



MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, March 9, 2010, 7:00 p.m.

El Cerrito City Hall – Council Chambers

10890 San Pablo Avenue

This Meeting Place Is Wheelchair Accessible

Chair Eggherman called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

Roll Call

Present: Chair Eggherman, Members Benassini, Benjamin, Miner, Spitalnik, Weinstein, Wong, Krueger, Rome, Brown-Lechner, Dandridge

Absent: Samkian

Also Present: Garth Schultz (Environmental Services Analyst and Staff Liaison)
Maria Sanders (Environmental Services Analyst)
Janet Abelson (Council Liaison)

1. Comments from the Public on non-Agenda Items

Paloma Pavel, El Cerrito resident, expressed interest in partnering with the Committee on future environmental film showings. She also introduced her partner, Carl Anthony who also spoke briefly about the interest in environmental film showings. Members Spitalnik and Eggherman expressed interest in the film concept, and Mr. Eggherman shared that the new High School Auditorium could be a good venue.

2. Approval of Minutes

Moved and seconded (Weinstein/Spitalnik) to adopt the Minutes from the Special Committee meetings of February 9, 2010 and Special sub-committee meetings on February 25 and March 2. Passed unanimously.

3. Presentation by Supervisor Gioia

Chair Eggherman introduced Contra Costa County District 1 Supervisor John Gioia. Mr. Gioia spoke about his roles in local agencies such as the Bay Area Air Quality Management District and discussed some of the work the District has undertaken. He also discussed efforts at the County level to improve integrated pest management practices via new appointments to the Integrated Pest Management Board. He expressed interest in learning more about what the EQC is concerned with and generally engaging in an ongoing community conversation on such topics as climate change and integrated pest management. Mr. Gioia and the Committee discussed topics including the potential for banning new wood-burning fireplaces, pesticides (particularly household use of), the PACE energy financing program, community service agriculture, and the work of the EQC's climate action subcommittee.

4. Community gardens discussion & brainstorm

Chair Eggherman introduced the topic and El Cerrito resident Robin Mitchell who discussed the impetus behind her community garden proposal and her interest in helping get a community garden

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started in El Cerrito. The Committee was impressed by and thanked Ms. Mitchell for her work. The committee discussed how the El Cerrito community could move forward on citing a community garden. The EQC agreed that organizing this effort is not within the means of the Committee, but that the Committee's role is to serve as a catalyst for ideas and support for topics like community gardens. After discussion the topic with input from community members and Ms. Mitchell, Mark Miner/Natasha Benjamin moved and seconded that the Committee support the concept of a community garden (or gardens) and have the green team subcommittee serve as the facilitator to work with Ms. Mitchell as details evolve. After discussion and clarification, the motion passed unanimously.

5. Organics program study session and scoping

Chair Egherman introduced Environmental Analyst Garth Schultz who stated that the City is moving forward with plans to collect food scraps and other organic materials commingled with yard waste in the green containers currently used for curbside collection of yard waste. The City is planning on collecting this material on a bi-weekly basis, which is unusual, but would save money. Mr. Schultz would like to hear the Committee's and the public's questions, concerns, and suggestions regarding this new program, and suggested that the Committee consider a study session on this topic at the next regular meeting. This item was set for discussion on Tuesday, April 13.

6. Calendar of events & Committee community involvement

Mr. Schultz presented a calendar of environmental events to facilitate the EQC considering if and how it would prioritize community involvement in them. The Committee discussed and announced various events and added some events to the list. This item will be periodically revisited at future meetings.

7. Committee and Liaison Announcements and Future Agenda Items

Chari Egherman noted that, because the Committee is involved in many activities, that subcommittee reports will not automatically be included in future agendas, and that subcommittees seeking Committee feedback, direction or decisions need to let the Chair and the Staff Liaison know, ideally two weeks or more before the meeting in which action is desired.

Councilmember Abelson reported that the Council adopted a resolution in the Retrofit Bay Area regional energy retrofit program implemented by the County to provide home energy retrofit services throughout the County. She also reported that the mid-year budget review shows a deficit and that the City is going to be tightening its belt.

Mr. Schultz announced the annual Board, Commission and Committee dinner and that the Committee will have the opportunity to review and comment on the new draft Animal Ordinance in May.

Maria Sanders passed out a draft of the climate action survey and asked for the Committee's help with review and revisions.

Chair Egherman announced Earth Day (April 24) and that the Committee should have a significant presence.

8. Adjournment

Chair Egherman adjourned the meeting at 9:20 p.m.

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 – Thursday from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.