



# MINUTES

## SPECIAL MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, August 11, 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 7:03 PM.

### Roll Call

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

Absent: Member Rome

Also Present: Janet Abelson (Council Liaison), Maria Sanders (Environmental Services Analyst).

### 1. Comments from the Public on non-Agenda Items

None.

### 2. Approval of Minutes

Moved and seconded (Samkian/Benassini) to adopt the Minutes from the Regular Committee meeting on July 14, 2009. Unanimous.

### 3. Climate Action Planning Process

Maria Sanders made a presentation on the results of the City of El Cerrito's Greenhouse Gas Inventory prepared in spring of 2008 and subsequent progress in reducing greenhouse gases from municipal operations. Ms. Sanders then led a discussion regarding next steps for developing the City of El Cerrito's Climate Action and Resiliency Plan and in engaging the community in the planning process. Ellen Spitalnik had questions about accounting for upstream emissions in the inventory. Rebecca Benassini mentioned that it would be good to include cost-effectiveness calculations when developing the list of greenhouse gas reduction measures. David Weinstein asked how the EQC's recommendation to create an energy efficiency and solar program would tie into the Climate Action Plan. Ms. Sanders responded that engaging the community in energy efficiency and renewable energy procurement would be critical to reducing greenhouse gases, and there are several regional programs that have applied for funding to extend their energy efficiency and renewable energy services to El Cerrito. Councilmember Abelson pointed out that the Council has authorized staff to develop a greenhouse gas reduction target and to prepare a plan. She asked for clarification on how public participation will be used in the development of the plan. Ms. Sanders responded that the planning process would be a good time to educate various sectors of the community on greenhouse gas reduction measures, and that she is seeking EQC feedback on the outreach process. Ron Eggherman made a motion to create a Climate Action Plan ad-hoc subcommittee to work with Environmental Services staff on the Climate Action planning process. Ellen Spitalnik, Mildred Dandridge, Mark Miner, Rebecca Benassini, and Sam Krueger volunteered to serve on the subcommittee. Councilmember Abelson volunteered to serve as a Council Liaison to the subcommittee.

### 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.*

#### 4. Sub-Committee Reports

The Committee heard updates from the existing ad-hoc subcommittees:

- *El Cerrito's Environmentally Friendly To-Go Container Initiative:* Ms. Samkian reported that the EQC's application was accepted by RecycleMore staff but will need to be approved by the West Contra Costa Integrated Waste Management Board when they meet in September.
- *Green Business and Residential Recognition program:* Mr. Miner outlined the timeline for the survey that residents can submit to nominate themselves for recognition. The final survey will be made available in a variety of print and internet forms in time for the October 17<sup>th</sup> EQC event. The winners will be announced in February or March. Ms. Samkian suggested making sure the survey was included in the normal City communication channels (like the quarterly newsletter and the garbage bill inserts). Frank Wong also discussed ways to make links in the web version of the survey to websites with appropriate environmental education.
- *Environmental Movie Series:* Ms. Samkian reported that the subcommittee will hold off contacting the theater until the new operators have a chance to get it fully operational. She will contact the theater to discuss how four environmental movie nights a year would fit into the Theater's overall community event schedule.
- *Community Green Teams:* Mr. Weinstein reported that the first Green Team effort would be focused on organizing a morning neighborhood tree planting effort on October 17. All members of the subcommittee have volunteered to be team captains. He passed out a draft flyer that will be used to recruit participants. Natasha Benjamin asked that all EQC members consider being Green Team Leaders in their neighborhoods. Mr. Miner volunteered to do so. Ms. Spitalnik asked that the subcommittee email the finished flyer to the EQC members so that they can use the flyers to recruit people. Mr. Weinstein reiterated that the big task ahead is to recruit Team Leaders that would organize their neighbors. Mr. Krueger passed out a draft of tips for organizing a neighborhood for street tree planting.
- *Outreach Strategy and Planning (Fall Outreach Event):* Ms. Benassini announced that the EQC Fall Outreach Event would take place in the City Hall Plaza from 12pm to 2pm on Saturday October 17, immediately after the Green Team Tree Planting event. She passed out the To Do list. Members discussed ideas for kids' activities, including an arts table and a short environmental movie like "The Story of Stuff." Suggestions were made for a band.
- *Municipal Code Revision – Animals Section:* This was discussed under the next section.

#### 5. Municipal Code Revision – Animals Section

Mr. Krueger presented his research on code language regarding chickens. In addition, Ms. Brown-Lechner presented research regarding miniature dairy goats based on a City of Seattle ordinance; and Mr. Eggherman presented his research on urban beekeeping ordinances. Mr. Eggherman stressed that the role of the EQC on this matter was not to develop the ordinance but to identify the issues and make recommendations to the Planning Department as they undertake this revision. Councilmember Abelson mentioned that the Planning Department has started to review the code and she recommended that the subcommittee contact Jennifer Carmen. The subcommittee concluded that they were "pro-domestic animals." They were not yet ready to advance recommendations to the Planning Department as further thought was needed on issues of enclosures, siting on urban lots, number of animals or hives, safeguards for good stewardship of the animals, and resolution of neighbor complaints. Members of the EQC discussed these issues. Linda Schneider, member of the public, commended the committee on their work and stressed that chickens make good pets, aren't all that noisy, are important for sustainable food production, and that there are a lot of on-line source to help educate the public on care for urban domestic livestock.

**6. Committee and Liaison Announcements and Future Agenda Items**

The next meeting will be September 8<sup>th</sup>. Councilmember Abelson provided an update on the Measure A street paving program, as well as the effects of the State's budget shortfall on the City's budget. Ms. Sanders reported that the City of El Cerrito will be applying for Federal Stimulus funding through the California Energy Commission's Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Program. These funds will help the City make energy efficiency improvements throughout its operations.

**7. Adjournment**

Mr. Eggherman adjourned the meeting 9:05 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.*