

MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, May 14, 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 7:07 pm.

Roll Call:

Chair Miner, Vice-Chair Goudey, Members Krueger, Benjamin, Dandridge, Solari, Weinstein, Doan and Wildenberg

Absent: Spitalnik, Pavel

Also Present: Garth Schultz, Environmental Analyst & Staff Liaison, Janet Abelson, Council Liaison

1. Comments from the public on non-agenda items

No comments from the public.

2. Approval of the Minutes

Doan made the motion to adopt the minutes of the Regular Committee meeting from April 9, 2013 seconded by Weinstein. Motion passed unanimously.

3. AB323 (Chesbro) Organics Recycling

A letter of support for Assembly Bill 323 (Chesbro) was shared. A bulk of organics (food waste and green waste) is still being sent to landfills, which causing greater greenhouse impact than composting. AB 323 has the potential to reduce greenhouse gases by more than 4 million tons of CO2 each year, create renewable energy and fuels and create four times more jobs than land filling the same material. Miner stated that many nonprofits support this Bill including the city of San Francisco which is the first municipality to support AB 323. El Cerrito would be the first small city in support. There are 2 major oppositions from the Los Angeles County Solid Waste Management Committee/Integrated Waste Management Task Force and County Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County. Schultz added that the El Cerrito business community would be largely compliant since they already participate in composting organics. Benjamin made the motion that the EQC recommend support of AB 323 to Council, seconded by Goudey. Motion passed unanimously. Miner would like to include in the letter that the city's local businesses are already composting. Abelson commended and thanked the EQC for supporting bills in a thoughtful way.

4. Single-Use Bag Ordinance and Food Ware Ordinance Public Comment

Schultz announced that the Public Comment Period for a draft Single-Use Bag Ordinance and draft Food Ware Ordinance will begin on May 15th. The City will solicit public comments on both ordinances for 60 days through July 15. The Single-Use Bag Ordinance (based on the Recyclemore

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.

model) will reduce the use of single use bags. The Food Ware Ordinance will eliminate EPS food ware used by food service businesses in the city. City staff are in communication with the City of Richmond about what worked positively and the problems Richmond encountered with their EPS food ware ban. Miner commented that EPS foam is hard to clean up during his experience working the green team clean up event on May 11th. There will be community public comment meetings on June 11th and July 9th during scheduled EQC meetings. Recyclemore is sending each city in West County their model of the Single-Use Bag Ordinance. An EIR (Environmental Impact Report) was conducted by Recyclemore. Wildenberg asked if there had been public and business outreach. Schultz answered that outreach will come from the Environmental Services Division fund. One mailer with 3 languages will be mailed letting them know about both ordinances. There were 2 rounds of canvassing to city food businesses regarding the incentive of compostable and recyclable food ware. Out of 75 businesses, only 6 businesses took advantage of the incentive.

5. Community Choice Aggregation Background Update

Miner gave an overview about the CCA and the Local Clean Power Alliance. There is one CCA operation in California, Marin Clean Energy. Sacramento, Santa Clara, Alameda, and Palo Alto all run their own electrical power. Berkeley, Oakland and Albany are looking into running their own local electrical power. EBMUD got rejected in becoming part of CCA. Miner also introduced the term FIT (Feed in Tariff) and will follow with more details later in the week. Al Winthrop, CCA Chair will come and speak at the EQC's September meeting. Miner stated that El Cerrito would not be likely to start producing its own local power but would join either Marin or Oakland/Berkeley. EQC discussion of future steps regarding this topic is pending until Council approves the CAP.

6. Community Recognition Event

Weinstein shared his ideas about having this event at a special place to invite all of the volunteers. He would like to have a presentation along with entertainment, perhaps having a band play but recognized it would consist of a fair amount of planning. Krueger suggested reading out names of volunteers at an event. Benjamin commented that this event is important and should also be a sense of community to get friends to volunteer. Schultz agreed it is important and that the event should build leadership support and generate more involvement. After July, he can put more thought into it and would like to be on a sub-committee. Miner suggested having thank you celebration before the Holidays or in September when there is nice weather. Miner, Dandridge, Weinstein, Krueger, Wildenberg and Benjamin volunteered to be on sub-committee.

7. Green Team: Updates and Action Items

Weinstein reported on the Clean Up event that was held on May 11th. It was a successful clean up with 6 people total working along Cutting Blvd. under I-80. Some of the land was fenced by Caltrans and was not accessible but a lot of debris was cleaned. Miner volunteered at event and pulled weeds from the on ramp. Stephen Pree, City Arborist suggested Ivy pulling events at Cerrito Vista and Tassajara Parks for future Green Team clean ups. Miner made the motion to have Ivy pulling events with dates TBD, seconded by Krueger. Motion passed unanimously.

Schultz also suggested helping with tree watering because of the limited resource in Maintenance, the lack of rain and the amount of trees that were planted. Input from Stephen Pree is needed on how to proceed with tree watering. Schultz will consult with Pree because special training might be needed for the volunteers. Dandridge asked if the City has ever had a workshop on pruning trees. Schultz and Abelson both responded with yes, there was a workshop during a past Earth Day.

8. Eco Film Series: Updates and Action Items

Goudey reported that the subcommittee did not meet because he could not attend the meeting and the meeting was not rescheduled. No event is scheduled for June due to subcommittee not meeting.

9. Announcements and future agenda items

Abelson announced that Council met with the school district at last Council meeting regarding the “Link Learning Program”. The city will have a model with 9 ECHS students during the summer where they will work a few days a week in different city departments and also work with a teacher. If the program works, the program will go to other cities within the school district. She also reported on school construction. In the future, Portola Middle School will move to what used to be Castro Elementary. Fairmount Elementary will move to the Portola portable buildings while Fairmount School gets reconstructed. The City may have an option to the flatland of Portola that can be used for recreation or a site for a new library. The Board & Committee recognition dinner will be held at the Community Center on May 31st. In July, Council will only meet once a month during their summer schedule.

Schultz announced that on May 21st, council will consider CAP for approval.

- May 29th Tree Inventory
- EC businesses food composting is growing. Giovanni’s, Elevation 66 and Well Grounded were the original 3. Now both Starbucks stores, Fat Apples and Trevino’s are also participating in the food waste composting program.
- May 3rd was the film premiere of “Where Recycling is a Treasure” the history of the recycling center.
- Solar Energy panels are being installed on the Public Safety Building and will also be installed in the Community Center.

Miner suggested a personal CAP for the July 4th festival because the CAP will by then already be passed by council. Schultz suggested Miner contact Maria Sanders, Environmental Analyst.

Weinstein announced on May 25th, EC Trail Trekkers will have an urban hike beginning from the Kensington Library and will include parts of El Cerrito and Berkeley.

Pavel apologized for being late because she was at an intern group meeting. Future agenda items would be film showing of “Journey of the Universe” and “Designing Healthy Communities”. “Journey of the Universe” to be shown in July with a preferred date of July 13th.

10. Adjournment

Miner adjourned the meeting at 8:50 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.

June 7, 2013

Assembly Member Wesley Chesbro
State Capitol, Rm. 2141
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 323 (Chesbro) Greenwaste / Food Scrap Recovery & Composting– Strong Support

Dear Assembly Member Chesbro:

We would like to express our strong support for Assembly Bill 323 (Chesbro). AB 323 presents a package of policies that will drive the recycling of yard trimming and food scraps, not only resulting in a reduction of pollution and greenhouse gases, but also creating jobs and supporting a burgeoning clean tech industry.

Despite California's robust recycling infrastructure for traditional recyclables, the state continues to landfill organic materials, such as yard trimmings and food scraps, at an alarming rate. In fact, food is the most prevalent item in our waste stream and a third of the material going to landfills is readily compostable. This is simply unacceptable, and, in the context of achieving a 75% recycling rate and strict greenhouse gas limits, it would be irresponsible not to recycle this material.

Tackling this waste stream is an integral part of achieving the goals in AB 341 and AB 32. According to CalRecycle “the 75% goal cannot be reached unless a significant amount of organics now being landfilled is instead used in new composting/AD facilities,” and the ARB has repeatedly identified the importance of composting and anaerobic digestion to reduce greenhouse gases. Nonetheless, the building of organics processing infrastructure has been hindered by a complex regulatory structure and state policies that have supported low-cost disposal alternatives.

AB 323 is a comprehensive approach to tackling the organic fraction of the waste stream that parallels AB 341 and builds on the CalRecycle’s existing Strategic Directive, which proposes that organics in landfill be reduced by 50 percent by 2020. Moreover, this bill has the potential to reduce greenhouse gases by more than 4 million tons of CO₂ each year, create renewable energy and fuels, and generate four times more jobs than landfilling the same material.

For these reasons, we are pleased to support this important legislation.

Sincerely,

c.c. Members, Assembly Natural Resources Committee