

MINUTES



REGULAR MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, February 10, 2009, 7:00 p.m.

El Cerrito City Hall

City 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: Committee Members Brown-Lechner, Eggherman, Rome, Samkian, and Miner

Absent: Members Weinstein

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 – 7:05

(Each speaker is limited to a maximum of 2 minutes for comment on non-agenda items. Comments regarding items on the agenda may be brought during discussion of those items and are subject to same time limits. Please let the Chair know if you have a comment on a particular agenda item.)

Trish Clifford announced herself as a Richmond Resident who is helping to promote an upcoming “Awakening the Dreamer” event in El Cerrito.

2. Approval of Minutes – 7:10

Member Brown-Lechner moved approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting on January 13, 2008, seconded by member Samkian. Committee voted unanimously to approve the Minutes.

3. Sub-Committee Reports – 7:15

Incentivize local businesses to provide recyclable take-out containers and reduce packaging. Members Brown-Lechner and Samkian reported out that they are considering applying for an EPA Solid Waste Assistance Grant to support their project and are also considering a Recyclemore mini-grant if the EPA grant funds do not get awarded. Grant funds could cover outreach about the program and the purchase of reusable takeout containers promoting the program for distribution to residents at City events. Given that the Lt. Governor is pushing a state-wide ban on Styrofoam takeout containers, member Brown-Lechner reported that this sub-committee is seeking a “kinder” approach to dealing with the take-out packaging issue. The sub-committee is interested in doing a pre-survey of restaurants to gather more information, possibly during Earth Day as a service project.

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 215-4354 (voice) at least FIVE (5) WORKING DAYS NOTICE PRIOR TO THE MEETING to ensure availability.

Create a recognition program for environmentally outstanding residents and businesses.

Committee member Miner reported out that he had attended the recent regular meeting of the Economic Development Board (EDB) and had pitched the idea of an EQC – EDB collaboration on green business recognition as a part of the EDB’s annual award program, the next round of which is coming up in Fall 2009. He also reported out about his research into the number of El Cerrito businesses currently participating in the Bay Area Green Business Program (26). After a brief discussion of next steps to be taken to develop a local recognition program for green businesses that complements the Bay Area Green Business Program, Mr. Miner offered to call El Cerrito Green Businesses to gather more information that could help the Committee determine its program approach.

Mr. Miner also reported out that he had not found any examples of a residential or “lifestyle” recognition program. The Committee briefly discussed how this part of the recognition program could be similar to the annual *Green Homes Tour* with people opening their homes as examples of green living, and potentially as a fundraiser for Committee programs. The Committee determined that it should gather more information about public interest in such a program at the upcoming Earth Day Celebration in April. Overall, Mr. Miner and Ms. Rome committed to contacting businesses and developing criteria for the recognition programs.

Increase incentives for solar panel installation and energy efficiency measures for homes and businesses. Mr. Schultz reported out on behalf of this sub-committee that there was little to report out except that the issue is complicated and largely dependent on state and federal actions that might support this type of program. This sub-committee is scheduled to meet again and will have more to report on at the next meeting.

Cerrito Theater Showing of “Thirst”, Co-Sponsorship with the League of Women Voters. Member Samkian reported out that this sub-committee is pre-viewing the film at her house on February 17 and the film is scheduled for showing at the Cerrito Theater on Sunday, March 1 at 2 p.m. The free event will be open to the public and will be followed by a discussion led by the film-makers.

4. Summertime Public Involvement Event

Staff-member Schultz brought up the concept of a summertime community event geared towards engaging the community in the Committee’s programs. The Committee briefly discussed and voiced support for the concept, the details of which will be developed during future meetings.

5. Committee Recruitment Update and Expansion

Councilmember Abelson reported out on the process and timeline for additional appointments to the Committee. Committee members expressed interest to Ms. Abelson in growing the size of the Committee through future appointments in a way that allows the Committee to incorporate new members without losing momentum on programs, such as by growing to 10 members in the near-term and gradually expanding to the full 15 members during the course of the next year.

6. Council / Staff / Liaison Updates and Upcoming Agenda Items

Councilmember Abelson reported out that the Council has been busy working on various redevelopment projects, and interviewing Board, Commission, and Committee candidates. Ms. Abelson also reported out about statewide implementation of AB32 and SB375.

Staff-members Schultz and Mintz reported out on various Environmental Services Division updates including: the implementation of the new Residential Recycling Program; planning for the

2009 Earth Day Celebration; strategic planning for the Environmental Services Division; the concept of a volunteer Environmental Corps; pending budget requests for the EQC; and the LED streetlight pilot project on San Pablo Avenue in front of City Hall.

7. Adjournment

Chair Eggherman adjourned the meeting at 8:50 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 Branch of the Contra Costa County Library located at 6510 Stockton Avenue, El Cerrito, during Library business hours.