



MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, January 13, 2009, 7:00 p.m.
El Cerrito City Hall
City Council Chambers
10890 San Pablo Avenue

Chair Eggherman called the meeting to order at 7 PM.

Roll Call

Present: Committee Members Brown-Lechner, Eggherman, Rome, and Samkian

Absent: Members Weinstein and Miner

Council Liaison Janet Abelson and Staff Liaison Garth Schultz present. Melanie Mintz, Environmental Services Manager also present.

1. Comments from the Public on non-Agenda Items

None.

2. Approval of Minutes

Member Samkian moved approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting on December 9, 2008, seconded by member Rome. Committee voted unanimously to approve the Minutes.

3. 2009 Chair and Vice-Chair Nominations and Selection

Committee considered nominations for 2009 Chair and Vice-Chair. Current Chair Eggherman nominated himself for Chair. Councilmember Abelson noted that Staff Liaison Schultz should run the Chair election and the newly elected Chair should run the Vice Chair election. Chair Eggherman handed the running of Chair elections to Schultz who asked for any additional nominations for Chair. Hearing none, Schultz asked to hear votes in favor of Mr. Eggherman as 2009 Chair. There was unanimous approval of Mr. Eggherman for 2009 Chair.

Chair Eggherman proceeded to seek nominations for Vice Chair, and nominated Mr. Miner. Ms. Samkian nominated herself for Vice Chair. Discussion was tabled to later in the agenda pending Mr. Miner's potential attendance, as it was unknown at the time whether he would be able to attend the meeting.

Vice Chair election was revisited at the end of the meeting. Chair Eggherman noted two nominations on the table. Hearing no further nominations, Chair proceeded to hear votes for Samkian and Miner. Samkian received three votes from Eggherman, Rome, and Brown-Lechner. Samkian abstained. Samkian was elected 2009 Vice Chair.

COMMUNICATION ACCESS INFORMATION

To request meeting minutes in large print, Braille, or on cassette or CD, please call Garth Schultz, Staff Liaison at 215-4351 (voice).

4. Sub-Committee Reports

The three sub-committees working on the development of the Committee's main priority projects reported out on their progress. The Committee discussed various aspects of each project and gave feedback to the sub-committees who will do further work developing their projects before the February meeting. Below is a summary of the items discussed.

Create a recognition program for environmentally outstanding residents and businesses.

See 1/13/09 Report section titled "Recognition program questions" for items discussed at meeting. Member Rome noted that she and Mr. Miner had several questions for staff regarding resources available to the Committee to implement a project like this. Schultz indicated he would be able to answer all of the questions listed at a sub-committee meeting. The Committee discussed timing the recognition program so that awards/recognition would coincide with Earth Day 2010. The Committee also discussed how the recognition program will differ from and complement the Bay Area Green Business Program and how to keep administration of the recognition program from becoming burdensome. There was also brief discussion on how to include schools, what prizes or incentives might be appropriate, and what City resources are available to the Committee as it pursues its projects.

Incentivize local businesses to provide recyclable take-out containers and reduce packaging.

See 1/13/09 Report section titled "Proposal by the EQC Subcommittee to Reduce Non-Biodegradable To-Go Packaging" for details of sub-committee work. Schultz stated that the City is already a member of the California Product Stewardship Council. Schultz also stated that there may be grant opportunities available for supporting this project and that he would forward those opportunities on to the sub-committee members. Regarding a policy "to encourage reduction of non-renewable to-go containers..." Environmental Services Manager Mintz noted that this would be an area where the Committee could draft the policy with the help of staff and then send it to the City Council for review and potential adoption. Schultz also suggested incorporating reuse and reduction as components of the program in order to further reduce waste, since there is no current program to collect biodegradable take-out containers in El Cerrito. Ms. Rome pointed out that the production of biodegradable containers is likely to have less impact than non-biodegradable ones. Councilmember Abelson noted that another approach could be to work with restaurants to serve appropriately sized portions, thereby reducing the need for take-out containers.

Increase incentives for solar panel installation and energy efficiency measures for homes and businesses.

See 1/13/09 Report section titled "Incentives for Solar Efficiency Retrofits" for details of sub-committee work. Chair Egherman briefly reported that the sub-committee working on this project had met, and that it has become clear that this is a long-term project with many unknowns, such as movement on the State and Federal levels to promote similar goals, and the current limitations of the economic situation. Member Rome suggested that, at the least, the Committee could gather information for the El Cerrito community and promote any resources that are currently available. Egherman noted that the sub-committee was meeting again the following day, and that more substantive ideas would likely arise from their discussions.

Councilmember Abelson noted that the Committee could do more work on these and other projects if the Committee size was increased by a few members. She noted that the Council was interviewing candidates and making selections for a number of Boards, Commissions, and Committees during the coming Council meetings, and that this would be an ideal time to increase

membership on the Committee if needed. Schultz stated that this should be discussed as an agenda item at the next meeting.

5. Council / Staff / Liaison Updates

Councilmember Abelson reported out that the Council had conducted Board, Commission and Committee interviews at the last meeting, and announced the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr celebration and gave a handout to the Committee (see 1/13/09 Report).

Staff Liaison Schultz invited members of the Committee to participate in planning for the 2009 Earth Day Celebration. He also notified the Committee that the new recycling program is set to start in Mid-February, and that the City is holding an Open House at the El Cerrito Recycling Center on Saturday, February 28th, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. to help educate the community about the new program. Mr. Schultz welcomed Committee member attendance and assistance at that event.

Environmental Services Manager Mintz reported that new bicycle lockers were being installed at the Community Center and that discount Bike Link Cards, which are used to access the electronic lockers, will start being sold at a discounted rate of \$5 for a \$20 card.

Members Brown-Lechner and Samkian reported out on the Committee partnership with the League of Women Voters to show the film “Thirst at the Cerrito Theater on March 1 at 2 p.m.

6. Adjournment

Chair Egherman adjourned the meeting at 8:37.