



MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, April 14, 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: Members Brown-Lechner, Eggherman, Rome, Miner, Weinstein and Samkian

Absent: None

Also Present: Garth Schultz (Staff Liaison), Janet Abelson (Council Liaison) and Melanie Mintz (alternate Staff Liaison).

1. Comments from the Public on non-Agenda Items

(Note: the following Public Comment Items actually occurred during the Membership agenda item; this is the appropriate location for reporting on their content).

Rajan Mutialu expressed his interest in being involved with Committee activities as a volunteer and participating in projects. The Committee responded with interest in engaging volunteers and expressed interest in formally determining guidelines for volunteer involvement at a future meeting.

Mister Phillips introduced himself as a candidate for Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors, District 1, and his interest in learning more about environmental issues of concern to the Committee and the community.

2. Approval of Minutes

Minutes from the Regular Committee meeting on March 10, 2009 approved unanimously.

3. Membership

Rebecca Benassini introduced herself and shared her interest in land use issues and her desire to participate in the Committee's efforts in whatever way possible.

Natasha Benjamin introduced herself as a marine biologist and shared her interests in environmental work.

Frank Wong introduced himself as an environmental engineer and shared his interests in educating the public about environmental issues and in figuring out what the public can do to help.

Sam Krueger introduced himself as having attended several meetings and already expressing interest in joining the Committee. The Committee had a brief discussion about the process for making a membership recommendation to the Council and whether a resume or an application should be required. Councilmember Abelson stated that a resume or application is not customary, but could be requested. Melanie Mintz

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.

reiterated that the City Clerk and the Assistant City Manager are planning to formalize the process for making committee member recommendations to the Council and that the Committee can decide on its own process for the interim. A recommendation for an interim process was made, but not acted on, wherein community members would announce their interest at an initial meeting, would bring in a resume for Committee review at a subsequent meeting, and that, having had a chance to review the candidate's resume, the Committee could vote on recommendation at a following meeting.

Karineh Samkian made a motion to recommend to the Council that Sam Krueger be appointed to the Committee and Mark Miner seconded. The vote was unanimous in favor of recommending Sam Krueger to membership.

4. Sub-Committee Reports

Subcommittee Report #1: Energy Efficiency. Member Weinstein reported out on his attendance at a local government training for renewable energy financing on April 2 (full report is in the 4/14/2009 EQC Reports, online at http://www.el-cerrito.org/archive/2009/attachments/17_report_090414_283.pdf). Mr. Weinstein described the introduction of potential regional and statewide standards for energy efficiency audits. He further recommended that staff make the City's interest in these topics known to other entities in order for El Cerrito to be identified as a potential partner in programs as they are initiated. There was an additional recommendation from the sub-committee to do more outreach about leaky homes as a part of the inefficiency issue.

Subcommittee Report #2: Incentivize local businesses to provide recyclable take-out containers and reduce non-biodegradable packaging. Sub-committee members reported out that they had issued letters and made site visits to a variety of restaurants in order to gather information about the use of recyclable or biodegradable packaging. Members Samkian and Brown-Lechner discussed various aspects of their findings with the Committee, which are described in the 4/14/2009 EQC Reports. The Committee briefly discussed the potential of doing a food packing ordinance as other cities have done in combination with the voluntary approach and how to support businesses that are using environmentally responsible packaging.

Subcommittee Report #3: Green Business and Residential Recognition program: Members Miner and Rome briefly discussed the timeline of action for movement on this project (see 4/14/2009 EQC Reports) and the Committee agreed that the proposed timeline was reasonable. Garth Schultz committed to assisting in the development of the business recognition component of the project by working with Economic Development staff member Dwayne Dalman in order to coordinate with the Economic Development Board's recognition program in the Fall.

Subcommittee Report #4: Quarterly Movie Series: Members of this subcommittee shared plans to do show another film in the coming months and to bring more details back to the Committee as they develop.

5. Earth Day Tabling and Opportunities and Outreach

Garth Schultz announced the City's Earth Day event on April 25, asked for Committee involvement and received feedback in reaching out to the community during this annual event.

6. Date for Summer/Fall EQC Event

Mr. Schultz discussed the idea of an event to publicize Committee projects and to engage the public during an event in late Summer or Fall. After a brief discussion of possible dates and conflicts, Mr. Schultz said he would see if any additional conflicts existed before bringing a final date recommendation.

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

Councilmember Abelson reported that El Cerrito has high transit ridership per a new report. She also briefly discussed the situation with the Cerrito Theater, and that the City will receive stimulus funds for new road construction.

ESD Manager Mintz reported out about the promoting green businesses on the Shop El Cerrito website, Bike to Work Day on May 14, Chair Egherman's update to Council on April 20, the new energy efficiency Capital Investment Program, and the future Green Building Ordinance.

8. Cancel Regular June Meeting on 6/9/2009

The Committee voted unanimously not to cancel the June meeting.

9. Adjournment

Chair Egherman adjourned the meeting at 8:55 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.