



MINUTES

Eugene Sustainability Commission
Atrium, Saul Room
Eugene, Oregon

February 19, 2014
5:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Kathi Jaworski, Steve Newcomb, Sasha Luftig, Sue Wolling, Alan Zelenka, Joanne Gross, Shawn Boles, Howard Saxion, Carolyn Stein, Dawn Lesley, commissioners. Babe O'Sullivan, Matt McRae, City Manager's Office.
ABSENT: Paul Nielson, Howard Bonnett

Ms. Jaworski called the February 19, 2014, meeting of the Sustainability Commission to order.

1. Opening - agenda review, approval of minutes

Ms. Jaworski called for corrections or clarifications to the January 15, 2014 minutes.
Mr. Saxion, seconded by Mr. Boles, moved to approve the January 15, 2014 minutes as submitted. The motion passed, 8:0.

2. Public comment

Mark Robinowitz addressed the commission on the topics of climate action, limits to growth and resource depletion, nuclear energy, peak energy, logging and highway expansion.

Ann Sheerer with the Oregon Leadership in Sustainability Program (OLIS) introduced students attending the meeting.

3. Sub-committee reports

Carbon fee

Mr. Saxion reported that the carbon fee study expected out around November 2014. The Oregon Climate Action Network is holding monthly phone calls about the carbon fee topic. The committee is interested in looking into local carbon credits - to see what other municipal governments are doing. Mr. Boles wants to work with UO students or others to see what local carbon fees can be put in place while waiting for state action. Local carbon fees could be used for local projects that are more closely related to those people paying the carbon fee. Councilor Zelenka sent out a synopsis of the carbon fee research work plan developed by Portland State University.

Housing density

Ms. Luftig reported that committee members and Babe O'Sullivan met with Mia Nelson from 1000 Friends of Oregon. Several aspects of the housing density topic were discussed including:

- Density will influence the need for expansion of the Urban Growth Boundary.
- There has been a big shift in the mix of housing that has been built in the last few years, most of it multi-family.
- This suggests a need to re-examine assumptions about the housing mix (45 % multi-family: 55% single family) contained in the 20 year land use plan.

- The City is experiencing push back on some of the strategies that would increase residential density.
- Envision Eugene calls for a 50% increase in Secondary Dwelling Units - but this would amount to only 13 units city-wide

Ms. Jaworski mentioned that there are examples of rezoning from multifamily to single family in North Eugene. It isn't just student housing that is driving new multifamily housing. senior housing and other multifamily housing projects are common across town - and a shift away from historic development patterns.

In discussion of next steps, it was noted that the agenda for the Envision Eugene Technical Resource Group has been pretty loose. Ms. Luftig will develop talking points for commissioners wishing to provide public testimony or meet with their councilors and will include a list of decision points. Councilor Zelenka mentioned there is nothing on the current council agenda that addresses Envision Eugene or density.

Triple Bottom Line

Ms. Jaworski reported that the sub-committee is reviewing the city's use of TBL beginning with decisions that have gone to council. Initial findings suggest that where applied, the TBL did have an impact but that it is not being used for the majority of council discussions. The committee plans to make a matrix of projects and decisions that have come before council and when or if a TBL or TBL-like tool was used. The group will develop a diagram to help inform the dialogue about when and where TBL could be used or used more effectively. The group will meet with Lisa Arkin (Oregon Toxics Alliance) and Stephanie Jennings (City of Eugene Community Development) to get a report on brownfield development and the Lane Livability Consortium Equity and Opportunity Assessment to better understand the impacts on environmental equity.

Ms. Gross shared that the sub-committee is discussing gross happiness indicators or wellness indicators as an alternative to Gross Domestic Product. Governor Kitzhaber is interested in this as well. The sub-committee contacted Jamie Damon who is associated with state level efforts but with no response yet. The sub-committee has also been looking into the STAR community rating tool, which is in a pilot phase. This tool doesn't seem to involve the public - a concern for the sub-committee. STAR could highlight weak spots such as social equity issues that are less well known.

Food policy

Ms. Gross shared that the food committee is looking to Alan Zelenka and Greg Evans to provide direction. Ms. Jaworski reported that she and Vice Chair Steve Newcomb met with Mia Cariaga (Division Manager, City Manager's Office) to discuss the slow response from the City Manager's Office to requests for information - most recently regarding food issues. Ms. Cariaga committed to a more rapid turnaround in the future.

Transportation

Ms. Wolling shared no progress this month. With the departure of one member, there is interest in other commission members joining this committee. The sub-committee would like to see a complete streets policy adopted by the City so that the default design for road projects accommodates all modes of transportation. Shawn Boles - suggest that we prioritize projects based on lifecycle GHG emissions including embodied emissions of a project.

In discussion about the South Willamette Street project and the possibility of a trial period to test a new configuration, Ms. Luftig pointed out:

- There's plenty of research indicating that a five lane version would be effective.
- Concern that it may drag out the process - and a trial process ("studying it to death") is expensive.

- It is not also clear how to determine success of the project. A trial wouldn't include all of the intended changes including consolidation of driveways and improved crosswalks. A trial may also take a long time in order to determine success.

Councilor Zelenka supports the idea of a trial but acknowledged there are political dimensions to the idea:

- People who want four lanes don't believe the data.
- In Ashland, a test drive of a new configuration was successful and built political capital.
- A road diet is new to Eugene and a test project could help ease into change.

Ms. Luftig suggested a meeting with commissioners and City transportation planning staff to discuss the pros and cons of a trial. An open meeting for commissioners between now and the next meeting would be beneficial.

4. Climate action planning

Julia Olson and Gordon Levitt representing Our Children's Trust joined the discussion of the proposed Climate Recovery Ordinance scheduled for a council work session on March 10. Councilor Zelenka clarified his intent by bringing this to Council is not to bring up for discussion the science of climate change but to commit the City to targets via an ordinance.

Some of the issues raised in the discussion of the ordinance included:

- Suggestion from Ms. Olson for a prescribed remedy or consequence if the community doesn't meet the targets in 2020. If a consequence is prescribed, it would prevent litigation or a judicial hearing to determine the consequence.
- An ordinance is typically short in format and does not include a lot of background information or findings.
- Interest and support from several commissioners in creating an ordinance with binding commitment to meet existing targets. The Council session is an opportunity to see if councilors support the idea.
- Concern that the overall approach is authoritarian and will have negative impact at the personal level, particularly for individuals who have built businesses that are auto-dependent.
- Concern about changing targets in the course of making the commitment to meet them.
- Legal pressure to meet targets may lead council to adopt overly aggressive regulations.

The commission unanimously agreed on the following communication to council:

In reference to the Our Children's Trust proposed climate recovery ordinance, the Sustainability Commission urges the Eugene City Council to adopt an ordinance before the 2014 summer break (July 31) that codifies the City's unanimously adopted City goals of a) reducing internal GHG emissions to be carbon neutral by 2020 and b) reducing community fossil fuel use 50% by 2030 and includes a mechanism for enforcement and accountability.

It was requested that staff develop this in memo format and cc the City Manager.

5. Break

6. FY 15 budget

Ms. Jaworski reported that she and commissioners Bonnett, Boles and Wolling had testified at the recent Budget Committee meeting about the FY 14 budget and proposed cuts and the impact on city sustainability efforts. She expressed frustration with the process and doubt that the message about sustainability, and its potential economic benefits, was heard. She also suggested that the commissioners could make more progress as advocates from the outside instead of working from the

inside and being “muzzled” to some extent. Other commissioners expressed similar frustration and a sense of powerlessness.

No additional action was proposed. Ms. O’Sullivan pointed out that the City Manager would be delivering his proposed budget strategy the following week to City Council. It won’t be specific but should give an indication of his intent.

7. FY 14 Work Plan mid-year review

The commission reviewed its current work plan and reported the following updates:

- Envision Eugene - a housing density sub- committee was established. Statement supporting commitment to climate related goals supports climate pillar.
- Food policy - met with city staff about zoning and planning to bolster the food system. Council work session on the topic in October. Work with Councilors Zelenka and Evans to develop Task Force.
- Sustainable Business Practices - final memo with projects results completed and submitted to City Manager.
- Transportation System Plan - continuing involvement with the Transportation System Plan. Gathering information on complete streets concept.
- Triple Bottom Line - on track to produce deliverables.
- City Budget Process - on track with action items. Submitted a memo and provided testimony to the Budget Committee.
- Carbon Fee - on track to create a policy recommendation. Interested in pursuing how to set up a local carbon offset program.
- Other work requests - The Climate Recovery Ordinance is new item (from Our Children’s Trust). Statement to council in support of codifying current goals.

8. Items from commissioners and staff

Ms. Luftig: She and Ms. Wolling will go to the SE Neighbors meeting next Tuesday. Ms. O’Sullivan agreed to provide talking points on the commission’s mission and current work plan priorities.

Ms. Jaworski suggested creating talking points and a PowerPoint presentation after each new work plan is approved.

Ms. Wolling: Robin Quirke is doing a research project with Tom Bowerman about consumption and looking for participants. Ms. Jaworski and Stein indicated an interest in participating.

Other announcements:

- Gil Penalosa will be speaking at the Hilton the following morning.
- James Hansen will do a private reception through the PIELC program.
- Mr. Newcomb will be gone for the next meeting.

9. Closing

The next meeting of the commission is March 19, 2014. Ms. Jaworski adjourned the meeting at 8:30 PM.

(recorded by Matt McRae)