

MINUTES FOR THE ASHLAND CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Wednesday, September 23, 2015
Siskiyou Room, 51 Winburn Way

1. Call to Order

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

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

2. Consent Agenda

Wier/Koopman m/s to approve the minutes of August 26, 2015, with one change from Buck under the green debris cans update of replacing the words, “a month minimum” to “an additional fee”. Voice Vote: All Ayes. Motion Passes.

3. Announcements

The next commission meeting will be held on October 28, 2015.

Beigel-Coryell will be unable to attend this month’s Mayor’s Brown Bag meeting with commission chairs Weir agreed to attend in her place.

October 23 and 24, 2015 will be the Plastic Round Up at the Rogue Disposal transfer station in White City. More information can be found at jcrecycle.org

Buck informed the group that a new general manager for Recology in Ashland has been selected.

The Ashland Climate Challenge Kick-off planning group continues to meet on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays at 2:00 p.m. The meetings are held at Geos Institute.

The Climate & Energy Action Plan ad hoc Committee the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays at 2:00 p.m. in the Siskiyou Room. There will be an extra, evening meeting, on Wednesday, September 30th at 5:00 p.m. (also in the Siskiyou Room).

The Council will be holding a study session on October 5th regarding the proposed pesticide/herbicide resolution.

4. Public Forum

Jeff Sharpe – wants to encourage the City, via things like the work done in connection with the Climate and Energy Action Plan, do grow the local economy by hiring local. He stated that hiring local both grows the economy and grows lively interactions in the community. He discussed the local multiplier effect. He also encouraged the commission to include in the upcoming Greenhouse Gas analysis information regarding the huge impact of dropping kids off at schools, and encouraged them to use this as a focus for the Action Plan moving forward. Confronting this impact would be a great achievement in the community.

Carol Voisin – Stated that she is here as a citizen, not as a Council member. She is bringing a sample resolution forward to set aside 100 acres on the Imperatrice Property for a solar park. The research she has done shows there are already easy connection points. She stated that there is urgency to this project due to the sun-setting of some Federal grants in 2016. She explained how during the past budget cycle she took this proposal to the Budget Committee but they did not like Councilors bringing proposals directly to them and so denied the request. Later Council had a study session regarding the Imperatrice Property history and learned that the property was originally purchased to cool effluent. CH2MHill is currently working on a study to show how this could be done. She walked the group through the resolution. She stated that investors and grants would pay for 50% of the infrastructure and in 15 years we (the City) would inherit that infrastructure.

The group asked a few questions of Ms. Voisin regarding solar panels, replacement costs, and feasibility studies on the land. They requested that a longer group discussion be added to the next agenda. They did state that the resolution as presented does not mention doing a feasibility study for the project, but instead stated that supporting the resolution means supporting the building of the project and they may not be comfortable with supporting the project until a study is done. Additionally, solar projects likely will be a part of the Climate and Energy Action plan, so it is difficult to approve something outside of that on-going effort.

5. Reports/ Presentations/ Updates

Downtown Recycling – a proposal for a pilot program is in the packet. Buck stated that she met last week with the Chamber of Commerce who have not yet agreed to be the monitors of this pilot. The cost would be \$17 per basket. The signage would be a slightly modified version of the ones already used by the Parks Department and would include the name of the sponsoring business.

Weir/Cruickshank m/s to move forward with the downtown recycling pilot program as proposed. Voice Vote. All Ayes. Motion Passes.

Council Update – Rosenthal read aloud to the group minutes from the Study Session where the Council spoke about the Imperatrice Property so they could have some background on the project. He let the group know that on October 6th the Council will be considering the Normal Avenue project and on November 2nd Council will discuss a potential ban on smoking in the downtown core.

City Conservation & Operations – There is information in the packet regarding current solar programs. Ashland is currently in the top five per-capita of solar installation totals in Oregon. He gave the group some information regarding the current program and how credits to those who have panels work.

Hanks stated that our code compliance officer will be working with retailers who have not been complying with the plastic bag ban to get them into compliance. He reminded the group that we will soon be doing a survey to businesses regarding the ban, for use by Council in January when they review the ban. Weir offered to assist in surveying the large retailers (grocery stores) for more statistical information regarding their bag use. The group requested that this topic be added to the next agenda.

SOU Quarterly Update – Beigel-Coryell stated that students start moving in tomorrow. The mostly-finished renovation of the Science building will be open as well. SOU purchased a new electric truck. The campus farmstand will be starting on Thursdays from 11:00 – 1:00 p.m. Author and environmental activist, Dr. Vandana Sheeva, will be doing a presentation on October 14th, it will also be streaming on RVTV.sou.edu.

6. Old Business

Sneak Preview Column – **Weir/Cruickshank m/s to approve the Climate and Energy Action Plan article as presented. Voice Vote: All Ayes. Motion Passes.**

Koopman/Buck m/s to approve the Energy Efficiency article as presented. Voice Vote: All Ayes. Motion Passes.

Group discussed whether or not it would be appropriate to have a water conservation article in early summer. Also discussed wanting to have quarterly updates on the Climate & Energy Action Plan process. Due to the due dates of the articles, the April edition (due in February) is probably the earliest month they could feasibly have an update ready. Group agreed this would be a good goal.

Climate and Energy Sub-committee – Rosenthal stated that the subcommittee has had its first two meetings and that two new members were appointed at the last Council meeting. Hanks is drafting an RFP for the project consultant and the committee will be spending the next meeting reviewing that RFP. Rosenthal thanked the group for getting the ball rolling on this project and all the work they did prior to the formation of the ad hoc committee.

Ashland Climate Challenge – Koopman stated that the overall layout of the event is in the packet. The planning group wants residents to take action now – prior to the kick-off event, to help get people energized for the process. She gave an overview of the challenge, including a month-to-month reduction challenge. Folks to participate can enter to win raffle prizes. The group is still looking for potential prizes and would like to know if there are any the City could provide. The group discussed how the challenge can be expanded in the future. McGinnis reminded them that the goal in the beginning is to keep things focused (simple solutions).

Koopman asked if City staff could help with the kick-off. Hanks stated that requests needs to go through him and to the City Administrator.

Koopman asked if the group could assist with getting the word out on First Friday. Cruickshank and Sohl agreed to assist.

Weir/Cruickshank m/s to request that Council allow Conservation Commission to sponsor \$100 for the kick-off event. Discussion: Sohl believes that the commission should have a bigger stake in the event, would consider \$200 or greater a more appropriate sum. **Weir/Cruickshank agreed to amend the motion to a \$250 sponsorship. Voice Vote on amended motion: All Ayes. Motion Passes.**

Rosenthal encouraged Koopman and the planning committee to consider wording changes in the

“solutions” section of the challenge list. This should be more about education and not about pushing a specific agenda. Koopman agreed to look at requested changes.

Pesticide/Herbicide Discussion – Cruickshank stated there is a draft resolution in the packet. The group bringing this to Council have agreed to remove Section D about testing and the reference to the Conservation Commission. Group discussed what other commissions or groups have been approached for support and whether or not they would like to support the resolution.

Cruickshank/Weir m/s that the Commission support this resolution as proposed, with the section removed as Cruickshank previously stated. Discussion: Group discussed how awkward it is to support a draft form of a resolution. Weir and Sohl both stated that while they agree that these are dangerous, they can’t vote yes on this resolution without having done more research. **Roll Call Vote: Weir, Sohl – no. Buck, Cruickshank, Koopman, Beigel-Coryell – yes. Motion Passes 4-2.**

Sohl and Weir both reiterated that they want to support this they just don’t currently feel they have done enough background research on the topic.

7. New Business

SOCAN Climate Summit – Buck requested that the commission support this event. She isn’t asking for financial support, as we’re too late in the process for that.

Weir/Sohl m/s to ask that Council agree to support SOCAN with a zero-dollar sponsorship. Voice Vote: All Ayes. Motion Passes.

Compost Classes – Buck stated that the final class was last week, and it was one of the best. She offered a big thank-you to Weir for teaching part of the class. She would like to form or re-form the subcommittee on compost classes to plan for future classes.

Buck/Cruickshank m/s to reconstitute the subcommittee with the commissioners who volunteered to participate (Buck, Weir, Koopman, and Beigel-Coryell). Voice Vote: All Ayes. Motion Passes.

8. Wrap Up

Group requested that Earth Bowl sponsorship be discussed again at the next meeting. Group requested that Hanks send information regarding the Imperatrice property. He agreed to send what was in the recent City Council packet and requested that if anyone has questions, they send them soon so he can have Public Works staff respond. Group also agreed to add storm drain care education to the next agenda.

Meeting adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Diana Shiplet
Executive Assistant