

MINUTES

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

February 17, 2010
5:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Josh Skov-Chair; Josh Bruce-Vice Chair; Shawn Boles, Howard Bonnett, Theresa Brand, Will Shaver, Kathi Jaworski, Mark Nystrom, David Funk, commissioners; Matt McRae, City Manager's Office.

ABSENT: Alan Zelenka, Rusty Rexus, Steve Newcomb, Lisa Arkin, commissioners.

1. Opening

Mr. Skov called the meeting to order at 5:34 p.m.

2. Public Comment

Dan Armstrong spoke on behalf of those community members who face problems of food insecurity. He thanked the commission members for their work on the food security scoping project, in which he had also participated. He appreciated that the scoping project had involved support from several other local organizations such as Lane County, EWEB and the University of Oregon and thanked several participants by name.

Mr. Skov reminded the newer members that the Sustainability Commission had planned to address several matters related to food security as part of the Commission's long-term goals.

Christina Cox spoke on behalf of GreenLane Sustainable Business and hoped that her group might find ways to formally ally itself with the Sustainability Commission in order to contribute to a number of sustainable business practices in the community.

Alan Perkins provided a brief history of GreenLane Sustainable Business Network as well as an overview of GreenLane's strategies and most recent activities. He noted that the ultimate goals of GreenLane were essentially the same as those of the Sustainability Commission.

Ms. Cox stated that one goal of GreenLane was to increase the level of sustainability education in the community through a series of networking and public events strategies.

Mr. Skov, responding to a request for clarification from Mr. Boles, noted that GreenLane's request to coordinate with the Sustainability Commission would be discussed at the next Commission meeting. He thanked Mr. Perkins and Ms. Cox for their comments.

Mr. Funk noted that Sustainability Commissioner Lisa Arkin had endorsed a formalized relationship between the Commission and GreenLane.

Ms. Cox suggested that any preliminary responses with regard to the GreenLane request to the Commission might help facilitate efforts to coordinate the two groups.

Ms. Brand asked when GreenLane had scheduled its networking events. Mr. Perkins answered that GreenLane's networking events had generally been scheduled to occur twice a month and had been designed to educate local businesses on a variety of sustainability matters.

Karl Morgenstern, speaking in his capacity as the Water Source Protection Coordinator for EWEB, commended Solid Waste Management Prevention Program Manager Ethan Nelson and Compost Specialist Anne Donahue from the City of Eugene for their work in generating the draft food security report that was scheduled for discussion later in the meeting. He noted that EWEB had also addressed food security matters as part of its ongoing efforts to protect and maintain local drinking water resources.

3. Agenda Review/Minutes Approval

Mr. Skov noted there were no changes to the meeting agenda.

Mr. Bonnett and Mr. Funk each noted corrections to the minutes of the Commission's January 20, 2010 meeting.

Ms. Brand, seconded by Mr. Boles, moved to approve the minutes of the Sustainability Commission's January 20, 2010 meeting. The motion passed unanimously, 10:0.

4. Draft Food Security Report

Mr. Nelson noted that Ms. Donahue was the Planning & Development Division's specialist on composting practices and noted that other members of the advisory committee that had contributed to the draft food security report were also present.

Mr. Nelson described how the draft food security report had been developed and noted that one of the purposes of the report had been to define precisely what the term food security meant and how that definition would be applied to efforts to strengthen and enhance local food services in a sustainable manner. He briefly explained the elements of the Working Local Food System Model graph that was included as part of the Organization Description document distributed earlier in the meeting.

Mr. Nelson briefly discussed the recommendations identified in the draft food security report and noted that elements of the recommendations primarily addressed the identification of a program to manage local food services and resources in a sustainable manner. He briefly addressed the costs and potential funding sources associated with the implementation of such a program and noted that it would require approximately one-half FTE as well as various other organizational expenditures.

Mr. Nelson noted additional recommendations from the draft report and noted that they involved various levels of work plan engagement with the City of Eugene's Climate and Energy Action Plan (CEAP).

Mr. Nelson reported that an initial local food security assessment gap analysis had been completed by a University of Oregon honors student, Melinda Jewel, which had been incorporated into appendices of the draft report.

Mr. Nelson described several other elements of the draft food security report for the benefit of the Commission including disaster preparedness strategies related to food security. Mr. Nelson expected a community planning workshop outlined in the draft food security report to cost approximately \$50,000.00.

Mr. Nelson discussed the various collaborative partnerships that had been identified in the draft food security report.

Mr. Nelson hoped that the draft food security report would serve as a catalyst for various grant application processes directed toward food security and sustainability issues.

Ms. Brand asked if the recommendations contained in the report had been prioritized with regard to the goals of the Sustainability Commission.

Ms. Brand asked if any other cities similar to Eugene had a food security plan that might be evaluated in terms of how such plans might be applied locally. LCOG representative David Richie responded that the only food security plans he knew of were in Knoxville, Tennessee and Hartford, Connecticut. He did not know if those plans might be applicable to Eugene.

Ms. Brand perceived that Eugene was at the forefront of food security issues.

Mr. Funk mentioned that there were various food security projects operating in Vietnam.

Mr. Funk asked how water quality and water availability issues had been addressed in the draft food security report. Mr. Nelson answered that such matters had not been covered.

Mr. Boles maintained that the draft food security report was a strong document and supported its integration into the CEAP. He suggested that soft drink taxes might serve as an effective funding mechanism for the strategies and practices outlined in the report.

Mr. Boles was not sure the measurements and indicators described in the report could be managed at a local level and suggested that such efforts might be more efficiently overseen at the state level.

Mr. Boles asked what populations the draft food security report had addressed and suggested that such information would be necessary for the effective implementations of policies outlined in the report.

Mr. Nelson noted that Lane County had planned a town hall event related to food security issues later in the evening.

Ms. Brand suggested that water security and conservation measures needed to be factored into the food security issues addressed in the report.

Mr. Shaver and Mr. Skov asked how Mr. Nelson wished the Sustainability Commission to proceed with regard to the draft food security report. Mr. Nelson hoped that the Commission would formally endorse the report to the Eugene City Council. City Manager's Office Division Manager Kelli Osborn noted that the Commission's endorsement was not required for the report to be presented to the City Council.

Mr. Boles and Mr. Skov asked how the recommendations and resource requests from the draft food security report might most efficiently be presented to the Eugene City Council. Mr. Nelson was unsure how those recommendations and requests might be interpreted by the City Council, particularly in light of the current state of City resources, and suggested that he return to the Commission with further information in that regard at a later date.

Mr. Morgenstern suggested that some level of City staff support to track the recommendations of the draft food security report would be helpful towards incorporating the recommendations contained in the report.

Ms. Jaworski appreciated the conversation surrounding the draft food security report and believed that some elements therein might be strengthened in order to communicate the appropriate level of urgency on various food security issues. She agreed that the draft food security report should be presented to the Eugene City Council with the endorsement of the Sustainability Commission.

Mr. Boles suggested that the draft food security report might also be discussed with the City's Sustainability Board. Mr. Nelson agreed with Mr. Boles' suggestion and noted that the report had previously been distributed to the Sustainability Board for edits and comment.

EWEB Representative Dave Donahue suggested that elements from the draft food security report relating to emergency food security plan might be prioritized as the Commission continued its discussions.

Mr. Skov thanked Mr. Nelson and Ms. Donahue for their presentation.

Mr. Nelson and Ms. Donahue thanked the Commission before their time before excusing themselves from the meeting at 6:32 p.m.

Mr. Skov asked if a Commission-endorsed presentation regarding the draft food security report should be presented at a regular City Council meeting or at a work session. Ms. Osborn replied that it would be more appropriate to present the report at a Council work session and further suggested that the Commission might draft a supporting memorandum to the Council regarding the report.

Mr. Skov noted that further discussion of the draft food security report would be placed on the next Sustainability Commission meeting agenda and that Commission members would coordinate with Mr. Nelson and Ms. Donahue in the interim.

5. BREAK

Mr. Skov called for a break at 6:34 p.m. before reconvening the meeting at 6:46 p.m.

6. Items From Commissioners & Staff

Mr. Shaver reported that he had coordinated with members of the Human Rights Commission on the summit event planned for April 10. He encouraged the other Commission members to attend the event.

Mr. Funk believed the Commission needed to review its liaison relationships with other boards and commission in light of recent developments and conversations.

Mr. Bonnett hoped to be appointed as the Sustainability Commission's liaison to the City's Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee.

Mr. McCrae, responding to a question from Mr. Boles, noted that the Lane County Board of Commissioners had invited Eugene City Staff and members of the Sustainability Commission to give a presentation on February 23 on the City's sustainability initiatives including the CEAP. Mr. Skov responded that it would be a good idea for one or more Commission members to participate at that meeting.

Mr. Boles encouraged the members of the City's Sustainability Board to contact their respective Commissioners to set up conferences.

Mr. Skov, responding to a request for clarification from Ms. Jaworski, noted that the Sustainability Board was an internal City staff group tasked with discussion and recommendation of various sustainability matters.

Mr. Boles hoped that the Sustainability Commission members would endeavor to "carry the torch forward" and continue to reach out to groups and community organizations such as GreenLane. Mr. Skov commented that the Commission might need to revisit its mission statement and objectives as part of such efforts.

Ms. Osborn noted that staff had provided an intern to identify and contact groups such as those Mr. Boles had suggested.

Mr. Shaver noted he had recently visited the Churchill area neighbors association to discuss various sustainability issues. He further noted that he also served as the Churchill area's representative on Lane Transit District's West Eugene EmX Extension Corridor Committee.

Mr. Nystrom noted he worked for the University of Oregon's Office of Sustainability and noted that that office had recently completed a climate action plan. He noted that the plan would be posted on the University's website soon.

Ms. Jaworski noted that it was her first time at a Sustainability Commission meeting and gave a brief overview of her background, interests and experience.

Mr. Skov reported he and Mr. Funk had recently spoken with members of the West University neighborhood association.

Ms. Jaworski stated her husband served as a member of the Cal Young neighborhood association and suggested that a continued relationship between that group and the Sustainability Commission might be useful and productive.

Mr. McRae noted that the final public forum for a discussion of urban natural resources as part of the CEAP had been scheduled for March 4 at EWEB.

Mr. Funk stated that GreenLane had expressed interest in speakers to present to them after April of 2010 and suggested that certain Sustainability Commission members might participate in that regard.

7. Sustainability Commission's Work Plan

Mr. Skov suggested that further work to prioritize the elements of the Commission's work plan was necessary.

Mr. Skov hoped that the Commission members would express whether or not various agenda items sufficiently related to the Commission's work plan.

Mr. Skov, responding to a comment from Mr. Boles, noted that the items from the Sustainability Commission's work plan generally "out-stripped" the hours each Commission member could devote to each of those items. He noted that such factors had led to his suggestion that further prioritization of the work plan was needed.

Mr. Skov, responding to a question from Ms. Jaworski, noted that the current work plan had been developed by the group and approved by the Eugene City Council.

Mr. Bonnett stated that several elements of the current work plan, such as community liaisons, had been carried over from previous iterations of the plan.

Ms. Jaworski asked how and to what degree the current work plan addressed the Sustainability Commission's intent to positively change public behavior patterns or awareness levels with respect to issues of sustainability. Mr. Funk replied that the work plan had generally been developed with the intent of increasing the overall levels of public knowledge and education on sustainability topics. He further replied that the Commission generally worked to coordinate sustainability messages between disparate local and national sustainability organizations.

Mr. Skov briefly discussed the Commission's advisory role to the Eugene City Council on a variety of policy areas.

Mr. Bonnett, responding to a comment from Mr. Skov, suggested that Mr. Skov as Chair continue to keep the Commission members "on track" with respect to the current work plan and with respect to the prioritization of items from that plan. Mr. Skov asked the Commission members to continue to reconsider how elements of the work plan might be prioritized more effectively and how the plan itself might be refined in the future.

Mr. Boles recognized the various resource and time constraints that affected the successful completion of the Commission's work plan.

Ms. Jaworski believed that completely re-drafting the Commission's work plan would not be an effective strategy. She further maintained, however, that the current plan might be revised in order to better highlight current opportunities and challenges with respect to various sustainability matters.

8. Debrief of the Joint Meeting with Planning Commission and Next Steps

Mr. Bruce arrived to the meeting at 7:19 p.m.

Mr. Skov quickly summarized the recent joint meeting between the Commission and the City's Planning Commission for the benefit of those who had not attended.

Mr. Skov noted elements of LTD's EmX extension projects that had been discussed at the joint meeting and noted he would work to bring Ms. Brand and Ms. Jaworski up to speed regarding those projects before the Commissions finalized a joint message to the City Council.

Mr. Bruce stated that each group had intended to form a subcommittee comprised of members from both the Sustainability Commission and the Planning Commission. Mr. Skov hoped that the goals for such a subcommittee would be carefully and explicitly stated as it was developed.

Mr. Skov briefly discussed the context in which a joint subcommittee of the Planning and Sustainability Commissions would be created. He noted that the subcommittee was expected to generally be used as an official resource for the City's Planning & Development division as it attempted to complete the ECLA (Eugene Comprehensive Lands Assessment) process.

Mr. Shaver, responding to a question from Mr. Nystrom, noted that the West Eugene EmX Extension Corridor Committee on which he served had been formed to provide recommendations and input on LTD's plans to expand its EmX bus rapid transit (BRT) service. Mr. Shaver further noted that the Corridor Committee had worked to determine the best routes for EmX expansion as well as the potential community and business impacts of those routes.

Mr. Skov noted from the joint meeting that the Planning Commission had generally expressed a desire for more "coherence of vision amidst the chaos of the details" with respect to various City planning and development topics.

Mr. Shaver indicated his willingness to serve on the a joint Planning and Sustainability subcommittee for routes on land use and future route selection

Mr. Funk believed that the Planning Commission wanted a tighter relationship with the Sustainability Commission because the Sustainability Commission's goals were extremely important to the future of the City of Eugene.

Mr. Skov believed that a joint Planning and Sustainability subcommittee would initially be focused on the ECLA process and EmX expansion projects.

Mr. Skov, responding to a question from Mr. Bruce, noted that the formal language of the motion that had been made at the joint meeting regarding the formation of the subcommittee had not yet been distributed.

Mr. Nystrom added he would also be willing to serve on a joint Planning and Sustainability subcommittee.

Mr. Bonnett believed that a joint Planning and Sustainability subcommittee might contribute in some way to the draft environmental impact statement (EIS) that was being developed as part of the LTD's EmX expansion efforts. Mr. Bonnett further hoped that the Sustainability Commission representatives on the subcommittee might also work to further awareness of sustainability issues such as social justice and the environment.

Ms. Jaworski struggled to understand the definition of a joint subcommittee and asked for greater clarification regarding the value of the formation of such a group.

The Sustainability Commission members discussed the manner in which a joint Planning and Sustainability subcommittee might be developed as well as the various areas in which such a group would most likely focus its efforts.

Mr. Skov noted that the Chairs and Co-chairs of the Planning and Sustainability Commissions would meet to further discuss the parameters of a joint subcommittee.

Mr. Skov stated it would be important to communicate with Planning & Development staff member Lisa Gardner in order to clarify the initial and ongoing charges of a joint Planning and Sustainability subcommittee.

Mr. Bruce expressed it would be important to keep the absentee members of the Sustainability Commission apprised of any discussions regarding the formation of a joint Planning and Sustainability subcommittee.

9. Strategies for Communicating with City Council, Including the LUTSCO Memo

Mr. Skov noted that the Commission's LUTSCO (Land Use Transportation Subcommittee) memo had been reviewed at the recent joint Planning and Sustainability Commission meeting. He believed that the memo had been considered by several Planning Commission members at that meeting to be either too complicated or too vague to be of practical use. Mr. Funk agreed with Mr. Skov's assessment.

Mr. Skov informed Ms. Jaworski that he would distribute additional copies of the LUTSCO memo to the Sustainability Commission members who had not attended the joint meeting and felt it was important that Commission develop a common frame of reference among its members for future LUTSCO discussions.

Mr. Skov found it interesting in the joint meeting that someone during the meeting had clearly stated that they were confused about how the information LUTSCO might be applied.

Mr. Nystrom believed that the Planning Commission's feedback regarding the LUTSCO memorandum needed to be taken as real. Mr. Nystrom stated he had also not really understood the LUTSCO memorandum the first time he read it.

Ms. Brand believed that the LUTSCO memo was useful to those who had a background on sustainability issues but might be too dense for those who did not. She urged that simpler land use messages that would create a basic level of understanding of sustainability matters were needed.

Mr. Bruce agreed with comments that indicated that a more gradual and basic introduction to the information contained in the LUTSCO memo might be more effective. He further suggested that the Eugene City Council was likely to have the same reaction to the LUTSCO memorandum as the Planning Commission members.

Mr. Funk stated it had been necessary for him to do multiple readings of the LUTSCO memo in order to understand it fully. He believed the information therein needed to be rearranged and presented in a more efficient manner.

Mr. Shaver recommended that the Sustainability Commission attempt to get on the City Council's meeting agenda as soon as possible even though the Commission's position regarding the LUTSCO memo had not yet been finalized. Mr. Bruce replied that an available slot in the Council's agenda would not open up before the spring of 2010.

Mr. Boles averred that he had argued for greater specificity in the LUTSCO memorandum and was saddened that it had been received as inaccessible. He hoped the document could be made more accessible to the various levels of the City's organization without sacrificing the quality of the information contained therein.

The Commission members discussed how the LUTSCO memorandum might be revised in order to make its content more accessible to the Planning Commission and other areas of the City.

Mr. Bruce suggested that the LUTSCO memorandum be left in its current form but also that different versions be developed in order to allow the intent of the memo to be communicated more effectively. Mr. Skov agreed with Mr. Bruce's suggestion.

Mr. Skov was alarmed that various barriers that had been identified in the LUTSCO memorandum had been met with confusion on the part of the Planning Commission as to how such barriers might be removed. Mr. Shaver responded that it might be difficult to change the collective thought processes of the Planning Commission in a manner that would allow them to address the identified barriers.

Mr. Skov, responding to comments from Ms. Jaworski, noted that the City's Sustainability Board was an internal group connected to internal city operations and as such was not set up to directly support the work of the Sustainability Commission.

The Commission members continued their discussion regarding ways in which the information from the LUTSCO memorandum and other sustainability related issues might be communicated more effectively.

Mr. Skov acknowledged that the Sustainability Commission had, to date, not been able to perform any specific, triple-bottom line related outreach to the Eugene City Council since the Commission had been constrained by other processes.

Mr. Boles suggested that, rather than approaching the City Council collectively, he might personally discuss the content of the LUTSCO memo with the Councilor who had appointed him. He further suggested that other Commission members might do the same.

Mr. Bonnett reminded the Commission members that they had put a policy recommendation before the City Council regarding discretionary road funding. He hoped that an update regarding that policy recommendation might be placed on the next Sustainability Commission meeting agenda.

Mr. Skov confirmed that Mr. Funk would produce a revised draft of the information from the LUTSCO memo for the next Sustainability Commission meeting.

Mr. Skov suggested that the joint Planning and Sustainability subcommittee would be ideally situated to review and discuss matters related to LUTSCO. He further agreed with Mr. Boles' previous suggestion that each Commission member contact their respective City Councilors regarding the content of the LUTSCO memo.

10. Closing-Next Meeting, Follow-up

Mr. Skov announced that there seemed to be a significant enough amount of outstanding Commission matters to fill the agenda for the next meeting but suggested that the Commission members contact him with any requests for agenda additions or adjustments.

Mr. Funk announced that Mr. Skov's wife was participating in a fundraiser for Haiti earthquake relief on March 12 at the Barrow Espresso Cafe.

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

(Recorded by Wade Hicks)