

ASHLAND CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Meeting Agenda

August 23, 2017 – 6:00 PM

Community Development Building, Siskiyou Room
51 Winburn Way

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Consent Agenda**
 - July 28, 2017 Meeting Minutes
- 3. Announcements** (5 min)
 - 3.1.** Next Regular Meeting: September 27, 2017
 - 3.2.** Upcoming Sub-committee meeting
 - 3.3.** Other Announcements from Commissioners
- 4. Public Forum** (10 min to be evenly divided by public wishing to speak)
- 5. Old Business** (5 min)
 - 5.1.** Commission Monthly Column in Sneak Preview (5 min)
 - Sept – Greywater Info/Workshop
 - Oct - Storm Drain education article
 - Nov – Leaf Bag program
 - Dec – CEAP Ordinance/Resolution progress – McGinnis
 - Jan – Ashland School District – Conservation Successes
- 6. New Business** (85 min)
 - 6.1.** Review/Vote on Imperatrice Use Recommendation to Council
 - 6.2.** Commission Goal Setting
- 7. Wrap Up**
 - 8.1** Items to be added to next agenda

MINUTES FOR THE ASHLAND CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Wednesday, July 26, 2017
Siskiyou Room, 51 Winburn Way

1. Call to Order

Chair Marni Koopman called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Commissioners Mark Weir, Risa Buck, Roxane Biegel-Coryell, Jamie Rosenthal, Bryan Sohl, James McGinnis, and David Sommer were present. Staff member Adam Hanks was present. Commissioner David Sommer was late. Commissioner Cara Cruickshank and Council Liaison Traci Darrow were absent.

2. Announcements

The next commission meeting will be August 23, 2017.

Group discussed the upcoming meeting calendar and agreed to combine the November and December meetings into one meeting on December 13th.

3. Public Forum

Huelz Gutchen – stated that changes happening soon to energy production and use need to be fully studied. They have already caused lots of upheaval and concern. He stated if we use ½ as much electricity as we currently do, that's equal to adding twice as many solar panels. This means efficiency is more important than generation. BPA gives us lots of efficiency rebates and if we reduced more BPA would be excited. If we install a little solar, though, they would be upset and will charge us more. This is due to the contract we signed years ago. He stated we don't actually get any of our electrons from the Bonneville dam, that the sources are all from an old program created in the 1940s and 1950s, before solar panels. BPA is now looking into solar but it needs to be studied more to see how it evolves. He stated that contracts can be re-written.

Sohl asked for clarification on BPA contracts. Hanks gave information on the issues related to large-scale solar production. The contract concerns don't apply for small-scale installations. Buck asked if this means small-scale is a way to achieve the 10x20 ordinance. Hanks gave information about some possible smaller-scale options.

Group agreed to move new business to earlier in the agenda, as Sohl must depart early.

4. New Business

Climate & Energy Action Plan Update – Sohl gave an update on the discussion from the Council meeting. He stated that Council decided to do an ad hoc committee, rather than a full-committee at this time. Hanks gave additional details of the Council decision and the next steps. Sohl gave an overview of the discussion Council had regarding goals and targets. Group discussed their feelings about the decision.

5. Reports/ Presentations/ Updates

Recology Quarterly Update – Rosenthal gave an update of recent and upcoming Recology activities including:

- They are focusing on preventing, “wishful recycling” - i.e. things which cannot be recycled but frequently are placed in recycle bins.
- The Household Hazardous Waste event, which went from 506 vehicles in 2016 to 584 in 2017. There were 62,000 pounds of waste.
- She reminded the group that for the Household Hazardous Waste event, the waste haulers pay \$125 per car but only charge \$5 per car. This is why the event can’t occur on a more frequent basis.
- The Firewise Clean-up Day went well, with about 100 vehicles attending. They are working to find ways to increase participation next year.
- On 4th of July Recology introduced “Buddy Blue”, their recycling mascot. The parade was a fun introduction to Buddy and they hope it’s a useful learning tool.
- Also on 4th of July they provided 44 clear-stream bins. A few of the redeemable bags were taken, but they were overall impressed by the low levels of contamination in the bins.
- The first “Lend Me a Plate” program went well. They will continue with a “soft” opening of the program over the next few months.
- Planning for the Bear Creek Salmon Festival is underway.

City Conservation Programs and Operations – Hanks stated that there isn’t much of an update other than the 10x20 project, which he covered earlier in the meeting. McGinnis asked if there are any discussions on land swaps or purchases with SO Land Conservancy to achieve both solar installation and trail easements? Hanks gave an update on some of the options to achieve 10x20 through smaller-scale projects, which seems to have more potential and higher co-benefits. Additionally, mixing trail easements with the wastewater treatment plan needs (that the property was originally purchased for) seem to be a good mix.

Group discussed ways in which the City could partner with commercial buildings to install solar throughout town.

Koopman wondered if the group had any interest in creating a statement in support of using the Imperatrice property for purposes other than a solar farm.

Weir/Sohl m/s to create a statement asking that the City Council support both the Southern Oregon Land Conservancy and the Parks Commission in moving forward with conserving the Imperatrice property for natural resources and recreational purposes. Discussion: Weir stated that his intent is to try and put a flag in the sand that conservation of this space should take priority. He wants to support SO Land Conservancy and their recognition of what is on that site (species-wise) as well as the value of open space to the Ashland community. Sohl stated that he has mixed feelings about the whole thing. On the one hand, any power generation has tradeoffs and consequences and we need to pick our poison. On the other, he agrees that there are many more degraded locations that should be used first. Ultimately he thinks there is value in using a portion of the property for solar and preserve the rest.

Buck wondered if there was a chance to use the site as a solar demonstration site, rather than a full solar park, though understands that’s probably too costly. She thinks there must be a way to balance all the multiple uses of the space. Hanks informed her that a solar demonstration is being

considered closer to the wastewater treatment plant, which would be more accessible by the public.

Koopman stated that she was struck by the aerial photo of the property and how much connectivity could be provided by the property. She also wants serious consideration of the high-value species which need to be protected. The best practice in climate adaptation is to not do any additional damage to natural resources. McGinnis stated that he is also concerned with the co-benefits provided by the property. He understands the desire to have solar panels to show the world that we're doing something but doesn't think that using this property is economically viable. Additionally, we need to remember that the land was purchased for wastewater treatment plant needs and if they had been using it as originally intended then it wouldn't be available now for any of the uses we're now debating. Beigel-Coryell stated that she agrees that other options are more viable.

Rosenthal stated that she's curious to know what are the potential negative effects of solar on an area. Weir gave details on the amount of concrete needed, wear and tear on roads, climate change for species whose habitat would change with the new shade, and environmental damage in other countries who produce the solar panels. Sommer stated he agrees with Weir about the negative effects, and would add that replacement cycles of solar are rather daunting, even without taking into account potential damage or vandalism costs.

Voice Vote: 8 ayes, 1 nay. Motion Passes.

Commissioner Sohl departed at 7:10 p.m.

Water Subcommittee – Buck stated they met with grey water installer, Karen Taylor, who will be doing an installation on September 30th for education purposes. City Water Conservation staff will help organize publicizing and certificates for continuing education. They are hoping to focus on having contractors attend the installation.

Council Update – Hanks apologized for not bringing this up at the last meeting, but the annual presentation by the commission to Council is scheduled for August 15. He drafted an update for Koopman and Buck to edit and present.

6. Old Business

Sneak Preview Column – Group discussion potential article topics and agreed to the following:

- September – Laundry to Landscape article, possibly written by staff member Julie Smitherman
- October – Storm Drains, by Cruickshank (she should tee-up the November article)
- November – Leaf Bag program, by Rosenthal
- December – CEAP ordinances (the big picture on where we are), by McGinnis
- January – possibly an article about conservation successes at the ASD, by Sommer

Conservation Commission Goal Setting – Koopman stated that the group should probably set goals for next year. Group generally agreed to use the next meeting as their goal setting session. They also agreed to send any proposed goals to Koopman to kick-off the discussion.

7. Wrap Up

Meeting adjourned at 7:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Diana Shiplet
Executive Assistant

Stretch Your Water: Laundry to Landscape Graywater Installation Workshop

Did you know, that your washing machine has more than one use? Not only can it wash your clothes, but it can also be used to help you water your landscape. In a demonstration at a local Ashland home, you will be able to see firsthand how you could use the water from your washing machine to water the plants in your yard. This resourceful idea is commonly referred to as, a “Laundry to Landscape” Graywater System.

Graywater systems have become increasingly popular in many states across the country and particularly in the Ashland area. Since DEQ approved the use of graywater in 2012, there have been 31 permits issued in the state of Oregon with 13 of those permits being issued in Ashland.

Because of this large volume of interest from our area, the City’s Conservation Commission partnered with Siskiyou Permaculture and the Southern Oregon Landscape Association to host a workshop on how to build a Laundry to Landscape Graywater System. Karen Taylor of Siskiyou permaculture will be our graywater instructor, and City staff will be there to answer any questions or concerns you have regarding local and state building codes as well as the permitting process.

What will you learn at this workshop? First, if you are not already familiar, we will explain what graywater is and what it can be used for. You will then get to see how a laundry to landscape graywater system is designed and what materials you need to build your own. You will watch it being installed and then get to see how it works to water plants in the yard. The time and materials may vary from house to house, but this will at least give you an idea of what it might take to make the first step towards your laundry to landscape graywater system. Our goal is to provide you with the tools and resources you need to decide whether a graywater system is right for your home.

So, please join us on Saturday September 30, 2017 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. to learn how you can install your very own Laundry to Landscape Graywater System! We encourage all landscaper contractors and homeowners to attend. **Landscape contractors will be provided with 3 CEHs.**

Register soon because space is limited. To register, please contact Julie Smitherman at 541-552-2062. To protect the privacy of our homeowner, you will be given the location of the workshop once you register. For more information about graywater, visit the City of Ashland’s graywater page at, www.ashland.or.us/graywater

Protecting waterways from your yard all the way to the Ocean! By Ashland Conservation Commissioner Cara Cruickshank

Most people think that water going into storm drains gets filtered or cleaned at the wastewater treatment plant before it enters Ashland and Bear Creeks; but sadly, this is not true. Stormwater runoff is a more complicated topic than it appears, even though it's basically rainwater that runs off of hard, impervious surfaces like streets, roofs or parking lots, and then flows into ditches or storm drains. While some larger drain basins may have filters, all the water that flows into a storm drain and picking up contaminants along the way, goes directly into our creeks first, then into the Rogue River, and eventually out to the Pacific. This means that *anything*- like grass, leaves, soap from car washing, rubber from our tires, motor oil, paint, dog poop, fertilizers from lawns, pesticides from gardens, and other pollutants we use every day- *are tragically entering precious waterways and affecting water quality for fish and other wildlife!* The nutrients from fertilizer runoff can cause algae blooms that kill fish by using up all the available oxygen as the algae decays, making it unavailable to the poor fish that suffocate to death in their own watery home. Decaying leaves and grass clippings also use up oxygen, while bacteria and pathogens from animal waste can create health hazards for people. Makes one think twice about dumping anything into storm drains, doesn't it? These are all the reasons why stormwater pollution is the number 1 pollutant in American waterways, and why those blue and silver medallions next to storm drains in town say, "NO DUMPING * DRAINS TO STREAM." They remind us that the distance between your yard and the ocean is as close as the nearest storm drain or ditch. So let's talk about how to be Stream Smart:

Leaves are a real problem for drains, so keeping them out of the street is a simple action to help improve water quality in streams. Landowners are responsible for disposing of fallen leaves on private property and adjacent sidewalks, so we shouldn't ever blow or rake leaves into streets or ditches. If you hire help, please remind them never to do this either. Compostable bags for disposing of leaves are available for purchase from Recology Ashland Sanitary Service at 170 Oak Street. The biodegradable bags cost \$14.50 for a set of five, which includes curbside pickup of the bags by Recology. Each bag can hold up to 35 pounds of leaves, so they're worth it! The bags can be picked up on any regular garbage collection/green debris and recycling days. Street sweeping is not a community wide leaf pick-up solution, so everyone can help the health of our streams by keeping leaves out of the street!

Also, wash you car on your lawn or gravel driveway so the dirty water gets filtered as it soaks into the ground, because soapy/oily wash water contaminates streams and rivers. And lastly, ALWAYS scoop dog poop, because fecal matter carries harmful bacteria right into waterways too, which can harm humans.

The fact that contaminated stormwater isn't processed by wastewater treatment plants seems ridiculous, right? *Seas are getting polluted from dirty stormwater in every river, along every coastline on every continent, all over the world.* Human beings have been treating the sea like it's a cesspool for centuries, and if we keep doing this to all the creatures that live there, then we'll lose marine life all together. ECO SHOCK, on NPR reported today that half of all fish species have been wiped out just since 1970, which is a momentous tragedy.

A key part of being *Stream Smart* is remembering that everything going down storm drains flows directly into Bear Creek, the Rogue River, and the ocean without being treated. So try to allow rainwater to soak into the ground at your home or business and ensure that any stormwater runoff from your property is cool, clean and free of harmful chemical fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides. Check out these great websites for more information:

City of Ashland stormwater page- www.ashland.or.us/SectionIndex.asp?SectionID=507

The Stream Smart website. Full of resources- <http://www.stream-smart.com/>

[Catching the Rain](#) page provides *Stream Smart* ways to manage stormwater at your home.

City of Ashland Leaf pick up info-<http://www.ashland.or.us/News.asp?NewsID=3365>

[Use Natural Products and Fertilizers-](#) Great resource for natural yard care

Memo

DATE: August 22, 2017
TO: Conservation Commission
FROM: Adam Hanks
RE: Commission Recommendation to Council on Imperatrice Property Use

Below is a draft recommendation to the Council regarding the Conservation Commission's desired recommendation on the future use of the Imperatrice Property.

Over the past 12-18 months, the Conservation Commission has been actively participating in discussions and review of proposals from citizens and interested organizations on the future potential uses of the Imperatrice Property. This interest was brought into focus with several public forum presentations from citizens interested in a utility scale solar park on the property.

While the local, renewable electricity generation aspect of the project was very intriguing and consistent in one sense with the Commission's overall perspective on energy policy, the Commission was also keenly aware of the unique and fragile ecosystem that exists on the Imperatrice property and was concerned about the impacts of development on the land, the plants and the animals.

Before making any sort of formal recommendation, the Commission heard from representatives from the Southern Oregon Land Conservancy, who have long had an interest in preserving a portion or potentially the entire property for conservation and compatible recreational uses for the community.

As a result of this presentation and further Commission discussion of previous presentations on solar generation potential, the Commission had a formal motion and vote to recommend to City Council that the property be retained for its biological diversity and its active and passive recreational opportunities for the community. The Commission feels that this biodiversity and recreational potential (trails, viewing areas, educational signage, etc) can be done in a very compatible way and best serves the Ashland community, the region and especially the unique and ever scarce plant and wildlife species that make the over 860 acre property so special.

Should the Council desire to move forward in defining and formalizing any particular new use for this property, the Commission is very much interested and hopeful that Council utilize the Commission to assist in the review and recommendation on the proposed uses in the future.

On behalf of the Conservation Commission,
Marni Koopman, Co-Chair
Risa Buck, Co-Chair

