

ASHLAND CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Meeting Agenda

March 23, 2016 – 6:00 PM

Community Development Building, Siskiyou Room
51 Winburn Way

1. Call to Order

2. Consent Agenda

2.1. Minutes February 24, 2016 Commission meeting

3. Announcements (10 min)

3.1. Next Regular Meeting: April 27, 2016

3.2. Upcoming Sub-committee meetings

- Conservation Classes – 2016
- Fourth of July - ??

3.3. Other Announcements from Commissioners

4. Public Forum (10 min to be evenly divided by public wishing to speak)

5. Reports / Presentations/Updates (15 min)

5.1. Downtown Recycling – Buck (5 min)

5.2. Council - Councilor Rosenthal (5 min)

5.3. Low Impact Living Workshop Series – Buck (5 min)

5.4. City Conservation & Operations – Deferred to April

6. Old Business (30 min)

6.1 Commission Monthly Column in Sneak Preview (5 min)

b. April – Climate Challenge/Earth Day - Koopman

c. May – Plastics Recycling - Buck

d. June – Water Conservation – Cruikshank/Weir

e. July - Conservation Classes – Buck

f. August - Climate Action Plan Update – McGinnis/Sohl/Biegel-Coryell

g. September – Living with Wildlife – Cruikshank

h. October - Meet your Commissioners - ??

6.2 Climate & Energy Action Plan – Project Update (15 min)

6.3 Rogue Valley Earth Day – Participation planning (10 min)

7. New Business (10 min)

7.1 Nomination/Vote of Chair/Vice Chair

8. Wrap Up (5 min)

8.1 Items to be added to next agenda

8.2 Adjournment (8 PM)

MINUTES FOR THE ASHLAND CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Wednesday, February 24, 2016
Siskiyou Room, 51 Winburn Way

1. Call to Order

Chair Roxanne Beigel-Coryell called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Siskiyou Room.

Commissioners Risa Buck, Mark Weir, Shel Silverberg, Cara Cruickshank, Bryan Sohl, and Marni Koopman were present. Staff member Adam Hanks and Councilor Rich Rosenthal were present. Commissioner James McGinnis was absent.

2. Consent Agenda

Cruickshank/Weir m/s to approve the minutes of January 27, 2016, as presented. Voice Vote: All Ayes. Motion Passes.

3. Announcements

The next commission meeting will be March 23, 2016.

The Governor's Transportation Panel will be occurring on March 8 at the Jackson County Public Works auditorium in White City.

The 2016 Master Recycler Class will be March 8 from 5:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Buck informed the group that there will be no spring Plastics Roundup this year, due to a lack of market for purchasing those materials.

4. Public Forum

Huelz Gutchen – stated that the Greenhouse Gas Inventory was wonderful and the presenter did well. We have lots of cars which make lots of problems. The report showed that Ashland emissions have gone down, but his numbers don't match the Greenhouse Gas Inventory numbers. He stated that the whole country reduced emissions over the past few years, not just Ashland. The EPA has been talking about the current non-ability to recycle plastics. Climate change is real but lots of people aren't dealing with it. He hopes that this group can figure out how to do this.

Jeff Sharpe – his group is going ahead with the Imperatrice Property solar proposal. He gave Beigel-Coryell a print out of their proposal. His group was originally planning on having this proposal on the November ballot but decided not to. They are hoping to put together a package useful for other areas. The ballot initiative they are now working on is focused more on increasing renewable sources of power overall.

5. Reports/ Presentations/ Updates

Council Update – Councilor Rosenthal will be absent from the next meeting. He informed the group that he has officially been re-appointed as liaison for the next year. He stated that Council approved the contract with Cascadia Consulting for their work with the Climate & Energy Action Plan Committee. That committee is now ready to move ahead with the bulk of their work.

Storm Drain/ Water Update from Public Works – Public Works Director Mike Faught, Senior Engineer Pieter Smeenk, and Utility Technician Steve Burkhalter gave an overview of current programs. Burkhalter gave examples of the public outreach. Most outreach is for contractors and the public to understand best management practices related to construction. Faught gave overview of how storm drain/water programs are funded and how the current master planning process may create alternative options for resources. Smeek gave information on how the City is working with other agencies in the valley to create education and information regarding pollution prevention and best management practices. He showed examples of new education signage. Group discussed ways in which they can advocate for/assist with programs once the master plan process is completed. Group thanked Faught, Smeek, and Burkhalter for their attendance and information.

Councilor Rosenthal departed meeting at 6:50 p.m.

Downtown Recycling – Hanks stated the group received confirmation from four businesses willing to monitor the trial project. They are working on four other businesses. One of the recycle baskets will be monitored by the City and/or Commission.

City Conservation and Operations – Hanks was recently in Portland working on a project related to utility providers' role in providing resources for electric vehicles. Ashland has done more than most utility providers due to the charging stations we have in parking lots/garages. Not many utility providers have much control over public facilities the way Ashland does. Group discussed current usage of the charging stations. Hanks stated that the public-charging model may be less important in the future but that hotel-lot charging may be a useful model to pursue in Ashland.

6. Old Business

Earth Bowl – Silverberg stated the subcommittee has met with all the teachers and the middle school principal to get feedback on last year's program. The information received was constructive. The committee has agreed to postpone the program to 2017 in order to connect the program with Earth Day and to redesign the materials to be more focused.

Sneak Preview Column – Group discussed the need to alter the next two meeting topics. They agreed that April will be an overview of the Climate Challenge, written by Koopman. May will be information regarding recycling challenges (plastics market), written by Buck. Silverberg suggested that a future topic might be a "meet your commissioners" article.

Climate & Energy Action Plan – The next C&EAP meeting will be March 2 at 3:30 p.m. to prepare for the March 16th meeting with the new consultant, Cascadia Consulting. Previous Conservation Commissioner, Jim Hartman, has been appointed to the committee. The last meeting was a review of the Greenhouse Gas Inventory.

Rogue Valley Earth Day Funding – Hanks stated that the Water Conservation Division will be sponsoring the event in addition to the Energy Conservation Division. The total for City sponsorship will be \$2,000. Group discussed whether additional commission sponsorship was necessary. **Koopman/Silverberg m/s to request that an additional \$400 in funding be given to Rogue Valley Earth Day in light of the cancellation of this year's Earth Bowl program. Voice Vote: 2 nays, 5 ayes, Motion Passes.**

Bag Ban Review – Weir reviewed the presentation to Council. He felt it went fairly well. Council decided to keep the status quo until or unless the Chamber of Commerce makes a recommendation regarding the ban. Hanks outlined the enforcement process likely to be implemented in the next few months. He stated that letters will soon be going out to all businesses reminding them of the ban regulations and sending updated display cards.

Commissioner Sohl departed meeting 8:30 p.m.

Conservation Classes – Buck stated that the subcommittee decided to change the title of this program from Conservation Classes, as that's too specific and doesn't reflect the new class variety, to the "Low-Impact Living Series." **Weir/Koopman m/s to approve the title change to the Low-Impact Living Series. Voice Vote: all ayes. Motion Passes.**

7. New Business

Greenhouse Gas Inventory – Hanks stated that he wanted to make sure that the group had a copy of the results and were able to get any questions answered. Group discussed where some of the data was pulled from and how to help the numbers improve in future years.

8. Wrap Up

Commissioner Silverberg stated that he will not be re-upping his appointment to the commission when his term is up on April 30th, but agreed to continue to help with the Earth Bowl. Group expressed their appreciation for his work on the commission and for his offer of continued assistance.

Group asked that Hanks request a presentation/discussion from Public Works regarding water reclamation be on a future agenda.

Meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Diana Shiplet
Executive Assistant

NO Spring Plastic Round-Up, Why?

The Jackson County Recycling Partnership (JCRP) that houses the Master Recycler program has recently determined that it will be unable to host its Spring Plastic Round-Up event, which has been held annually since 2008. The original intent of the Plastic Round-Up event was to create an opportunity for residents of Jackson County to recycle plastics which are not accepted in the curbside collection programs offered by local haulers that include nursery plastics, film, plastic packaging and clamshells, for example. The unfortunate circumstances in the world markets have resulted in the decision to suspend the event.

Plastic recycling has become more challenging over the last number of years and more specifically in 2013 with the start of China's "Operation Green Fence." The Chinese government grew frustrated with the amount of "trashy recyclables" entering the country and the new premier launched stricter enforcement of existing laws. The aim was to avoid the volumes of poorly sorted or dirty shipments of recyclables from foreign exports. Additional challenges have emerged in the last year; and chances are quite high that this trend will continue into the near future.

The most important factor that has cancelled the 2016 Plastic Round-Up is a lack of markets for the plastics collected. Without market demand, recycling these materials is not an option.

MORE DETAILS THAT HAVE CONTRIBUTED INCLUDE :

- One of the main factors is **record low oil prices**. The low fuel prices you may have noticed when you fill up your vehicle or pay natural gas bills have some down sides. This super cheap petroleum makes the use of virgin oil more attractive for plastic manufacturers. Instead of using recycled plastics to make new “stuff,” manufacturers are choosing the cheaper option.
- Domestic and export markets for recycled plastics are overflowing. Globally, the slowdown in China’s economy and production rate has affected the consumption of recycled plastic as a feedstock for new products. In some cases, smaller consumers of mixed plastics have had to shut their doors until better markets return.
- And finally, the strong US dollar has made US exports less affordable in the global marketplace, which has driven European companies to source recyclable materials from less expensive parts of the world.

Making lemonade out of this disappointing situation could inspire us to pay closer attention to the first (2)R’s, REDUCE & RE-USE. Tips that reduce the vast amount of plastics in our lives include:

- Making different buying decisions.
- Avoiding single use, disposable items.

- Letting manufacturers and retailers know you like their product but not the “waste” that comes with it.
- Remember this motto: Use it Up, Wear it Out, Pass it On, or, Do Without.

The Jackson Co. Master Recyclers hope to resume the Plastic Round-Up when global markets improve. In the meantime, those plastics are still not accepted in curbside recycling. THANKS for helping to ensure a clean recycle stream!!

Please direct Plastic Round-Up questions to: 541-494-5488

Risa Buck is a member of the Ashland Conservation Commission & Waste Zero Specialist for Recology Ashland

511 word count