

MINUTES

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

March 16, 2011
5:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Josh Skov, Chair; Josh Bruce, Vice Chair; Lisa Arkin, Howard Bonnett, Theresa Brand, Art Farley, Kathy Jaworski, Steve Newcomb, Rusty Rexius, Will Shaver, commissioners; Babe O’Sullivan, Keli Osborn, Matt McRae, City Manager’s Office; Carolyn Weiss, Planning and Development Department, Kurt Yeiter, Public Works Transportation.

ABSENT: Shawn Boles, David Funk, Alan Zelenka, commissioners.

Mr. Skov called the meeting of the Eugene Sustainability Commission to order. He welcomed new commissioner Art Farley, who introduced himself and provided some brief biographical information.

1. Opening: agenda review, minutes approval

There were no changes to the agenda. Mr. Skov corrected the second sentence in paragraph 2 on page 5 of the minutes to read (italicized text added): “He said *that* would also address the issue of energy security.”

Ms. O’Sullivan indicated she would circulate a summary of the TBL analysis done by the commission at the February meeting.

Mr. Bonnett, seconded by Mr. Bruce, moved to approve the February 16, 2011, minutes as amended. The motion passed, 8:1:0; Ms. Jaworski abstaining from the vote because she was not present at the meeting.

2. Public comment

Nancy Forrest and John Evans, representing the Eugene-Springfield Solidarity Network, advocated that the City adopt “Sweat-free” purchase policies and provided the Sweat-free Communities’ Web site for further information and a sample ordinance: Sweatfree.org. Mr. Skov noted the commission planned to meet with the City’s Human Rights Commission at a date to be determined and he anticipated the commission would raise the subject at that time. Ms. O’Sullivan said she would communicate that date to Ms. Forrest.

3. Items from commissioners and staff

Mr. Shaver reported that little new content was provided at the last Transportation System Plan Community Resource Group meeting because the group had several new members. Members discussed worst fears and best possible outcomes.

Mr. Farley noted the University of Oregon had developed its own Climate Action Plan. He reported he had helped to develop a new web site, “Birding Eugene,” and would send a site link to the commission.

Mr. Farley called the commission's attention to the April 23 celebration of the anniversary of the Ridgeline Trail system sponsored by the Friends of the Ridgeline.

Ms. Arkin said that she continued to track activity at the State legislature.

Mr. Newcomb reported that the Eugene Water & Electric Board (EWEB) had formed a community advisory panel that included Mr. Boles to complete an integrated energy resource plan. The plan would guide EWEB's future energy resource decisions.

Mr. Bonnett said he was working through the City's Street Repair Review Committee and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee to get bicycle paths added as an element of the Willamette Street reconstruction project planned for construction in summer 2011. He anticipated the Street Repair Review Committee would recommend some new street projects to the City Council to be funded through bond funds made available by lower-than-anticipated program costs, and he continued to work to make those projects bicycle-friendly. Mr. Skov asked Mr. Bonnett to provide the commission with a link to the information prepared by GEARS about the Willamette Street project.

Mr. Bruce had met with Councilor Pat Farr and two members of the Planning Division staff to share his thoughts on row houses and infill development and the code barriers that existed to those development forms. He had also attended an open house regarding the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan and offered input. He noted the recent Japanese earthquake/tsunami and anticipated that Oregon legislators would introduce legislation to ensure better resilience.

Mr. Bruce considered it a sign of progress that the City Council did not completely kill the West Eugene EmX project. He was also excited about the new downtown developments and the developments occurring near the University of Oregon campus and between campus and downtown, some of which were being constructed to LEED standards.

Mr. Skov announced that the Partners for Sustainable Schools was holding a May career fair at South Eugene High School. He would provide additional details via e-mail.

Mr. Skov said that the Oregon Department of Transportation and Department of Land Conservation and Development continued to move forward with implementation of Senate Bill 1059, related to greenhouse gas reduction, which he believed had local parallels in the forms of the Climate & Energy Action Plan and Envision Eugene. He suggested the City needed to "connect those dots" and recommended the commission stay abreast of the bill's implementation.

Mr. Skov proposed that the commission review the projects in the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan with the goal of elevating those that helped to implement the Climate & Energy Action Plan, the Envision Eugene recommendations, and that also helped to leverage similar efforts. Mr. Bruce recommended the commission comment on the plan's target for increased bicycle-pedestrian use as a commute option. He questioned whether the goal was sufficiently aggressive and suggested the commission could appropriately comment to the council regarding the proper target without getting into the details of the projects. Mr. Skov indicated he would provide the commission with his own written comments on the plan.

Mr. Skov proposed that the commission consider whether it would take a position on the issue of Civic Stadium. Commissioners briefly discussed the timeline for the decision. Ms. Osborn outlined the proposal made by the City Council to the 4J School District about planning for the future of the stadium.

Ms. Jaworski identified neighborhood schools as an important issue for further City-district discussion, particularly in light of their importance to walkable neighborhoods. She was interested in how the commission could facilitate that discussion.

Mr. Bruce called attention to a meeting planned for March 31 to discuss formation of a Willamette Valley Resilience Collaborative.

Ms. O’Sullivan shared that she, Mr. Skov, and Mr. Funk attended a Green Lane event in February, and Mr. Skov briefly addressed those present. She also noted the recent City-sponsored screening of the movie “Deep Green.” Ms. O’Sullivan reported that she had spoken with her Corvallis counterpart, Linda Levitt, and looked forward to working with Ms. Levitt on some shared projects. She believed that the two communities could have fruitful exchanges about their efforts.

Mr. McRae, the City’s new Climate and Energy Analyst, briefly reviewed some of the projects he was currently working on.

4. EmX: Briefing from CLUTAC and update on council action

Mr. Skov distributed a handout entitled *Triple Bottom Line Assessment of Proposed EmX Corridor in West Eugene* done by the Comprehensive Land Use and Transportation Advisory Committee (CLUTAC). He provided brief background on the development and nature of the assessment, emphasizing it addressed the West Eugene EmX concept but was not specific to the precise route. He said that as the CLUTAC was working toward a recommendation that the council could use in its decision making about the locally preferred alternative, members struggled with the tool in terms of how it provided guidance. Mr. Skov proposed that the commission discuss how it could shape expectations about what using the tool meant. He concurred with a statement by Mr. Newcomb that it was important to think carefully about the base case one used for comparison in such an assessment.

Mr. Shaver attributed the complicated nature of the tool to the many variables in the analysis. The commission had a brief discussion of how the tool was used and how it informed decision-making. Ms. O’Sullivan said staff had learned through experience that the TBL tool had its limitations; it was not a guide to mitigation or a tool to reconcile different priorities. It was a tool that provided an opportunity to vet concerns about a project or plan through a transparent process.

The commission discussed next steps. Ms. Arkin suggested the assessment be prefaced by a description of the commission’s vision for the corridor. Mr. Newcomb believed that LTD’s previous positive experiences in building EmX routes could be used to address some of the negative impacts identified in the analysis.

Mr. Skov acknowledged that people would differ about the future impacts of such a project and suggested that CLUTAC could focus on one or two issues for separate discussion and be explicit about the assumptions it was using, particularly those related to the economy. He asked commissioners to provide further comment on the assessment via e-mail. Mr. Rexius encouraged that the assessment be completed prior to the April Metropolitan Policy Committee meeting.

The commission took a brief break.

5. Envision Eugene: Staff briefing and council update

Ms. Weiss provided an update on the most recent recommendations coming out of the Envision Eugene process. She noted that a public hearing was scheduled for April 25.

The commission discussed some of the issues related to the recommendations that members anticipated would be raised during the commission's upcoming work session with the Eugene City Council. Ms. Weiss shared the draft strategies and tactics related to those issues and the rationale behind them to help prepare the commission for that discussion. Issues mentioned by commissioners included the community's housing mix and the need to monitor the mix; the impact of school closures on the City's "20-minute neighborhoods" concept and the need for jurisdictional cooperation between the City and school districts; the relationship of farmland preservation to climate change and food security; the relationship of the land supply to housing affordability; the potential of conflicts between strategies and between strategies and other City planning goals; concerns about expanding the urban growth boundary to accommodate low-density residential development; the need for better integration with the recommendations of the Climate & Energy Action Plan in regard to monitoring; the potentially negative impact of the infill compatibility standards on the land supply and urban growth boundary; and the relationship of downtown Eugene to the recommendations.

Mr. Skov asked Ms. Weiss to send the commission a summary graph that showed the impact of the proposed housing mix.

6. Car Share Program

Ms. Brand reported that the Board of Directors of the Lane Transit District approved the 6th/7th/11th avenue option for West Eugene EmX.

Ms. Brand reviewed the steps remaining in the process of establishing a Car Share Program. She reported that the Lane Transit District Board of Directors approved the Car Share Program. A request for proposals would be issued in April 2011 with the goal of selecting a vendor and having program in place in late summer.

7. Sustainability Commission retreat

Ms. O'Sullivan reviewed a proposal for the commission's retreat, to be held in May or June, and recommended the commission use a facilitator. Ms. Arkin asked that the retreat be scheduled at a time that allowed new commissioners to attend. Ms. O'Sullivan would poll the commission for possible dates.

8. Sustainability Commission: policy review and recommendation process

Due to a lack of time, this item was postponed.

9. Closing, next meeting, other follow-up

Mr. Skov adjourned the meeting at 8:28 p.m.

(Recorded by Kimberly Young)