



Eugene Sustainability Commission

MINUTES

Eugene Sustainability Commission
Atrium, Saul Room
Eugene, Oregon

July 16, 2014
5:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Shawn Boles, Howard Bonnett, Summer Cox, Joanne Gross, Dawn Lesley, Sasha Luftig, Steve Newcomb, Justin Overdevest, Howard Saxion, Carolyn Stein, David Tam, Sue Wolling, Alan Zelenka, commissioners. Babe O’Sullivan, Matt McRae, City Manager’s Office.

ABSENT: None

Mr. Newcomb called the July 16, 2014 meeting of the Sustainability Commission to order.

1. Opening – agenda review, approval of minutes

Mr. Newcomb made changes to the agenda including:

- Add introduction of new commissioner Justin Overdevest
- Eliminating Item 6 (Discussion item: working agreements, dissenting opinions) to allow discussion of a draft letter on the Beltline Highway Improvements

He then called for corrections or clarifications to the June 18, 2014 minutes.

Mr. Saxion , seconded by Ms.Lesley , moved to approve the June 18, 2014 minutes as submitted. The motion passed, 13:0.

Mr. Bonnett requested clarification about the schedule of public hearings and forums for commissioners to speak about the Climate Recovery Ordinance and the proposed motion to establish a Food Task Force. The Climate Recovery Ordinance is included in the July 21 public hearing and the Food Task Force topic is scheduled for a work session in September.

2. Public comment

Mark Robinowitz – provided comment on the City Council meeting two weeks ago on the ODOT Beltline Highway project. He also spoke about concerns with the Climate Recovery Ordinance.

New commissioner Justin Overdevest introduced himself. He is an associate at Good Company, working on sustainability related topics such as the Triple Bottom Line and sustainable food. He has also worked with Latin American countries.

3. Sub-committee reports

Triple Bottom Line

The sub-committee reported that they had met with city staff to discuss the use of the Triple Bottom Line on specific projects and decisions. Former commissioner Kathi Jaworski is working on a summary report of the sub-committee's findings. The group is also reviewing reports on the use of the Genuine Progress Indicator in other cities and hopes to bring forward a recommendation on this in the future.

Transportation

The sub-committee presented a draft letter on the Beltline Highway Improvement project. Ms. Wolling discussed the Beltline project, reporting on project proposals. There is a placeholder in Transportation System Plan (TSP) to be approved in 2015. This will be followed by federal environmental review and construction in 10 years.

The commission discussed various aspects of the issue and the contents of the draft letter including:

- Questions about the timing and jurisdiction: this is an ODOT issue not City issue and it doesn't appear to be an urgent issue with Council.
- The issue should be framed in terms of a larger policy of transportation funding, embodied energy and GHG emissions.
- Concern about the traffic projections on which the project is based. There was a low-build option on the table but it was removed because it didn't appear to meet the state criteria. The commission should look at the criteria for the low-build option and provide a critique.
- The commission should consult with the Mayor and councilors about how to bring a letter forward. Perhaps the commission should start with Councilors Syrett and Clark to build support. Can make an argument with Councilor Clark that the safety issues can be fixed without spending \$200 M.
- Suggested content for the letter:
 - Modify the letter to include an over-arching policy about use of transportation funds.
 - Use points that resonate with people to make the letter effective, e.g. "let's be smart and consistent in our policy."
 - Project needs to address transit (EmX).
 - The letter needs to be more specific about positive options, not just critique of 3 proposed.
 - Making a strong statement is important – fiscal responsibility and safety issues are arguments to lead with.
- The commission should get started in developing its response and strategy. Letters without support haven't worked. Further action should be based on work plan review, retreat and further discussion with councilors/Mayor.

Action item: Bring the issue/letter back on the September meeting agenda.

The sub-committee is also preparing comments on the policies proposed for the TSP and will submit as individuals.

4. Commission work-planning retreat preparation

The commission reviewed the FY 14 (July 2013-June 2014) work plan and discussed successes, challenges and lessons learned.

Envision Eugene: The housing density item provides the commission with the best chance of influencing implementation of Envision Eugene. Feedback from the Mayor and City Manager confirmed this. Ms.

Luftig spoke with Planning Commission Chair Bill Randall about making this a major focus of joint work through CLUTAC which could address both policy framing and communicating to neighborhoods to avoid fear, reaction. The commission made an impact with industrial expansion and environmental justice issues; more work, study, and consultations resulted. The housing mix issue may be a moot point with staff indicating that it is likely to not be revisited. It's not clear when there is a council decision point on Urban Growth Boundary expansion for single family housing - maybe fall or early 2015. The commission needs to think about strategic options in the retreat. The question was asked whether neighborhood interests were driving land use decisions –and it's our job to keep reminding the Councilors to look at the big picture.

Transportation: Individuals on the sub-committee have testified as individuals and had some impact. The complete streets policy in the TSP needs some refinement. There is continued work on this item in the coming year. Commissioner Bonnett is asking for an extension of the deadline for comments on TSP policies. Councilor Zelenka suggested that Council should ask the commission to weigh in independent of the deadline and he could make a motion at council to this effect.

Sustainable Business Practices: This item was carried over from the previous year's work plan having been championed by former commissioners Rusty Rexius and Dave Funk. It was a qualitative assessment of the City's approach to assisting businesses but was not the most effective process. It's a good example of a work item generated within the commission that didn't have any traction with the City Manager or Council. The resulting memo didn't build credibility with the business community and the original survey tool was took a negative approach. There was no collaboration with any partners. This project is a good example of what not to do. The commission doesn't lack credibility with the business community (as suggested by the City Manager) but could build this. How to build credibility with City Manager should be discussed at the retreat. Business assistance is not through the commission but city support of Bring program.

5. BREAK

6. Commission work planning retreat preparation continued

The commission continued its review of the FY 14 work plan.

TBL: The sub-committee is working to prepare its report. TBL is not a formalized process in the City – variable in its application. It is not the commission's role to be keepers of TBL. Staff lack understanding of how to use TBL and there are a variety of tools available. Sub-committee has gotten close to bringing forward recommendations about triggers, appropriate tools, etc. The topic is worthy of another year's work. The commission can provide more help in determining when and how TBL is used and the Mayor has requested this.

Action item: staff to send out link for LLC report on TBL tools (authors Zako and Moore).

Not appropriate to keep pushing for culture change in city where leadership doesn't prioritize this. Could issue annual report card on decision making but this may not be the most effective way to promote its use. The sub-committee should wrap up its work in the coming year.

City budget process: The commission "rose to the occasion," and pulled together a good document with well-developed information. The commission may need to do this again. The effort was as successful as

it could have been. It elevated the value of what the commission does. Commissioners testified multiple times to the budget committee and this is a good strategy for future issues. TBL needs to be included in budget decisions.

Carbon fee: Commissioners are monitoring what's happening at the state level, awaiting the legislative study (under development by Portland State University) that's due in October. While the commission was unsuccessful in moving a draft resolution forward on carbon pricing, Our Children's Trust was able to get a Climate Recovery Ordinance considered because they kept coming back to council. It helped that there was constant pressure in front of the council to address this issue. The commission also drafted several documents summarizing climate science and findings. Operating on the squeaky wheel principle will not advance social equity. Those who don't have the resources and the time won't have the means to speak up in front of council.

Local food policy: If the proposed food task force is established, what is the ongoing role for the commission? The task force should address the issues from a regional perspective. It should be able to meet the need for developing a study on the barriers to a sustainable food system.

Work requests: The Climate Recovery Ordinance was an outside work request from Our Children's Trust and it provides a useful lesson on strategy. The commission cannot just write a resolution and expect it to go somewhere. It needs to apply constant pressure, repeatedly, to the entire council. There was some important synergy with Councilor Zelenka developing and putting forward a refined proposal. The OCT original draft ordinance lacked support. It probably couldn't have advanced without both efforts.

The commission also discussed feedback received from the Mayor and City Manager and other input:

- Can the Mayor help build a relationship with the Human Rights Commission?
- Outcomes from the student report evaluating the effectiveness of the commission suggest the need for a vision quest.
- May want to have commissioners interview their appointing councilors since they were not interviewed during the student research.
- Suggestions for being more effective:
 - Alignment with council goals
 - Take opportunities for more frequent interactions with council
 - Speak at every public forum or hearing instead of continued sub-committee work
 - Rally friends and connections (e.g. GreenLane)
 - Meet with appointing councilors on regular basis

7. Election of Officers

Mr. Boles, seconded by Ms. Stein, nominated Steve Newcomb as commission chair and Howard Saxion as vice chair for the year beginning July 2014. Mr. Newcomb and Mr. Saxion were elected on a vote of 11:0.

8. Items from commissioners and staff

Councilor Zelenka reported:

- Scenario planning is moving forward at Metropolitan Planning Council level. A public workshop is scheduled for July 24.

- There is a community-supported shelter fund raiser block party on July 19.
- City Council passed a fossil fuel divestment resolution on a vote of 6:2.
- The new city hall should be close to a net-zero energy building with further action (installation of solar panels).

Ms. Luftig reported that a Sunday Streets event is scheduled for this Sunday.

Ms. Gross shared that a meeting with landowners was held in relation to Envision Eugene but farmers who are actually renting farm land were not given a voice.

9. Closing

The next meeting of the commission is August 26, 2014. Mr. Newcomb adjourned the meeting at 8:30 PM.

Recorded by Babe O'Sullivan