



Eugene Sustainability Commission

MINUTES

Eugene Sustainability Commission
Atrium, Saul Room
Eugene, Oregon

March 20, 2019
5:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Kelsey Zlevor, Sue Wolling, Howard Saxion, Ralph McDonald, Zach Mulholland, Greg Ringer, Jon Kloor, Doug Edwards, Thomas Price, Councilor Emily Semple, Mark Nystrom – staff, and Elena Domingo-staff

ABSENT: Kevin O'Brien, Art Farley, Jennifer Hayward

Opening

- Chair Zlevor called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.
- Commissioner Kloor moved to approve the February Meeting Minutes and Commissioner Saxion seconded. Approved – Zlevor and Semple abstained.

Public Comment

Jim Ball shared information about a YouTube video that explains the Duck Curve, which is a graph that represents some of the problems California is facing for integrating so much wind and solar energy into their electrical grid.

Linda Heyl with 350 Eugene talked about the importance of reducing emissions from natural gas and wanted NW Natural representatives to hear what citizens are thinking. She said that inventories show that natural gas use has increased, and the next ten years are crucial for transition away from natural gas.

Jim Neu thanked the Sustainability Commission for recommending that City Council consider prohibiting new natural gas infrastructure, prohibiting financial incentives for installing natural gas services and appliances, and prohibiting installation of natural gas service for new residential, commercial, and industrial buildings in the proposed new NW Gas franchise agreement. He raised concerns about how the decarbonization plan does not incorporate the full life cycle of the product, including fracking methods. Gas should go the same direction as coal.

Chuck Areford made comments about the decarbonization presentation from NW Natural. He said that it leaves out the most important aspect of climate change, the leaked methane that occurs during fracking and that methane is a much more potent ghg than carbon dioxide.

Public Comment Response from Commissioners

Commissioner Price thanked the public speakers and attendees and asked for the speakers to forward any documents they had to the Commission.

Commissioner Kloor declared a potential conflict of interest because he is currently employed by NW Natural.

Commissioner McDonald thanked attendees for coming and 350 Eugene for their community engagement. He encouraged people to support the City Council proposals related to plastic service ware and to participate in the City's curbside food waste recycling program that will roll out this spring/summer.

Chair Zlevor addressed the fact that the agenda did not get approved at the opening of the meeting.

- Agenda Review. Commissioner Wolling moved to approve the agenda and Commissioner Edwards seconded. Approved unanimously.

NW Natural Deep Decarbonization Presentation

Shanna Brownstein with NW Natural presented information about their deep decarbonization goals and responded to some of the public comments that were made. She shared NW Natural's hope to lead the way for the country on how to decarbonize a natural gas system.

Commissioners asked questions related to methane leakage in the natural gas delivery structure (including upstream production), NW Natural's total carbon footprint, the cost difference between biogas and conventional gas, how to encourage production of renewable natural gas, and options for potential partnerships.

Break

Committee Reports

Working Agreement Revisions Committee

Chair Zlevor gave the committee update. The committee has met twice to discuss the working agreements and they are putting together a decision tree on how policy gets passed through the Sustainability Commission. They are trying to figure out a track that would expedite issues and keep the Commission involved, fulfilling a trusted advisory role to City Council. They intend to meet one more time before coming back to the Commission as a whole.

Food Waste Committee

Commissioner McDonald gave the committee update. They have had some scheduling issues with people out of town and the snowstorm. The next meeting is April 10th at 1:00pm, likely in Room 210. The good news is that after a successful pilot program in

certain neighborhoods, the City is rolling out a citywide curbside food waste recycling program this spring/summer.

Natural Gas Committee

Commissioner Mulholland gave the committee update. The committee discussed how they'd like to go back to the policy options that were put on the table and gather the data necessary to vet those proposals. Then, they could potentially make a final recommendation based on the costs and benefits to various options – thinking through political feasibility, technical feasibility, etc.

CAP 2.0 Review Committee

Commissioner Mulholland reported that the committee has not yet met. The committee intends to meet to respond to comments that are gathered during the community review process after the final draft of the CAP is released.

Work Plan Review

Chair Zlevor went through the 2019 Work Plan.

1. City Council Engagement: The Commission constantly infuses City Council engagement throughout their work.
2. Climate Change Policy: CAP 2.0 outreach and policy input, waste reduction policy, and natural gas are all underway. The three future items include the Transportation System Plan, biophilic design, and neighborhood preparedness.
3. FY18 Follow-Up of Proposals Sent to City Council: Riverfront Property. Encouraged people to attend Riverfront Redevelopment Open House on March 28th at 5:30pm in the Atrium lobby.
4. Monitor: Continue to monitor Envision Eugene progress and housing issues.
5. Emerging Issues: Address unforeseen sustainability-related items.

Chair Zlevor asked commissioners to send any speaker recommendations to her and Vice Chair Wolling. She also mentioned that as the current chair of the Sustainability Commission, she is open to feedback from the group.

Commissioner McDonald said that at the retreat, he suggested the topic of neighborhood preparedness. He isn't able to start a committee related to this right now, but the snowstorm was an example of the need for neighborhood preparedness. Would like to have a presentation or input about what did or didn't go well during the snowstorm and how the City can help neighborhoods in emergencies.

Commissioner Price said that LTD has asked him to look at some of the issues and thought processes around modes of travel. We are currently prioritizing privately owned vehicles instead of mass transit, as displayed in the storm response.

Commissioner Mulholland noted that it has not yet been scheduled for City Council to talk about home energy scores. He wants to know what a fully funded TSP would look like. There has been a lot of conversation around ADUs and he wonders if there's a place for

Sustainability Commission to weigh in on the discussion. He also thinks that an emergency preparedness presentation would be great.

Vice Chair Wolling said that the Sustainability Commission should consider recommendations regarding Envision Eugene, Transit Tomorrow, and the TSP to make sure people are looking at them from a climate perspective.

Council Update

Councilor Semple spoke about recent City Council action related to single-use plastics. They have asked staff to draft an ordinance that would require retail food businesses to provide utensils only upon request, which includes stirrers, straws, and service ware. A public hearing will be held in May or June. They are also considering a polystyrene ban and a plastic bag ban for restaurants and carry out, similar to the ban for stores. She talked about the lack of good alternatives and considerations when looking at the production of paper vs. plastic. The City will also be monitoring action taken by the state on this issue.

Councilor Semple also talked about the riverfront park and how she is pleased with the consideration of public input and how the plan has evolved. The initial park development will be greenspace with bikeways and overlooks and the plaza will be done later. NW Natural is scheduled to present to City Council on May 22nd.

The City Council passed the Capital Improvement Program (CIP), which included a lot of ghg emission calculations. The ADU conversation is not over, a proposed ordinance and public hearing will be held on May 20th with another work session in June.

Commissioner Mulholland asked if it would make sense for a subgroup to meet and make comments on a single-use plastics proposal that comes out and to send someone to the public hearing with a Sustainability Commission recommendation. He made a motion to reform the Waste Reduction committee for a month.

Commissioner McDonald responded, saying there is already a plan for Commissioner Farley to re-read the letter regarding single-use plastics to City Council.

Commissioner Mulholland retracted his motion and said that he will put forth the committee proposal next month.

Commissioner McDonald proposed that the Food Waste Committee draft a letter regarding single-use plastics to bring to the City Council hearing in April.

Updates from Commissioners and Staff

Mark Nystrom invited everyone to the River Road-Santa Clara neighborhood planning events on April 7th and 10th. He gave an update that staff is working on an Internal Climate Action Plan update. This update will help advise City Council about their options as 2020 approaches.

Mark noted that the state legislative deadline to schedule a hearing is late March. At that time, we will know which bills will not be moving forward. Related legislation includes a plastic bag ban, straw ban, polystyrene ban, auto dismantling, mattress and pharmaceutical EPRs, electric vehicles, and affordable housing.

He addressed the CAP 2.0, saying that the Eugene Climate Collaborative continues to meet, and staff are working with DEQ to get the most recent consumption-based inventory.

Commissioner Price noted that Greenlane Sustainable Business Network asked the Mayor to speak with them in April.

Commissioner McDonald said he would like to see plastic cups included in the City's ordinance. Plastic cups kill turtles and animals that paper cups don't and there are many environmental costs of plastic to consider beyond its production.

Commissioner Mulholland is hoping City Council can move faster on electric vehicles and TSP funding.

Adjourned 7:34pm

Recorded by Elena Domingo