

MINUTES

Eugene Sustainability Commission
McNutt Room—Eugene City Hall—777 Pearl Street
Eugene, Oregon

September 21, 2011
5:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Josh Skov, Chair; Steve Newcomb, Jessica Bloomfield, Shawn Boles, Howard Bonnett, Art Farley, Dave Funk, Kathi Jaworski, Rusty Rexius, Sue Wolling, commissioners; Babe O’Sullivan, Matt McRae, City Manager’s Office.

ABSENT: Alan Zelenka, Chris Anglin, commissioners.

Mr. Skov called the September 21, 2011, meeting of the Sustainability Commission to order. Introductions were made.

1. Opening – Agenda Review, Approval of Minutes

Mr. Skov adjusted the agenda by moving item 6, work plan, to item 8.

Ms. Jaworski, seconded by Mr. Newcomb, moved to approve the July 20, 2011, minutes as submitted. The motion passed, 4:0; Mr. Bonnett, Mr. Rexius, Mr. Farley, and Mr. Funk abstaining as they were not present at the meeting.

2. Public Comment

Mike Sussman thanked the commission and expressed appreciation for the City’s Climate and Energy Action Plan (CEAP). He said that many residents were “quite interested” in what the commission was doing. They were supportive of its work in developing proactive solutions to the issues of climate change and energy uncertainty. They were watching the commission to ensure that it “kept to the path” and took a broad view of the future to ensure that the community was not just responding to those issues but was preparing for what he believed was “an even better life” by taking proactive steps.

3. Items from commission and staff

Mr. Rexius reported that he and Mr. Boles were involved in the Envision Eugene process as members of an *ad hoc* committee working on the issue of the industrial lands supply, which would make a recommendation to City Manager Jon Ruiz.

Mr. Rexius reported the City intended to launch its commercial food waste collection program in November and his firm would receive those materials for processing. Mr. Farley asked if the program was a move toward residential curbside pickup. Mr. Rexius hoped it was but cautioned that was a complicated thing to accomplish.

Mr. Bonnett said he missed the last commission meeting because he was in Vancouver, Canada visiting his friend David Suzuki and discussed sustainability issues with him. He would share Mr. Suzuki’s

comments at a future meeting. He observed that Mr. Suzuki had twice been voted as the most trusted living Canadian citizen and other Canadians frequently hailed Mr. Suzuki on the street and thanked him for his contributions.

Mr. Bonnett reported that he had the opportunity to use the bicycle improvements recently constructed along Willamette Street and they had worked very well and increased his feeling of safety.

Ms. Wolling noted the first “Sunday Streets” event held on September 18 in the Whiteaker neighborhood. She thought it was a good start in promoting more active transportation.

Mr. Boles reported that the Integrated Energy Resource Plan Advisory Committee would meet for the last time the following day and finalize its recommendations to the Eugene Water & Electric Board (EWEB) commissioners.

Enlarging on Mr. Rexius’s earlier remarks, Mr. Boles reported that the committee had “tightened up” the economic opportunity analysis using the Joint Elected Officials Economic Development Plan as a “feeder” document and augmented that analysis with information about food as a basis for industrial activity.

Ms. Jaworski encouraged the commissioners to attend the upcoming Neighborhood Summit scheduled for September 24 at 8:30 a.m. The event focus was on neighborhood democracy, and the keynote speaker was Jim Beers, former director of the Seattle Department of Neighborhoods.

Ms. Jaworski commended the recent staff report provided to commissioners by Ms. O’Sullivan.

Ms. O’Sullivan updated the commission on her attendance at recent conferences and workshops.

Ms. O’Sullivan noted the launch of the Climate Communication Strategy on September 20. A consultant had been hired to begin the research and design for such a strategy. She expected the final report would be completed in December and she would share its findings with the commission.

Ms. O’Sullivan reported that the City Council interviewed three candidates for the commission vacancy on September 19 and would make a decision soon. She shared information about upcoming commission training opportunities. Ms. O’Sullivan invited suggestions about the content, format, and timing of the staff report.

Mr. McRae reported on the September 19 joint meeting between the City Council and EWEB commissioners, saying the two bodies discussed the implementation of CEAP by the City and EWEB. He said staff would share a progress report on CEAP with the council at a work session on October 10 as well as the 20-minute neighborhoods assessment and next steps in that effort.

Mr. Newcomb reported that day was the United Way Day of Caring and many volunteers worked at various nonprofit agencies throughout the day. He had volunteered at Pearl Buck Center. He emphasized the importance of such investments to the community.

Mr. Skov reported that he had delivered the commission’s letter to the Neighborhood Leaders Council (NLC) on July 26. He emphasized the importance of building a bridge to the NLC if the commission and council were to work collaboratively. Mr. Funk, who had been working with the NLC’s Committee on Sustainability, concurred.

Mr. Skov had recently learned that EWEB's total installed base of solar installations would soon cross the three megawatt threshold, which was a much higher amount per capita than most United States communities in similar climates. He placed that amount in context by noting a residential system was about two kilowatts. He had also attended EWEB's groundbreaking for its utility-scale, two-megawatt installation at the Baldock Rest Area on I-5 south of Wilsonville.

Mr. Skov referred to AMI (Advanced Meter Infrastructure) and said the recent article in the *Eugene Weekly* on the topic focused on the potential costs and problems related to AMI instead of the opportunities it presented, which included a more nimble and responsive electrical system.

Mr. Rexius reported that the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) was planning improvements to Highway 126 between Greenhill Road and Veneta and recommended that the commission offer comment on the project. He said he was a member of the project team and the next team meeting was October 6 at the Fern Ridge Library.

4. Climate and Energy Action Plan Progress Report

Mr. McRae highlighted elements of the CEAP progress report he provided to the commission via e-mail. He called the commission's attention to the metrics in the report that indicated downward trends in many areas over the past five years, including gasoline use, natural gas use, water use, and waste generation. Commissioners asked questions clarifying the information presented and generally commended the report.

Mr. Rexius suggested a link between the City's gas tax and decreased gasoline consumption. Mr. McRae questioned the impact of a three-cent gas tax on consumption but said he would include the date the tax was instituted for context.

Mr. McRae requested input on the report's organization and content and solicited thoughts on the overall progress suggested by the report. He also asked if the commission wished to provide comment to accompany the report when it went to the council on October 10.

Mr. Skov encouraged Mr. McRae to seek comment from other staff and the Planning Commission.

Mr. Boles asked Mr. McRae to prepare a cover sheet summarizing the status of each item in the six different categories. He also asked him to translate the downward trends into equivalent savings. Mr. Skov asked Mr. McRae to include what United States citizens paid for fossil fuels in the report.

Ms. Jaworski advocated for a future discussion of what the report really means with the council to encourage people to act on the information.

Mr. Bonnett suggested CO2 emissions reductions should be considered in terms of totals rather than on a per capita basis to ensure that a certain level of reductions was achieved no matter the growth in the community. He also asked that the baseline for the various charts included in the report be consistent.

The commission discussed a suggestion from Mr. Rexius that the status of items on which no action was taken or that were no longer relevant be identified and removed from the report. Mr. Skov expressed concern about that given the public process that had led to the inclusion of the items. He preferred that the commission revisit those items and use that process to engage the community in dialogue. Mr. McRae suggested the topic specialists could be reassembled for a half-day meeting to review each area and discuss why the items were not progressing. There was general support for Mr. McRae's suggestion.

The commission discussed the message about the progress report it wished to convey to the City Council when it held its work session on the topic on October 10.

Commissioners agreed it was important to highlight the level of collaboration that went into CEAP.

Mr. Boles suggested that the commission inform the council that unless it was willing to commit at a regional or state level to a price signal associated with the production of CO₂ gas the community would not achieve its goals in the necessary time. He acknowledged the challenge of delivering that message but maintained the commission would be derelict not to do so.

Mr. Newcomb questioned whether greenhouse gas was the appropriate metric and suggested a longer term discussion was in order. He believed some areas of CEAP deserved more emphasis and asked Mr. McRae to identify gaps where the community could do more. Mr. McRae suggested natural gas use was one area not being addressed and that the commission could do more to emphasize adaptation issues. He believed the community could be doing more in regard to water conservation and said more funding was needed to maintain the urban forest. He did not know if the urban forest was the best measure of adaptability but it was an easy and inexpensive measure with a multitude of benefits.

Mr. Bonnett supported Mr. Boles' suggestion. He did not want to send the council the message that the outlook was good as long as the City continued to implement CEAP and believed there should be some way to accomplish that without invalidating all the positive things that had been accomplished to date.

Ms. Jaworski liked the idea of highlighting the gaps identified by Mr. McRae. She questioned whether the timing was appropriate for the message Mr. Boles wanted to convey because she wanted the commission's main message to the council to be that the commission was pleased about the resources the City placed toward the implementation of CEAP and that CEAP was making a difference.

Mr. Skov wanted Mr. McRae to spend more time sharing CEAP with others and suggested he ask the council if it would like to see him do more of that. He also wanted Mr. McRae to ask the council if it wished him to report to it on what Mr. Skov characterized as "socially disruptive and economically destructive events related to changes in climate." He recalled the discussion the commission had at its recent retreat about the overlap between CEAP and economic issues and stressed the importance of emphasizing that overlap in the report. Mr. Skov wanted Mr. McRae to connect CEAP to the planning and land use regulatory framework, specifically citing the requirements of Senate Bill 1059.

Returning to Mr. Boles' suggestion, the commission agreed it wished to deliver a more general message of support. Mr. Newcomb questioned whether it was necessary to recommend a price signal now. He believed that such a move had to be made carefully or it would penalize those who were already struggling economically. He said such a move should be made with consideration of human beings and should be targeted at those who could afford to pay it. Mr. Farley thought the commission should take more time to prepare a recommendation about the topic.

Mr. Skov suggested that rather than discuss a price signal, the commission emphasize to the council the importance of linking its policies to CEAP. There was general support for the suggestion. Mr. Funk thought it was important to communicate that more needed to be done. Commissioners concurred.

Ms. Jaworski agreed to draft the commission's communication to the council and Mr. Skov agreed to attend the work session.

5. BREAK

6. Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan

Transportation Manager Rob Inerfeld joined the commission and led it through a PowerPoint presentation on the City's Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan (PBMP). Commissioners asked questions clarifying the presentation, particularly as related to funding sources and funding levels and their relationship to project priorities.

Mr. Boles asked staff to provide the commission with the amount of systems development charge revenues went to bicycle improvements as opposed to other transportation modes. He said discretionary transportation dollars should be used to compensate for the traditional gap in funding for alternate modes.

Commissioners discussed its interest in seeing more funding expended on bicycle and pedestrian projects. Mr. Skov contrasted spending on alternate modes to spending on automobiles. Mr. Rexius suggested that funding levels were meaningless to people unless connected to something tangible, such as per capita levels. Ms. Jaworski concurred and suggested information about the degree of magnitude in the difference in spending levels could have a powerful influence.

Mr. Skov asked how the commission could speak to the relationship of the plan priorities to the priorities in the transportation system plan (TSP) and how funding was prioritized. Mr. Inerfeld anticipated that staff would prioritize the projects in the BPMP in a process that included public involvement.

Mr. Bonnett shared rough estimates for the backlog of need for street improvement projects and bicycle projects. He also shared his concerns about what elements of the PBMP would be officially adopted by the council and what appeared to be the potentially fluctuating nature of the project list. In addition, there was no priority list for sidewalk projects comparable to the lists for streets and bicycles, and sidewalks were an important element of 20-minute neighborhoods.

Mr. Inerfeld explained that the priority bikeway network included in the PBMP was the result of a State requirement but it did reflect the City's priorities. He acknowledged that the project list was subject to change, which he attributed to the City use of grants to fund many bicycle projects. Staff had to use its best judgment to determine which projects were ready to move forward, which included consideration of factors such as the City's street repaving plans. He said the lack of a sidewalk list did not mean bicycle projects had a higher priority.

Mr. Inerfeld encouraged the commission to provide input via the form on the BPMP website.

Ms. Jaworski suggested that project priorities and spending decisions should also be consistent with and supportive of related plans and policies, such as the City's plans for 20-minute neighborhoods. Mr. Inerfeld concurred, and pointed to Objective 1 and Policy 1.1 in the BPMP as examples. Commissioners encouraged Mr. Inerfeld to strengthen those connections in the plan.

Ms. Wolling was pleased with the priority placed on bicycle boulevards in the BPMP and suggested the definition of bicycle boulevard be revised so to ensure boulevards satisfied the majority of the standards for such facilities.

Mr. Boles said a lack of sidewalks in the community was a huge barrier to active transportation. He concurred with Ms. Wolling's remarks and said signage and striping alone did not provide the physical cues necessary to indicate the presence of a bicycle boulevard. Ms. Wolling noted some of the attributes

that made Alder Street an attractive bicycle boulevard, which included a single stop sign, one-way automobile traffic, and the level of bicycle traffic, which attracted other bicyclists. She recommended the City locate such facilities strategically on routes that served the most bicyclists as opposed to scattering them throughout the community where they might not feel as safe to the user.

Mr. Skov recommended that Mr. Inerfeld share any tools he had with the City Councilors about ways they could use their leadership positions to reduce the tension between bicyclists and drivers.

Mr. Bonnett recommended to Mr. Inerfeld that he ask the PBMP Advisory Committee to draft a vision statement for the plan that made the community's goals for increasing the use of alternate modes clear. He also believed that the performance measures failed to measure the policies, particularly in regard to amenities that enhanced one's bicycling or walking experience. He advocated for performance measures that addressed all the policies. Mr. Inerfeld hoped that the City would be able to look at ways to enhance the pedestrian experience on selected streets through the TSP. He said bicycle projects already considered that issue to some degree. In addition, staff would consider the allocation of right-of-way to various modes on City streets that process. Mr. Boles suggested that allocation should prioritize the mode that created the fewest greenhouse emissions.

The commission deferred further discussion on the topic to the work plan.

Mr. Skov and Ms. O'Sullivan agreed to prepare the commission's input to the council.

7. Work Plan

Ms. Jaworski recommended that commissioners volunteer for topic areas reflected in the matrix prepared by Mr. Skov and commit to more fully developing each item and tracking progress. Commissioners agreed. Mr. Farley recommended the commission also consider how to proceed with the suggestions made by Mr. McRae during discussion of CEAP. Ms. Jaworski agreed and suggested that the commission consider how to incorporate those issues into the work plan and prepare to both respond to what the City was doing and to take proactive steps.

Ms. Jaworski suggested that the commission revise the goal related to council goals as follows: "Advocate for goals that have been adopted by the City Council where they interface with sustainability."

Mr. Boles recommended a focus on general policy recommendations while remembering the need to be responsive to emerging issues. He also wanted the commission to ensure the Triple Bottom Line was integrated into the City's decision making process.

Commissioners volunteered for the following topic areas:

- TBL – Mr. Funk
- Food security (economic development) – Mr. Boles, Mr. Farley, Mr. Rexius
- IERP/CEAP – Mr. Newcomb, Mr. Faley, Mr. Zelenka
- Regional planning – Ms. Bloomfield, Mr. Rexius, Ms. Jaworski
- Bicycle/pedestrian – Mr. Bonnett, Ms. Wolling
- Inform 20-minute neighborhoods – Ms. Jaworski, Ms. Wolling, Mr. Newcomb
- EMX – Mr. Skov, Mr. Bonnett, Mr. Funk
- CLUTAC – Ms. Bloomfield, Mr. Skov, Mr. Rexius, Mr. Bonnett

Ms. O'Sullivan noted the County's strategic planning exercise, which had economic development as a priority, and suggested that the commission be able to influence that process through the council. In addition, the region's Sustainable Communities grant was a new opportunity for discussion of sustainable economic development. She said the County was particularly interested in food production and wood products.

The commission agreed to a suggestion from Mr. Skov that the topics of equity and articulating the economic benefit of sustainability made sense as items in the work plan without assignments at this time.

8. Election of Officers

Mr. Boles, seconded by Mr. Rexius, moved to nominate Mr. Skov for the position of chair and Ms. Jaworski for the position of vice chair.

Mr. Bonnett moved to close the nominations.

Mr. Skov and Ms. Jaworski were elected to the positions of chair and vice chair by a unanimous vote.

9. Closing

Mr. Skov adjourned the meeting at 8:37 p.m.

(Recorded by Kimberly Young)