pruning workshops and tree maintenance events.

6. Announcements and future agenda items – 8:40

Abelson announced Earth Day would be April 20th and would include a work party in the morning throughout town followed by a free lunch for volunteers at the Community Center. There will be online registration available soon, but for now volunteers can sign up at the Recycling + Environmental Resource Center or via email at Green@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us. Abelson recommended that the EQC recommend sites for clean-up and work events. At the last Council meeting, the City was presented with an award for its strong participation in the National Night Out program from the National Association of Town Watch. The City has received a grant for bicycle and pedestrian improvements for Moeser Lane and Ashbury Avenue. The City is completing an environmental review of the Eden Housing Project, which will include additional senior housing. Councilmember Mark Friedman proposed that City Council no longer perform the pledge of allegiance, which was met with a lot of press.

Weinstein wanted to add 2 items to the agenda for consideration. The first, a 10 minute presentation from Susan Schwartz to the EQC about the Hillside Natural Area. Miner thought it might be good to have this presentation at the next meeting when there is public attendance. The second, Weinstein proposed an action item to recommend an application from the City for a grant to acquire public land near the Hillside Natural Area.

Sanders provided an update on the Solar project, sharing that the first installation would take place at the Recycling + Environmental Resource Center next week and that the additional panels would allow the Center to become a Zero Net Energy facility. The installation at the Community Center was

scheduled to take place in March and would include closure of the Center's parking lot for approximately a week.

7. Adjournment

Miner adjourned the meeting at 9:12pm

Any writings or documents provided to a majority of the Environmental Quality Committee regarding any item on this agenda will be made available for public inspection at the El Cerrito Recycling + Environmental Resource Center Administrative Office at 7501 Schmidt Lane, El Cerrito, Monday - Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.