

**MINUTES FOR THE ASHLAND CONSERVATION COMMISSION**  
**Wednesday, March 18, 2015**  
**Siskiyou Room, 51 Winburn Way**

**1. Call to Order**

Marni Koopman called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. in the Siskiyou Room.

Commissioners Thomas Beam, Mark Weir, Roxanne Biegel-Coryell, Jim McGinnis, Risa Buck, Jim Hartman and Councilor Mike Morris were present. Staff member Adam Hanks was present. Commissioners Shel Silverberg and Bryan Sohl were absent.

**2. Consent Agenda**

**Buck/Weir m/s to approve the minutes of February 25, 2015, with amendment showing Koopman called the meeting to order, not Weir. Voice vote: All Ayes. Motion passes.**

**3. Announcements**

The next commission meeting will be held on April 29, as the usual meeting date is the same week as the Earth Bowl and the commission would like maximum participation at both. The climate and energy subcommittee will meet on April 1 and 15 at 2:00 pm.

Earth Bowl will take place on April 20, from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. at the Ashland Middle School auditorium.

The annual FireWise clean up day will be April 25<sup>th</sup> this year from 9:00 am – 4:00 pm at the Valley View Transfer station.

**4. Public Forum**

Huelz – Informed the group that at the City Council Study Session on Monday there was a presentation regarding the WISE Project, which was very informative. He encouraged the group to learn more about the presentation. He would like the City to create a policy for procuring solar generators. He explained some of the challenges of financing solar power (high initial expense) and how it will require creative financing to overcome those challenges. Currently, solar power is really only available to the wealthy. The City needs to hire an MBA to come up with ways to finance these projects. Also he would like to have an award system where each year the best panel installation would get awarded with a percentage of the cost of the system being refunded.

**5. Reports/ Presentations/ Updates**

*Introduction of Compost Class Instructor* – Buck informed the group that she asked the new instructor to postpone, as she was concerned about the length of the agenda for this meeting. He will come next meeting.

Council – Councilor Morris thought the Climate Action Plan presentation on Monday night was well received by the Council. He hopes that it can proceed and be finished without being too politicized. He believes that this is a good group work on it with good ideas. Gave a brief overview of the WISE project and how it involves the use of TID. He's concerned it would change the hydrology of the entire area. The group asked how to get the community to show support for the Climate Action Plan without becoming political. Morris suggested that they

encourage folks to attend public forums and to encourage Council individually but understand that Council gets hundreds of e-mails a day on some topics.

*City Conservation & Operations* – Hanks informed the group staff member, Julie Smitherman will be at the next Commission meeting to discuss drought issues and to take questions regarding water conservation. We currently are preparing to release an RFP for a facilities water audit, staff is just waiting to see if Parks will join us or do an audit separately. Hanks spoke to the group about the positive progress which continues at the wastewater treatment plant and how we have some new projects going for energy savings which are all BPA funding eligible. He stated that because of the work done at the wastewater plant the water treatment plant manager is starting to look for projects for energy savings as well.

*Earth Bowl* – Hartman is currently reviewing the questions submitted for the test. So far the questions are pretty challenging but will be good for the competition. Weir stated that they already have five team signed up to compete. He has put together a study guide packet with resources for all the questions as well as some sample questions. There are SOU students who will be acting as coaches for the teams. The trophy is almost completed. The subcommittee is reaching out to lots of media outlets to get the word out regarding the competition.

*Fourth of July* – Buck informed the group that the subcommittee decided that they would do a visual of how much trash an average household creates per year. It will be similar to previous parade entries, but the group will not be at the end of the parade, nor will they be collecting trash or recycling. Instead this will be an educational opportunity for spectators. Group suggested maybe adding in a component showing how much trash created could be reduced by using recycling.

*SOU Quarterly Update* – Biegell-Coryell reviewed the update which was included in the packet. Was encouraged by all the recent successes. She also highlighted the upcoming Arbor Day celebration on April 8<sup>th</sup>, as the tree of the year is on the SOU campus.

## **6. Old Business**

*Sneak Preview Column* – Due to timing issues, Weir suggested that the water conservation article get swapped with the Climate Action Plan article. Hartman reminded the group that a picture can be submitted with the article. Group gave a few minor suggestions for editing the Climate Action Plan article.

**Weir/Buck m/s to approve the Climate Action Plan article, with the proposed edits. Voice Vote: All Ayes. Motion Passes.**

**Biegell-Coryell/Buck m/s to approve the Water Conservation article with any edits the group sends in time for the May edition deadline. Discussion:** Hanks suggested that the city's water url be included in the article. **Voice Vote: All Ayes. Motion Passes.**

Upcoming column topics:

- June – Compost Classes, written by Buck
- July – School Efficiency Improvements, written by Hartman

*Earth Day Sponsorship* – Hanks wanted the group give the okay that the Conservation Department would be covering the sponsorship funds this year. If, however, the commission would like some presence at the event the Conservation Department is happy to share their booth space. This year's funding is at a similar level to previous years, the only change really is what line item the funds are coming from. Group agreed this would work.

*Climate Action Plan Presentation recap* – Biegell-Coryell gave an overview of the study session. She thought it was a good presentation and that the Council was receptive and asked good questions. Sohl had found lots of good information about the Eugene plan, which was helpful. Eugene has two dedicated staff members and one temporary staff member to create and implement the plan. Eugene staff said that any plan must be in place before goals can be made or achieved. Hanks reviewed the possible committee approval process. Group thanked the subcommittee for their hard work.

## **7. New Business**

*Recognition of Commissioner Beam's Tenure* – Hanks provided a certificate for the group to sign in thanks to Beam for his efforts. Beam stated he had recently met with the Mayor regarding his time on the commission. During the meeting, the Mayor stated that he would like to have a watershed festival. Beam would like to encourage the commission to consider taking this on or partnering with other groups to create this festival. Buck stated that there is already the Bear Creek Salmon Festival, maybe it's better to expand that festival to be about the larger watershed. Group requested that this topic be added to the June agenda.

Group thanked Beam for his work on the commission. Beam informed the group that he will soon be giving a presentation to the Jackson County Soil and Water agency regarding the work recently done on his property. It was a great process. He offered to come talk to the commission at a later date to give information on what he's learned. He thanked the group for their work and integrity.

## **8. Wrap Up**

Group requested that a update regarding the plastic bag ban and a discussion of the possibility of adding dog stations to the downtown core be scheduled for an upcoming meeting. Also, the vote for new chair and vice chair should be on the next agenda.

Meeting adjourned at 7:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Diana Shiplet  
Executive Secretary