



MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, September 8, 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 7:02 PM.

Roll Call

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

Absent: None

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

1. Comments from the Public on non-Agenda Items

None.

2. Approval of Minutes

Moved and seconded (Samkian/Weinstein) to adopt the Minutes from the Regular Committee meeting on July 14, 2009. Passed unanimously. Followed by brief discussion about why the Minutes listed the meeting as a Special meeting.

3. Brown Act Review

Staff Liaison Schultz gave a brief overview about the specifics of the Brown Act and how it pertains to Committee business.

4. Sub-Committee Reports

The Committee heard updates from existing subcommittees:

- *El Cerrito's Environmentally Friendly To-Go Container Initiative:* Ms. Samkian reported that the September Board meeting for the West Contra Costa County Integrated Waste Management Authority was cancelled, so the Board unable to vote on approval of the Mini-Grant. The next Board meeting is set for 10/8. The sub-committee is planning to meet to launch the program prior to the Committee's 10/17 event, and will work with staff to get this accomplished.
- *Green Business and Residential Recognition program:* Mr. Miner reported that the residential survey has been established. He also reported that the sub-committee is working on coordinating the business recognition part of the program in concert with the Contra Costa County Green Business Program. He and the Committee discussed several ideas for business recognition option, including recognizing entire classes of services (i.e. auto repair) and a reception for all EC Green Businesses.

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.

- *Environmental Movie Series*: Ms. Samkian reported that she is still waiting on details regarding the next date for the movie event.
- *Community Green Teams*: Mr. Weinstein reported out about the poster, postcard, and email list announcement for the Green Team event. He and the Committee also discussed various details of the tree planting event on 10/17 and potential future projects, such as trash pickups and others. The Committee noted that there was a lot to cover on this topic prior to the next regular meeting. Mr. Weinstein made a motion to hold a Special Meeting to deal with this topic on Tuesday, September 15th, at 7 P.M, location TBD. Seconded by Mr. Krueger. Passed unanimously.
- *Outreach Strategy and Planning (Fall Outreach Event)*: Ms. Benassini reported that the Arts and Culture Commission is having an event directly following the EQC event on 10/17. She and the Committee discussed the potential synergies between the two events, and the possibility of joint promotion. The Committee also brainstormed and discussed details of the 10/17 event, such as logistics, programming, outreach, and press releases.
- *Municipal Code Revision – Animals Section*: This was discussed under the next section.
- *Climate Action Planning and Outreach and Advisory Sub-committee*: Ms. Spitalnik reported that the next meeting of this sub-committee is scheduled for 9/22 between 6-7 pm. She gave an overview of the items under consideration by this committee, including connections to the Planning Commission and the Design Review Board. Mr. Miner reported out about a Low Carbon Diet Group that he is attending. Mr. Weinstein commented that, with so much work being undertaken by all of the various sub-committees, there needs to be good coordination among all of them with regards to community outreach, so that people aren't inundated by various contacts from the same entity (i.e. the Committee).

5. Spending Authorization

Staff Liaison Schultz asked the Committee to authorize spending from the Committee's \$5,000 2009-2010 budget for a number of items including:

- Printing the Environmental Recognition Survey
- Purchasing incentive prizes for the Recognition Program
- Printing promotional flyers and posters for the 10/17 events
- Purchasing reusable to-go containers for the 10/17 event
- Purchasing food for the 10/17 event
- Printing the Green Team recruitment brochure
- Design, printing, and postage of ½ of a postcard announcing the 10/17 event

The Committee discussed spending money on these items, especially the postcard (which was estimated at \$1,500 for the Committee's share) and asked a number of clarifying questions of Mr. Schultz. Mr. Wong made a motion to approve all expenditures at a total cost not to exceed \$3,150. Mr. Miner seconded the motion. The motion was followed by more discussion about the merits of spending more than half of the Committee's budget in the first half of the fiscal year. Motion passed unanimously.

6. Municipal Code Revision – Animals Section

Mr. Krueger presented his research on urban chicken rearing. He noted that urban chicken rearing is on the rise and that the main issue at hand is whether they are a disturbance or not. Per Mr. Krueger, who has experience with chickens in his neighborhood; they can be noisy, which is an issue that the Committee ought to address in its concerns for the Planning Division.

Linda Schneider, El Cerrito resident, brought her neighbors Diane and Destry to share their experience regarding her backyard chickens. They stated that they appreciated the shared experience of having

chickens locally, and that the noise is not an issue (compared to BART and aggressive dogs in the neighborhood). Mr. Schneider commented that permits for chickens should not include fees. Ms. Samkian noted discussing these issues with her neighbors during National Night Out. Ms. Spitalnik and Mr. Miner had questions about neighbor consent for chickens. Ms. Schneider commented that there are many other public noise issues that don't require neighbor consent (i.e. dogs, loud music). Mr. Krueger replied that chickens are somewhat different because they can't be turned "off". This was followed by a discussion about the role of the Committee in relation to this Municipal Code change, as well as a discussion about the potential for disease spread. The discussion closed with a stated goal by this sub-committee to have a final version, laying out the rationale about why the Committee supports revision of the Municipal Code to allow chickens, goats, and bees in El Cerrito, ready for consideration at a future meeting.

7. Committee and Liaison Announcements and Future Agenda Items

The next meeting will be October 13.

Councilmember Abelson reported on the status of the City's budget with respect to the State budget and summarized a number of issues of concern and options for dealing with these issues in the future.

8. Adjournment

Mr. Eggherman adjourned the meeting at 9:10 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.