

# MINUTES

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

November 17, 2010  
5:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Josh Skov, Chair; Josh Bruce, Vice Chair; Lisa Arkin, Shawn Boles, Howard Bonnett, Teresa Brand, Dave Funk, Kathy Jaworski, Steve Newcomb, Rusty Rexius, Will Shaver, commissioners; Babe O’Sullivan, Keli Osborn, Michelle Mortenson, City Manager’s Office; Kurt Yeiter, Transportation Planning.

ABSENT: Alan Zelenka, commissioner.

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

## 1. Opening: Agenda Review, Minutes Approval

Mr. Skov reviewed the agenda and indicated he would provide time following public comment for a staff update. Responding to a question from Mr. Shaver about the agenda as it related to a statement in the minutes about the work plan, Mr. Skov anticipated the commission would discuss the work plan in December.

Mr. Skov announced that Mark Nystrom had resigned from the commission due to other commitments.

Mr. Skov called for corrections to the minutes of October 20. Mr. Boles reiterated his request for the name of a young man who spoke at James Hansen’s presentation. Mr. Bonnett noted the minutes indicated the commission agreed to consider a letter of support for the proposed Lane County floodplain ordinance, but he acknowledged that might be moot given the events that had transpired since the meeting. Mr. Skov agreed. Mr. Bonnett recalled Mr. Boles making a statement related to carbon pricing that he believed should be included in the minutes. Mr. Boles concurred.

Mr. Bonnett, seconded by Mr. Brand, moved to approve the minutes of October 20, 2010, as amended. The motion passed unanimously, 8:0 (Ms. Jaworski, Mr. Funk, and Mr. Newcomb having not yet arrived).

## 2. Public Comment

**Brandon Rishel** discussed his experience managing the Victoria Car Share Coop, a nonprofit car-sharing program in Victoria, BC, which grew from 9 to 20 vehicles during his tenure. He reported he was in the process of beginning a similar program, the Lane Car Share Coop, in Eugene and had an investor interested in purchasing shares. Mr. Rishel indicated his interest was in a non-profit car sharing program that kept money in the community and had a commitment to car sharing as a social benefit. He planned to start with conventional vehicles but wanted to incorporate electric vehicles in the program fleet at some point.

**Mark Robinowitz** noted that a report published by the International Energy Agency entitled “Saving Oil in a Hurry” found car sharing was more effective than free mass transit in the United States. While he hoped a car sharing program received support, he suggested it was a distraction because of the City’s commitment to highway construction. Mr. Robinowitz went on to criticize government at all levels for not being aggressive enough in addressing climate change, as evidenced by the fact that government continued to support highway construction. He also criticized plans in the northwest to construct incinerators and shared a map done by “environmentalists in Olympia” that demonstrated overlap for the sourcing for the new incinerators being installed around Puget Sound. Mr. Robinowitz averred that the forest would be strip-mined for incinerators.

Mr. Robinowitz hoped the commission considered conflicts of interest in future commission appointments and that people who opposed highway expansion would be considered. He recommended the commission rethink its approach due to decreased public support for strategies intended to address climate change.

Green Building Analyst Jenna Garman invited the commission’s involvement in designing a community engagement/action event focused on an upcoming screening of the documentary *Deep Green* at the MacDonald Theater. She shared a copy of the documentary with the commission. Mr. Bonnett and Ms. Brand agreed to preview the movie and come back to the commission with ideas for their involvement.

### **3. Items from Commissioners and Staff**

Mr. Shaver said that he continued to attend meetings of the West Eugene EmX Corridor Steering Committee and observed that Lane Transit District was facing some public relations issues regarding the proposed route.

Ms. Brand reported that there was a new Climate Masters Program starting Tuesday February 8 at Peterson Barn. Registration would begin in December, and 25 people could be accommodated.

Mr. Boles recommended the movie *Inside Job*, a movie about the financial crisis, currently playing at the Bijou.

Mr. Boles reported that he and Mr. Rexius continued to participate in the Envision Eugene process as members of the Community Resource Group (CRG), which was still largely focused on process. He anticipated a staff technical advisory team would be formed. He said much work remained to be done on the housing mix, infill opportunities, and the potential of zone changes to accommodate more housing units. Those recommendations were to go to the City Council in February 2010.

Responding to a question from Mr. Bruce, Mr. Boles anticipated that the CRG would look at both developed and undeveloped parcels for development potential after properties considered undevelopable were eliminated. Staff would identify and the CRG would review the properties considered to be redevelopable.

Mr. Bruce suggested the implication was that the CRG would assist staff in developing different figures than those identified in the Eugene Comprehensive Lands Assessment (ECLA). Mr. Boles believed the technical advisory team would revisit the ECLA numbers and determine if they needed to be adjusted. He also believed that the CRG would look at the consequences of different development scenarios in terms of how many residents could be absorbed within the existing urban growth boundary (UGB).

Mr. Rexius observed that some people were anxious about the numbers produced by ECLA, and

anticipated the technical advisory team would help the City determine if it needed to consider something different. Mr. Skov said not only ECLA's conclusions but the methodology behind them were of concern to many people.

Mr. Bonnett reported that the Fairmount Neighbors were doing a historic examination of the neighborhood and that process involved interviewing older people, who frequently spoke of role of neighborhood schools in community development. He suggested that School District 4J and the City of Eugene were working at odds as the district was proposing to close schools and the City was attempting to promote sustainability.

Speaking to Mr. Robinowitz' comments, Ms. Arkin noted her own opposition to forestry biomass.

Ms. Arkin reported on an environmental health forum held on November 16 in the Bethel neighborhood. The forum was part of a project funded by a grant provided to Centro Latino Americano and the Oregon Toxics Alliance by the Environmental Protection Agency's Environmental Justice Program. The forum included a report on the results of door-to-door surveys and canvassing in the neighborhood, which she hoped to share with the commission at a future meeting. She clarified, in response to a question from Ms. Brand, that the report was a not a baseline assessment of pollution, but rather the "experience of the pollution."

Ms. O'Sullivan introduced Michelle Mortenson of the City Manager's Office, who was present in support of the commission, and acknowledged Ms. Mortenson's efforts on behalf of the commission.

Ms. O'Sullivan reported that members of the commission had the opportunity to discuss the City's Climate and Energy Action Plan with the Eugene Area Chamber of Commerce's Local Government Affairs Council. She said the meeting had been very useful in terms of how to approach such groups. Ms. Brand requested a summary of the meeting that identified key issues that came up and some strategies that might work in communicating with such groups. Ms. O'Sullivan agreed.

Mr. Bruce recommended that the City take more advantage of the academic expertise focused on sustainability that was available through the University of Oregon (UO). Responding to a question from Mr. Boles about whether the UO's sustainability efforts occurred under the umbrella of an advisory committee, Mr. Bruce indicated such a committee had recently been formed. Mr. Bruce suggested the commission could recommend to the City Council that City staff work with particular groups on campus to achieve certain sustainability objectives. Mr. Boles suggested another approach would be to give the City's Climate and Energy Action Plan to the UO advisory committee and ask it where the UO's expertise fit against the goals and objectives in the plan. Mr. Skov recommended the commission schedule further discussion of the topic at its December meeting and suggested that those commissioners with professional or volunteer contacts with the UO e-mail who those contacts were to the commission's leadership.

Mr. Bruce recalled that the commission had discussed doing two outreach events in partnership with the Chamber and City Club and asked for an update at the next commission meeting.

Ms. Jaworski reported on the development training meeting provided to City boards and commissions, saying the neighborhood associations expressed considerable interest in connecting with the commission. She provided a brief summary of the meeting and indicated a similar training was scheduled in the spring, which she encouraged the commission to attend.

#### **4. Car Sharing – next steps**

Ms. Brand provided the update, reporting that the last car sharing stakeholders meeting was well-attended. Those in attendance included representatives of the UO, *point2point*, and the City, and the focus of the meeting was on how to make a car sharing program happen. She said a smaller working group was being formed to look at next steps in the process, including a request for proposals (RFP) to vendors. She noted that Mr. Rishel was on the list of potential vendors.

Ms. Brand noted the UO's interest in expanding its current car sharing program, and reported that the UO was in the process of hiring a transportation manager who would be responsible for moving that project forward. Ms. Jaworski emphasized the UO's commitment to the program and said its representatives had shared information regarding how the UO had already reduced student car use over time.

Speaking to the subject of who could champion such a program, Ms. Jaworski said the meeting participants had discussed the potential of a regional body to serve the role of the program's political champion. She acknowledged the issue of the program's convener was yet to be resolved.

Ms. Jaworski asked the commission to review the car sharing report and provide input to herself or Ms. Brand.

The commission discussed next steps. Ms. Jaworski reminded the commission that the council's direction regarding the program was focused on the needs of the West University Neighborhood, and she believed the commission's subcommittee had resolved that the neighborhood was suitable for such a program. Mr. Boles recommended that the commission forward that message to the council. The commission agreed to provide the council with a brief update at a January council work session, the date to be determined by the council's agenda.

## **5. Break**

Mr. Skov called for a brief break.

## **6. Land use and transportation—strategy, feedback for council**

The commission discussed its role in moving forward the proposed alternative for the West Eugene EmX extension route and the message it needed to deliver to the council and general public. Mr. Skov reported that Mayor Kitty Piercy and City Manager Jon Ruiz had indicated to Lane Transit District (LTD) that they would like the Coordinated Land Use and Transportation Action Committee (CLUTAC) to review the alternatives through the lens of the triple bottom line (TBL) before the Joint Locally Preferred Alternative Committee met. The CLUTAC would meet the following week, and Mr. Skov encouraged interested commissioners to attend the meeting.

Ms. Jaworski noted that Community Mediation Services (CMS) had been contracted by LTD to do mediation in relationship to EmX on West 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Mr. Skov asked Ms. O'Sullivan to find out what was planned in regard to the use of mediation.

Mr. Boles suggested the commission did not have to take a position in favor of a particular route, although it might inform that issue through CLUTAC. He thought the commission should clearly state that it was a good idea to have EmX in west Eugene.

The commission discussed concerns voiced by some members of the public in regard to the proposed alternative, which included concerns about lost parking, concerns about the impact from construction on commercial properties along the route, the operating costs of an EmX system, concerns about the funding model, and opposition to the federal funding underwriting the costs of the system.

Commissioners noted some different factors in support of an EmX route. Those included:

- The long-term financial viability of bus service versus EmX
- The need for public transit options in West Eugene in light of peak oil
- The fact that EmX was not just a transportation-related decision, and that the community could not consider the viability of EmX in a vacuum—Eugene would not be able to realize its density goals without such a system
- Avoid focus on “this route now” and focus on the long-term and how to accommodate population and job growth while maintaining a livable community
- Need to share the positive experiences of business owners on current LTD EmX routes
- Need to address misinformation about the costs of the system and be clear that the federal government would pay the largest share, which was typical of transportation projects
- Need to consider the issue in light of social equity and fairness—when discussing business disruption, need to point out that while some jobs might be lost by some people because of construction, other jobs will be created and the economy as a whole will not suffer
- Need to consider the issue of social equity for those living or working in the vicinity of the route and their access to transit and services in the absence of an automobile
- Point out that the system would give many residents access to services that would otherwise be hard for them to reach

The commission discussed several ideas for communicating about the topic and the audience for those communications. Suggestions for communication included op-ed articles, public forums, presentations to neighborhood groups, and one-on-one meetings with City Councilors.

Mr. Bruce recommended that the commission charge two members with writing an op-ed piece on the topic. Mr. Rexius was mentioned as one author, and Ms. Jaworski offered her assistance.

Ms. Osborn reminded the commission of the regularly scheduled opportunity for public comment available through the council’s Public Forum, and also encouraged commissioners to contact their “council buddies” to discuss the subject.

Transportation Planner Kurt Yeiter discussed LTD’s outreach to the community and business owners along West 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue and said that in response to what it had heard from property owners, LTD staff had redesigned part of the West 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue segment to phase in the improvements to lessen their impact and would provide that option to the Joint Locally Preferred Alternative Committee. He reminded the commission that the Eugene-Springfield Metropolitan General Area Plan envisioned EmX would play a major transportation role in the community and suggested that meant that over time, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> avenues would also be EmX corridors and it was an issue of what was done first.

Mr. Bruce, seconded by Ms. Jaworski, moved that two members of the Sustainability Commission write an op-ed article around EmX addressing general questions and issues that people should be asking.

Mr. Rexius said he had drafted some thoughts on the topic but preferred the commission author such a piece rather than commissioners as individuals given his potential conflict as a property owner in the vicinity of the route.

Mr. Boles suggested that rather than focus on EmX, the op-ed piece focus on policy issues related to transportation spending. He wanted the CLUTAC to examine that issue and make a recommendation to the council. Ms. Jaworski agreed the issue of transportation spending was important but pointed out that EmX was a time-sensitive issue. She suggested the commission adopt the motion and take advantage of what Mr. Rexius had written.

Mr. Funk pointed out that anyone could write an op-ed piece. He believed the project needed to be given context by placing it inside the larger picture of how the community would grow. He questioned the need for the motion.

Mr. Bruce withdrew his motion. Ms. Jaworski withdrew her second.

Mr. Bruce said the community lacked a clear understanding of what the City was trying to accomplish and he believed the project needed an educational component to counter the voices of opposition.

Mr. Boles encouraged Ms. Jaworski to write an op-ed article if she wished to do so. Mr. Skov offered his assistance to Ms. Jaworski. Ms. Jaworski indicated she would review key points from the discussion, solicit input from other commissioners, and prepare an article prior to the next commission meeting. Mr. Funk offered his assistance.

Mr. Skov solicited commissioners to volunteer to speak to the media about the topic and encouraged commissioners to contact their councilors to discuss the preferred alternative. He suggested that EmX could be the subject of one of the commission's public outreach events. The commission agreed to schedule further discussion at the next meeting. Mr. Skov then solicited commissioners' interest in visits to the neighborhood associations. There was general support for such visits. Ms. Brand recommended that the commissioners establish closer ties to their neighborhood associations as a general goal. Mr. Funk recommended that commissioners be provided with talking points when addressing neighborhood associations. Commissioners agreed, and Mr. Skov agreed to share some notes to facilitate that effort.

## **7. Closing Call for Agenda Items**

Mr. Skov adjourned the meeting at 8:20 p.m.

*(Recorded by Kimberly Young)*