

MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, March 12, 2013, 7:00 p.m.

El Cerrito City Hall - City Council Chambers

10890 San Pablo Avenue

This Meeting Place Is Wheelchair Accessible



Miner called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm.

Roll Call:

Chair Miner, Vice-Chair Goudey, Members, Dandridge, Spitalnik, Solari, Pavel, Weinstein and Doan

Absent: Krueger, Benjamin, Janet Abelson, Council Liaison

Also Present: Maria Sanders, Environmental Analyst & Staff Liaison

1. Comments from the public on non-agenda items

Katherine Sutton an Albany resident and from Transition Albany, a group working to localize and reduce consumption would like to show the film “Symphony of Soil” on April 15, 2013 at the Rialto Theater in El Cerrito. The film is part of a series usually shown in the Albany Library partnered with the city of Albany to form an alliance. This would be a fund raising event. She would like to ask the EQC for one of their community access days in order to have the theater free of charge. Dandridge sent the information to Pavel, Goudey and Robin Mitchell. This would be the film’s premiere for the East Bay.

Kevin Wildenberg commented that this was his third consecutive EQC meeting. Garth Schultz, Environmental Analyst has his application to join the committee. Kevin has pulled Hillside broom and has helped with Baxter Creek.

2. Approval of the Minutes

Weinstein made the motion to adopt the minutes of the Regular Committee meeting from February 12, 2013 seconded by Miner. Motion passed unanimously.

3. Presentation by Susan Schwartz, Friends of Five Creeks

Susan Schwartz gave a power point presentation about the Hillside Natural Area and background information about the Friends of Five Creek. The Friends of Five Creek was found in 1995. They are an all volunteer group with hands on planting, pulling weeds from Cerrito Creek and working in the Hillside Natural Area. The Hillside Natural Area is 90 acres (3 parcels) former range land and quarry. It has 4 creeks and has the most animals, birds and flowers. It is the most used and has the most potential of fire due to people. The Hillside has one protected species, the Mariposa Lily. The area has been mapped with trails and the area’s plants by volunteers. The Friends of Five Creek is asking for volunteers to help survey the animals in the hillside. French Broom is the biggest threat of a wild fire. The Eucalypts trees although not invasive as the French broom but are flammable due to leaves and

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bark that have oil. In 1987, the City paid LSA for a Management Plan. Grasslands across the top ridge were used as a fire break. In 2010, Friends of Five Creek began pulling broom from the Hillside. Some areas in the Hillside are too steep or have poison oak and eventually will need professionals. There are too many small Eucalypts trees but that's where the hawks are. The City will have to hire a consultant for those types of issues.

Gordon White, commented and spoke of his 33 years with the El Cerrito Fire Department and experience working in the Hillside. They would burn fields when they wouldn't cross city territories. Air pollution put a stop to that. They received permission to burn with a permit. They would also cut and recut broom before it went to seeds. They also used prisoners from Sonoma to cut broom. A lot of brush was cleared. He made a correction from Susan Schwartz's presentation saying that the Hillside is 95 acres not 90 acres.

Solari asked if the EQC would support to hire professionals. Susan Schwartz said they did not come to the EQC for an action but eventually there will need to be funding on how to tackle these tasks. Miner asked would the EQC eventually have to bring this to council to support. Susan's recommendation was don't pay for a new plan and use ongoing management of the hillside and use available recourses and groups. Spitalnik congratulated Susan on the work they have done. EQC's role is to proceed and for financing to be determined in a future date. Susan recommended getting Gordon White who is very knowledgeable about the Hillside for meetings.

4. Climate Action Plan – Presentation and Public Comment

Maria Sanders, Environmental Analyst introduced herself and gave a power point presentation about the CAP. She has been working on the CAP for 3 years. Public comment began on February 12, 2013 and will end on March 15, 2013. The CAP will be sent to the Planning Commission on April 17th, 2013. On April 9th, 2013 the EQC will recommend the CAP to the City Council and will be sent for council approval on May 21, 2013. Public concern, threats posed by climate change and the added benefits of taking action were reasons to have a CAP. The CAP's purpose is to reduce emissions below 2005 baseline levels 15% by 2020 and 30% by 2035. There was community involvement with the CAP. In 2010 there was a CAP survey with 450 participants, 3 public workshops and 1 public workshop in mid 2011. There were also frequent EQC and Council updates.

The CAP is organized into 6 chapters. Chapter 1, Climate Change In Context (methodology). Chapter 2, El Cerrito's Green House Gas Emissions (inventory). Chapter 3, Community Climate Action Strategies. Chapter 4, Municipal Climate Action Strategies (City's carbon footprint). Chapter 5, Personal Climate Action Plan and Chapter 6, Implementation (best reduction measures). Miner suggested having a personal climate action plan at Earth Day for public education & outreach.

Steve Price, resident of 30 years and serves on the Tree Committee was impressed with Sanders and with the document produced in house. He did suggest removing the term "built out city" and that it does not describe El Cerrito. Gary Hill, resident and served 10 years on the Design Review Board that people tend to focus on San Pablo Avenue. He suggested having electric bicycles that can go up hills and having them at Earth Day. He asked how does the CAP address the Hillside and people who live in the Hills? Sanders answered that there is a section in the CAP under Stockton and Fairmount Avenues but it doesn't go high enough into the hills. It would be a planning effort for the City's General Plan which should be updated in the next couple of years. That would be a good time to insert a pedestrian/bicycle plan. Katherine Sutton, Albany resident commented that she would like Albany and El Cerrito to work together and that Albany is lagging in this area. Social change happens when people come together and it has to come from the people. She suggested bike sharing as used in Paris, France. Kevin Wildenberg commented that implementation needs specific dates. Andrea Lucas

serves on the Planning Commission with the city. She liked the approach of the CAP and said it was easy to read. She suggested zoo trains or electric bikes as ways for people to get up and down from the hills without the use of a car. David Britt e-mailed Sanders about a study of natural gas leaks and believes it should be pressed hard because it is a big issue.

Andy Katz, EBMUD Board of Directors commented that methane is a serious problem from agriculture and trash sources. He also spoke about rebates EBMUD offers for dishwashers and washers and how to push those debates to customers.

Katherine Sutton, Albany resident commented that the City of Berkeley's Multi-family dwellings were composting to reduce the amount of food waste sent to the landfill. Anne Oganowski, 14 year resident and a renter said her landlord said that food waste needs to be put in the garbage. She feels there is a disconnect between landlords who do not live in the city. Sanders took down her information to coordinate a site visit from city staff and possibly start composting at her Apartment complex.

EQC Comments on CAP

Weinstein commented that the term "built out" to stay in the plan and preservation of historic buildings and neighborhoods and not to have high rise buildings like the in the city of San Mateo. Doan commented adaptation and mitigation not included in the CAP probably due to the time frame. Water shortages and sea levels rising are factors to think long-term for preparing communities for the change. Goudey thanked residents and visitors who came to speak and thanked them for their participation. Spitalnik thanked everyone as well and suggested having a feasibility study about the innovative idea about having a zoo car transport people from BART to the hills (roundtrip). Pavel commented she loves El Cerrito, the EQC and what was happening in the room. Miner thanked the group and Sanders and said it is important that they achieve their goal of 1% per year reduction from 2005.

5. Eco Film Series: Updates and Action Items

Pavel presented details about the "Rising Waters" event that will be held on Saturday, March 23, 2013. The filmmaker has been invited and there will be music at the event. John Goya, C.C. county supervisor will be leading a discussion panel and Will Travis from the B.C.D.C. will show a 10 minute slide show. After the film, there will be continued dialogue with elected officials, EQC members and members of the public at Nong Thon restaurant with food and refreshments. A ticket is not needed to join the discussion group after the film. Pavel asked who would be attending the film. Sanders, Miner, Dandridge, Spitalnik will be attending. Pavel asked for leaders or co-leaders for dialogue groups and passed out sign up forms. Janet Abelson, council liaison will be leading the Transportation discussion group. Pavel would like EQC support with welcoming people, helping facilitate at the event and holding the notes from the discussion groups.

Goudey sent an e-mail to city staff about the situation of showing "Symphony of Soil" with Albany and using one of the City's community access day at the Rialto Theater. The City can not use community access days for fund raising for an advocacy group. Goudey asked EQC if there is a limitation. Goudey has seen the film and wanted to show the film. There was confusion because the group Bay Food Shed was to show "Edible City" and was granted a community access day at the Rialto but the event did not happen. Weinstein would like to know the City's policy and said it has been inconsistent. Solari asked how many community access days does the City have? There are 12 days shared among the City's various groups. Miner thinks it is important that El Cerrito and Albany work together on such issues of climate change. EQC film events have always been free to attend and in his opinion, there should be more focus on the content of events rather than the monetary amount of

paying the Theater. Spitalnik noted that it was 9:30 pm and suggested to move on with the agenda and to have further discussion at another time. Sanders will ask City staff for the definition of the policy for the next EQC meeting. Weinstein would like to know who makes the decisions. Sanders will put it on the next agenda.

6. Green Team: Updates and Action Items

Weinstein announced that the clean up event scheduled on Saturday, March 26, 2013 was postponed. Weinstein made the motion to have clean up event dates scheduled for May 11th, July 20th, September 21st, and on November 9th, seconded by Dandridge. Motion passed unanimously. Weinstein also mentioned that he would like the thank you celebration for volunteers who have helped in clean up events to be held at a special place not in the council chambers or the community center.

7. Announcements and future agenda items

Sanders announced EQC Eco film series “Rising Waters” event on Saturday, March 23, 2013 10:30 am – 12:30 pm. Compost give away for El Cerrito residents at El Cerrito Recycling Center from 9:00 am – Noon on Saturday, March, 23, 2013. Earth hour will also be on the same day from 8:30 pm – 9:30 pm where millions of people in thousands of cities turn off their lights for an hour to display universal commitment to protect the planet.

Earth Day celebration will be on April 20, 2013. Bike to work day will be on May 9, 2013. New solar panels were installed at the Recycling Center and will now be net zero energy. Trees will be taken down behind the public safety building and community center. An electric vehicle charging station will be installed at City Hall and will be the City’s first charging station.

8. Adjournment

Miner adjourned the meeting at 9:43 pm.

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 Center Offices at 7501 Schmidt Ln., El Cerrito, Monday - Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.