

MINUTES

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

May 18, 2011
5:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Josh Skov, Chair; Josh Bruce, Vice Chair; Shawn Boles, Howard Bonnett, Art Farley, David Funk, Rusty Rexius, Will Shaver, commissioners; Babe O’Sullivan, Matt McRae, City Manager’s Office; Kurt Yeiter, Public Works Transportation.

ABSENT: Lisa Arkin, Kathy Jaworski, Alan Zelenka, commissioners.

Mr. Skov called the meeting of the Eugene Sustainability Commission to order.

1. Opening

- *Review Agenda*

There were no changes to the agenda.

- *Approve Minutes of the April 20, 2011, Meeting*

Mr. Boles, seconded by Mr. Shaver, moved to approve the April 20, 2011, minutes as submitted. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Public comment

Renee Benoit reported that 2011 marked the 40th anniversary of the establishment of BRING Recycling. She announced the BRING Birthday Bash on July 24, a sustainable home and garden tour co-sponsored by BRING, the City of Eugene, and Eugene Water & Electric Board (EWEB) on September 24, and a “Trash Fashion Show” on October 14. She asked the commission to consider co-sponsoring any or all of the events and also for suggestions about local businesses that might also be interested in event co-sponsorship. She provided contact information and agreed to send Ms. O’Sullivan an e-mail with the dates mentioned. Mr. Skov indicated the commission’s willingness to co-sponsor events but said it had no funding to offer. Mr. Bruce suggested that Ms. Benoit contact Councilor Alan Zelenka about the potential of City sponsorship.

3. Items from commissioners and staff

Mr. Bruce reported that, through his work with the University of Oregon’s Oregon Partnership for Disaster Resilience, he had met with City staff Lisa Gardner, Steve Nystrom, Joe Rizzi, and Mr. McRae to discuss how to better integrate non-regulatory plans such as the City’s Climate & Energy Action Plan and Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan with regulatory plans, such as the Eugene-Springfield Metropolitan General Area Plan. He termed it a step in the right direction as it would put regulatory force behind the City’s non-regulatory plans.

Mr. Newcomb reported that snowpack was 180 percent of normal and EWEB expected high spring flows in the McKenzie River as the snow melted.

Mr. Shaver reported his office was participating in the Business Commute Challenge and he was seeing more people bicycling to work.

Mr. Farley said the recent Ridgeline Celebration Day went well and was well-attended. He expected the City to acquire more property along the ridgeline corridor in the near future.

Ms. O'Sullivan reminded the commission of the May 26 open house at the Eugene Hilton sponsored by the Oregon Global Warming Commission to collect feedback on its "Roadmap to 2020" plan.

Ms. O'Sullivan said she recently attended a strategic planning session of the West Coast Forum on Climate Change and Materials Management in San Francisco. Those present identified as a top priority the role of government purchasing as a model for private organizations in adjusting purchasing patterns to be more climate friendly. She said that priority aligned closely with work the City was doing to develop more sustainable purchasing policies for the organization and to foster similar behavior in the community.

Responding to concerns expressed by Mr. Boles about the value of such travel and its return to the community, Ms. O'Sullivan indicated the forum generally met through webinars and she believed that it brought value to the community. Mr. Boles looked forward to reports of dollars brought to the community through the forum and a decrease in the purchase of non-green products, which would represent indicators of value to him. Ms. O'Sullivan said the forum was looking at carbon-intensive goods and targeting purchasing policies related to such goods. Mr. Funk asked if the City had a baseline for measuring progress. Ms. O'Sullivan responded that the City was in the process of gathering data and had recently hired a purchasing analyst, Heather Nelson, to oversee the organization's sustainable procurement efforts.

Mr. Skov suggested that the commission revisit the topic of City purchasing policies when it discussed the work plan.

Ms. O'Sullivan announced the commission's retreat was scheduled on June 12 from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. and on July 16 from 8 p.m. to noon.

Ms. O'Sullivan reported that City staff involved in sustainability work would meet the following day with similarly involved faculty and staff at the University of Oregon to discuss a deeper partnership.

Mr. McRae reported that the City was conducting another internal greenhouse gas inventory and the results would be compared to the inventory done in 2005.

Mr. McRae reported that he presented the findings of the 20-minute neighborhood assessment to the Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee and to the Cal Young Neighborhood Association, which was considering how the 20-minute neighborhood concept could inform the association's reorganization. He would also present the findings to the City's executive and division managers and the City Council. An open house for interested parties would be scheduled at The Atrium in June, and he invited the commission to contact him with the names of organizations who might wish to participate.

Mr. Skov said he recently offered testimony to the City Council urging it to consider the Civic Stadium site in light of Envision Eugene's Seven Pillars, which was not mentioned by others testifying and which had highlighted to him the importance of the commission continuing to make those connections.

Mr. Skov noted a recent report from GLOBE International on climate legislation that indicated some progress was being made by individual states in the United States.

Speaking to Ms. O'Sullivan's report on the work of the forum, Mr. Skov believed the City of Eugene was pioneering sustainable purchasing practices and had the opportunity to make a difference by setting an example for others.

Mr. Funk reminded the commission of its June 1 meeting with Green Lane.

Mr. Funk reported he would speak on June 10 in Portland at a training entitled *Let's Not Talk about Climate Change*, which regarded best practices for raising awareness of climate change, motivating behavior change, and developing public policies leading to greenhouse gas reductions. He provided information about the event and encouraged interested commissioners to attend.

Mr. Funk announced that his son would speak at Oxford University about who was getting wealthy from climate change.

Mr. Boles suggested to Mr. McRae that staff examine whether it was possible to make the boundaries of 20-minute neighborhoods follow ward boundaries. Mr. McRae indicated that issue was being discussed by Neighborhood Program staff.

Mr. Boles reported that the Technical Resource Group formed for Envision Eugene continued to meet and was working on a recommendation related to the housing mix to present to the City Council. The council would discuss the implications of the mixes being considered at a work session on May 25.

Mr. Bonnett reported that he had worked successfully through the Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee to persuade the City to modify the planned Willamette Street improvement project to include both dedicated and shared bicycle lanes. He was also working through the Street Repair Review Panel to include Alder Street from 18th to 24th avenues in the list of street improvement projects to be completed in 2011 with unexpended funds from Measure 20-145, Bonds to Fix Streets. City staff believed there would be about \$10 million available. The panel had reviewed and approved a list of projects that totaled about \$6 million and would soon review a second list of projects that included the Alder Street project to be funded with the remaining money. He was unsure if there was an opportunity for effective public input at this point.

Mr. Skov recalled his testimony before the council suggesting how the City should use its discretionary transportation dollars, such as the Surface Transportation Program-Urban (STP-U) dollars, at which time it was pointed out the City had a policy for the use of those funds. He did not think the City was following its policy and suggested it might be an appropriate time to approach the council again about the policy. Mr. Bruce believed it within the commission's purview to suggest to the council that it amend its policies, particularly around discretionary funding. He also advocated for commission review of the Capital Improvement Program and more balance in the expenditure of discretionary dollars.

Mr. Skov advocated that a commissioner testify to the council that because of the TransPlan update, the emphasis on 20-minute neighborhoods in Envision Eugene, and the adoption of the Climate & Energy Action Plan, the policy that the City spend its discretionary transportation funds solely on the automobile was inconsistent with the direction in those efforts and the policy should be changed.

Mr. Bonnett pointed out the strong argument for the current policy that existed in the form of the street repair backlog, which would grow larger if the bond was not renewed. He suggested that instead, the council be asked to consider that there was more to the transportation system than the automobile, and that to get people out of their cars and onto bicycles required a better system of off-road paths and streets that served the bicycle, like Alder Street, where he had recently counted more than 1,000 bicyclists and 600

pedestrians in a 12-hour period. He said it was a collector street for pedestrians and bicyclists categorized as a local street, which disqualified it from certain improvements.

Commissioners discussed Mr. Skov's suggestion. Mr. Bruce suggested that instead, the commission include the recommendation in its review of the transportation system plan. Mr. Boles believed Mr. Skov's proposal was more appropriately embedded in the strategies associated with Envision Eugene and suggested it could result in a shift in funding for various modes, both for "historical compensation" and because of the future.

Speaking to Mr. Bruce's remarks, Mr. Boles recalled that the commission at one time had discussed applying the concept of sustainability to City budget packages, but he did not recall receiving any feedback on whether that happened or how well it worked. He said his question would be if the City had instituted the TBL in the capital budget.

Mr. Funk pointed out the issue of street repairs was also a sustainability issue for the City because of the higher long-term costs associated with delayed repairs.

Mr. Skov indicated his intent to craft a statement along the lines he had outlined and solicited assistance. Mr. Shaver endorsed Mr. Bruce's suggestion. Mr. Bruce suggested further discussion under item 6. Mr. Skov did not think the two approaches were mutually exclusive and reminded the commission that it had agreed to more regular contact with the City Council.

Mr. Rexius announced his firm would launch a commercial food waste collection program in June and hoped in time to see it expanded to residential users.

4. Communication strategy with neighborhood leaders

Ms. O'Sullivan recalled the concerns expressed to the City Council by neighborhood association leaders regarding the commission's recommendations to the City Council regarding Opportunity Siting (OS) and the Infill Compatibility Standards (ICS). She proposed that the commission consider a written communication to clarify the intent of the recommendations and the context in which they were offered. She also suggested the work session presentation notes be attached to the communication, and that the board members of the neighborhood associations be invited to discuss their concerns with the commission. The commission discussed Ms. O'Sullivan's proposal. Commissioners agreed it was important to reach out to the neighborhood leaders and directed Ms. O'Sullivan to draft a letter discussing the commission's interest in collaborating with the neighborhood organizations on issues such as Envision Eugene and transportation planning. Mr. Farley suggested the commission discuss the issue at its retreat. There was general concurrence.

5. BREAK

The commission took a brief break. Mr. Newcomb left during the break.

6. Transportation planning

Mr. Yeiter reviewed a memorandum updating the commission on the City's transportation system planning effort and described a rating system known as the Sustainability Transportation & Access Rating System (STARS), which he likened to the LEEDS process and anticipated would help the City evaluate projects using a national sustainability standard. Commissioners asked questions clarifying the information presented.

Mr. Funk commended the memorandum and the project Web site.

Mr. Bruce suggested that the STARS tool argued for topic-specific TBL.

Mr. Boles expressed concern that STARS was based on faulty premises in that it concerned new highway design and construction, which he maintained was not the best use of transportation dollars as it had been “obviated by the realities that we currently encounter.” He considered such construction inappropriate and detrimental to society over the long-term, which led him to conclude the tool was not worthwhile. Mr. Yeiter said the tool was less geared toward street projects than other tools available.

Mr. Skov said he was familiar with the STARS framework and did not want the commission to make assumptions about the details. The framework was very detailed and helped the user identify goals. He encouraged commissioners to review the process guidance section of the framework.

Mr. Bonnett expressed concern the framework did not adequately address the issue of land use. He hoped staff considered that because he did not find adequate consideration of that issue during his review of the memorandum and attached framework.

Mr. Skov discouraged staff from attempting to use the framework to score projects because he believed attempting to develop such scores when the framework was at such an early stage would result in meaningless scores. He indicated he would follow-up with some e-mailed comments.

Mr. Bruce asked Mr. Yeiter to identify the best opportunities for the commission to offer policy input into the planning effort.

Mr. Boles asked if Mr. Yeiter believed that the City was able to sample a range of opinions using the Transportation Community Resource Group. Mr. Yeiter said yes. He said the core of the group was the original department advisory committee, which was selected for its range of opinions and geographic diversity. Subsequent additions to the group did not appear to push it in any particular direction, and he continued to be pleased about the good balance of the group. Mr. Yeiter promised to keep the commission updated on the planning progress.

7. Work plan: outreach events

The commission discussed the work plan item related to outreach and education and the potential of holding an outreach event before the end of the fiscal year. Mr. Funk believed the Green Lane meeting could be considered a community outreach event and suggested it would be good to get before the City Club as well. Mr. Boles suggested the potential of a link between the commission’s work plan item and outreach to the neighborhood leaders through a forum about ICS and OS. Mr. Shaver believed such a program would be of interest to the City Club. Mr. Farley suggested that ICS and OS could be tied to a discussion of neighborhood livability and 20-minute neighborhoods and an interesting panel of speakers could be brought together for the discussion.

Speaking to Mr. Boles’ suggestion, Mr. Skov believed a conversation with the neighborhoods rather than a forum or presentation was appropriate at this point. He suggested the commission might have a more settled view of ICS and OS in six months’ time.

Mr. Funk advocated for a presentation on the Climate & Energy Action Plan to the City Club. He believed the topic could be laid out in a way that made it interesting and connected it to Eugene residents. Mr. Bonnett concurred. Mr. Boles suggested the commission could discuss how the objectives and strategies of the Climate & Energy Action Plan had begun to inform the organization’s work.

Ms. O’Sullivan urged the commission to consider other audiences, such as University of Oregon audiences and the advisory committee overseeing the Lane Livability Consortium.

Mr. Skov suggested that a subcommittee that included himself, Mr. Shaver, and Mr. Funk follow-up on the discussion via e-mail.

8. City Council follow-up

Ms. O’Sullivan recalled that at the conclusion of the April 20 joint meeting with the commission, Mayor Kitty Piercy had identified affordable housing, a definition of the “core” and how it related to greater density, and inclusionary zoning as issues for the commission to address in follow up discussions with the council. Responding to a suggestion from Mr. Skov that the commission should provide comment to the council within the timeframe for Envision Eugene, Ms. O’Sullivan interpreted the mayor’s remarks as inviting further dialogue on those issues beyond the public comment period. She said it was up to the commission to decide how to interpret the invitation.

The commission discussed next steps. Mr. Skov asked if the commission should provide comment on the housing mix. Mr. Boles thought that would be appropriate. Mr. Rexius pointed out that while some commissioners were participating in the Technical Resource Group and had discussed the topic, the commission had not yet discussed the housing mix or housing affordability and he was not prepared to provide input at this point. Mr. Skov recommended that commissioners view the City Council work session on the housing mix scheduled for May 25 as preparation for further discussion. Ms. O’Sullivan said she would send the commission the Webcast link and supporting materials.

Mr. Boles cautioned the commission that the Technical Resource Group had not yet completed its full analysis of the housing mix.

Mr. Rexius requested more information on inclusionary zoning.

9. Closing, next meeting, other follow-up

Mr. Skov adjourned the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

(Recorded by Kimberly Young)