



MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, July 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 7:04 PM.

Roll Call

Present: Chair Eggherman, Vice-Chair Samkian, Members Brown-Lechner, Rome, Miner, Weinstein, Krueger, Benjamin, Wong, and Dandridge
Absent: Spitalnik

Also Present: Garth Schultz (Staff Liaison), Janet Abelson (Council Liaison), Maria Sanders (Environmental Services Analyst), Laureteen Brazil (Public Works Management Assistant)

0. Brief Introductions of Committee members

1. Comments from the Public on non-Agenda Items

Miya Katahara from Albany's Sustainability Committee introduced herself and expressed interest in a dialogue about potential points of collaboration between El Cerrito's Environmental Quality Committee (EQC) and Albany's Sustainability Committee. Ms. Katahara provided information and feedback about Albany's recent "Green Albany Day" event.

Mari Gilmore, El Cerrito resident, reported that she attended Albany's Sustainability Committee June Meeting and gathered feedback about Albany's "Green Albany Day" with the interest of sharing that information with the EQC.

Marianne Hegeman, El Cerrito resident, introduced herself as the person who started El Cerrito's City-wide Garage Sale. She summarized her work promoting reuse from creating the Reuse Directory's for Berkeley and Albany to performing larger city-wide reuse studies. Ms. Hegeman stated her interest in helping El Cerrito develop better reuse programs. Mr. Weinstein responded that this might be an interesting opportunity for the Green Teams.

Paloma Pavel, El Cerrito resident, introduced herself as being interested in the Committee's work and potential future membership. She is the President and Founder of Earth House Center, and she just released a book titled *Breakthrough Communities: Sustainability and Justice in the Next American Metropolis*. (Note: this comment was taken out of order).

2. Approval of Minutes

Moved and seconded (Samkian/Weinstein) to adopt the Minutes from the Regular Committee meeting on June 9, 2009. All members except one voted aye; Eggherman abstained. Motion passed.

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.

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3. Sub-Committee Overview

Chair Eggherman led a discussion reviewing the purpose, direction, and membership of existing sub-committees and creating new sub-committees. Mr. Eggherman highlighted the nature of sub-committees as ad-hoc working groups developing the Committee's approach to particular projects and programs. Staff Liaison Schultz asked that sub-committees include staff in their meetings in order to ensure that the EQC and the City Environmental Services Division (ESD) have the greatest potential for beneficial collaboration on all projects.

Existing Subcommittees:

Environmentally Friendly To-go Container Initiative: Samkian and Brown-Lechner
Environmental Recognition Program: Rome, Miner and Wong
Environmental Movie Series: Samkian, Weinstein, Brown-Lechner and Benjamin

New Subcommittees:

Community Green Teams: Weinstein, Wong, Benjamin, Dandridge and Krueger
Outreach Strategy and Planning: Dandridge and Benassini
Municipal Code Revision: Eggherman and Krueger

Samkian reported that the Environmental Movie Series sub-committee had met and reviewed "Who Killed the Electric Car?" and that the sub-committee is interested in contacting the Cerrito Theater in order to hold a community event in September or October, once the new operator has established itself. The sub-committee would like suggestions about potential speakers for the event. Benjamin noted that "Who Killed the Electric Car?" has a speaker resource list that the sub-committee could use.

Rome reported that she has been working on the residential component of the Environmental Recognition Program, and distributed drafts of the self-recognition survey for the Committee review and comments. Wong raised the question of what the "recognition" entails; Rome responded that it is still being determined. Committee members provided feedback on the survey. Wong commented that the Recognition program could also be an excellent education opportunity. Benassini commented that the Committee could have schools send the survey home to families. Brown-Lechner and Schultz commented that the survey is a great start, and thanked Rome for her work. Council-member Abelson commented that it would be a good idea for EQC members to take a draft version of the survey in order to refine it before final printing. Miner expressed interest in including commitments as a component of the survey. Schultz reported that the Economic Development Board (EDB) is meeting on August 6 and that Liaison Miner may want to attend to get more information about the plans to include a Green Business category in the EDB's upcoming business recognition program.

Eggherman commented that it might be a good idea to have sub-committees notify the greater Committee about sub-committee meeting times in order to provide the opportunity for members to join other sub-committees. Through discussion it was determined that this might be an issue in terms of the Brown Act (i.e. accidentally reaching quorum for sub-committees) and that it is more ideal for sub-committee members to consistently participate in sub-committee work.

Ms. Hegeman indicated an interest in seeing the Committee engage in shared composting knowledge locally. Weinstein commented that this could be a good project for the Green Teams. Krueger indicated interest in participating in the Green Team sub-committee.

4. West Contra Costa Integrated Waste Management Authority Mini-grant Application

Samkian announced that the Environmentally Friendly To-Go Container Initiative had completed a final draft of an application for funding under the West Contra Costa Integrated Waste Management Authorities Mini-grant program. She asked for the Committee to review and possibly adopt a motion to approve submittal. She reported that after getting feedback from the Committee during the previous meeting she looked into sourcing reusable to-go containers as per the Committee's recommendations. She settled on a US made, BPA free plastic container that is as stain resistant as plastic can be. Samkian made a motion to

approval submittal of the Mini-grant application; Brown-Lechner seconded. Committee discussed details of the application, the funding source, and the Mini-grant program. Rome asked if the grant budget including printing on the lid of the container; Samkian responded that it does. Benjamin asked if it is likely that the grant will be awarded; Samkian responded that it is. Wong asked if there will be a charge for the containers; Brown-Lechner responded that this might be inappropriate, since grant funds would cover the cost of the containers. There was a suggestion to have recipients of the containers sign a pledge to use the containers for their intended purpose. Benassini asked whether restaurants were ready to accept these containers; Samkian and Brown-Lechner responded that almost all of the restaurants originally surveyed would. There was also a suggestion that restaurants could issue a small credit for using a reusable container (like coffee shops often do) and that a list of businesses that are friendly to the Reusable To-Go Container Initiative could be put on the website. Brown-Lechner reported that the ban on Styrofoam containers in the State Legislature is still pending approval, and that Committee's Initiative, because it is a voluntary commitment, is a good first step for El Cerrito, particularly because of the potential additional cost to business. Dandridge complimented the grant writers on a well written document.

Vote to approve the motion to submit the Mini-grant application was unanimous.

5. Community Green Teams (Fall Tree Planting)

Weinstein introduced this agenda item and clarified that the Green Teams are not only about planting trees but also about many other potential projects benefiting environmental quality in El Cerrito. Schultz introduced Laurenteen Brazil from the Public Works Department, who provided an overview of tree planting in El Cerrito and the opportunity for the Committee to help the Department get 200 trees into the ground by February (point of clarification: this number was revised to 175 after the meeting). Brazil provided several documents to the Committee regarding trees in El Cerrito. Brown-Lechner asked if City provided trees can be planting only in front yards; Brazil responded that they may only be planted in the public-right-of-way (or planting strip) next to the street, which is technically City property. Rome asked if residents may plant what they choose in back yards; Brazil referred her to the list of approved street trees (the Tree List). Weinstein indicated that the Green-Team subcommittee should take on the tree planting opportunity as a Green Team project. Samkian suggested that National Night Out could be an opportunity to promote the Green Teams. Brazil commented that people who are not able to commit to maintaining trees in front of their own homes could seek neighbor support for this commitment. Dandridge expressed concerns about some of the content on the Tree List; Schultz responded that there is a Tree Committee that will hopefully soon be seated to work on revising and updating the Tree List. Samkian commented that the EQC should encourage the Tree Committee to make improvements to the Tree List. Dandridge asked if the free trees were available to both residents and businesses; Brazil responded that they are, except along San Pablo Avenue because of the upcoming Streetscape reconstruction that will include new trees. Krueger commented that the Green-Team sub-committee has discussed imitating El Cerrito's Earth Day projects on a neighborhood basis, like the "block captains" in Albany. He suggested that the tree planting project can be the framework to help energize neighborhood leaders around "greening". Miner asked Brazil where the Committee could help in this effort the most; Brazil responded that organizing plantings would be the most useful as there is a dearth of people signed up to have free trees planted. Weinstein reiterated that the Green Teams should do more than the tree plantings. He said that, though it may take time to get the Teams established, additional Green Team endeavors such as improvements to the Hillside Natural Area or the proposal by Ms. Hegeman should be sought sooner rather than later.

Members of the EQC with additional questions about planting free trees may call or email Laurenteen Brazil at (510) 215-4369 and lbrazil@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us.

6. Outreach Strategy and Planning (Fall Outreach Event)

Schultz provided an overview about the Fall Outreach Event concept, and offered that he and Egherman both feel it is a good idea to have someone craft an approach regarding the EQC's overall outreach strategy. The Committee heard from Ms. Katahara from Albany's Sustainability Committee regarding feedback from Green Albany Day. The Committee discussed details of the event, what the draw should be, and the overall point of the event. Egherman provided an overview of what the event might look like. There was a long

discussion about the details of the event culminating in a proposal to hold the event from 12 p.m. – 2 p.m. at City Hall on October 17, incorporating music and food, preceded by a tree planting event held earlier that day. There was brief discussion about potentially holding the community event at Arlington Park in order to foster a more family friendly atmosphere. Most members expressed a preference for City Hall since the green features could help add to the draw. There was an informal vote in favor of the above stated proposal.

7. Municipal Code Revision – Animals Section

Schultz provided an overview of this item to form a sub-committee to draft up a list of concerns and suggestions for the Planning Division to potentially incorporate in its upcoming revision to this specific section of the Municipal Code. Egherman and Krueger volunteered to sit on this sub-committee. Rome commented that she would like to see pro and con points addressed in the sub-committee's analysis.

8. Committee and Liaison Announcements and Future Agenda Items

Councilmember Abelson reported on the re-opening of the Cerrito Theater and progress towards redevelopment of the vacant Target store site. She announced that August 4th is National Night Out and that City Hall had been recently recognized as a Green Business and is nearing completion of LEED Certification.

Schultz announced an opportunity for the EQC to send representatives to the Association of Bay Area Governments' Green Business Program Recognition Event the same week as the meeting. Schultz also provided an update about progress toward food-waste composting, announcing that the option to compost food-waste with yard waste should be available in calendar year 2010.

Maria Sanders announced that the City is in partnership with Rising Sun Energy Center's CYES energy efficiency audit program and passed out a flyer about this and other energy efficiency programs, as well as a sign-up for sheet for the CYES program. Ms. Sanders reported that she is working as the lead public agency staffer on an EPA Climate Showcase Grant in partnership with the cities of Albany, San Pablo and Piedmont in order to get funding for the development of energy management and community energy efficiency programs. She also reported that she is working with the City's Green Team to do internal energy management and measure energy efficiency performance. She has already identified 20% energy savings for the Public Safety building from energy efficiency measures implanted during the past year. She is also managing the 5-year investment plan to reinvest energy efficiency savings into future energy efficiency improvements which will result in additional savings and energy usage reductions, such as a lighting retrofit for all of the recreation clubhouses. Ms. Sanders is also taking the lead on the City's strategy for the Development of a Climate Action Plan and will present additional information about this topic at the upcoming meeting.

9. Adjournment

Chair Egherman adjourned the meeting 9:21 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. and online at <http://www.el-cerrito.org/gov/eqc.html> .