

MINUTES FOR THE ASHLAND CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Wednesday, September 28, 2016
Siskiyou Room, 51 Winburn Way

1. Call to Order

Chair Bryan Sohl called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Commissioners Jaime Rosenthal, Risa Buck, James McGinnis, Roxanne Beigel-Coryell, and Mark Weir were present. Councilor Rich Rosenthal and staff member Adam Hanks were present. Commissioner Cara Cruickshank arrived late. Commissioner Marni Koopman was absent.

2. Announcements

The next commission meeting will be October 26, 2016.

Group decided to combine the November and December meetings into one meeting on December 14, 2016.

3. Public Forum

Huelz Gutchen – stated cement makes lots of carbons, but the whole world needs to use it until a better option comes up. Recently, people have been building wooden high rises – this is pretty cool. He described the three parts of energy and how 2/3 of our energy signature could be made zero with the use of solar panels, particularly used to run homes and cars. Now we can do zero-net, autonomous, no wire to the outside homes. There are two builders in town who he has talked to who have thought about stopping building until they can learn these new systems. He stated there are two types of homes; those built and those yet to be built. Autonomous homes can be built with the new technology. Energy upgrades are really hard to do, so most folks don't which means it's better to build these things from the start. He hopes that things like energy audits of homes will be required to be on real estate notices. Portland is working to make this a requirement. Once they succeed we can follow their model in creating our ordinance.

4. Reports/ Presentations/ Updates

Open Burning Ordinance and Regulations – Fire Marshal Margueritte Hickman gave a presentation regarding the history of our current open burning ordinance and what regulations and permit requirements are involved with open burning in Ashland.

Group asked Hickman questions regarding types of vegetation allowed to be burned. Hickman stated that other than woody fuels in the Wildfire Hazard zone, the only other things allowed to be burned are noxious weeds like Himalayan Blackberries. They are allowed to be burned because transporting them increases the possibility of seeds spreading.

Commissioner Cara Cruickshank arrived 6:40 p.m.

Buck asked questions regarding consideration of alternatives to burning. Hickman stated that as the things which are allowed to be burned are so limited, further reductions have not been seriously considered. Weir asked if the limited amount of permits issued (10 or so per year) an amount that the Fire Department is comfortable with maintaining? Hickman stated that as Ashland's burn permit numbers are so small compared to other towns, she feels they are at an

acceptable level. She reminded the group that Ashland continues to offer lots of great wildfire fuels reduction opportunities like the Wildfire Mitigation fuels drop-off days in conjunction with Recology.

Group thanked Hickman for her presentation.

Quarterly Updates – Group determined that the following quarterly update schedule should be re-started:

SOU – October

Recology – Nov/Dec combo meeting

School – January (only if School Administration is willing to appoint a representative in time)

Council Update – Councilor Rosenthal stated that electric rates will be discussed at the October 31st study session.

Group discussed when the liaisons for commissions for 2017 will be determined. Rosenthal stated that he expects this to occur in late January or early February.

City Conservation Programs and Operations – Hanks gave information regarding an upcoming update of the BPA energy efficiency implementation manual. In effect, they will be spending more to aid commercial energy efficiency programs and less on residential.

5. Old Business

Sneak Preview Column – Hanks stated that due to some timing issues the October edition space was used for the SOCAN and Rogue Climate press release. November is still set to be the, “Meet Your Commissioners” article. December will be a holiday waste reduction article written by Jamie Rosenthal. Group discussed the possibility of using January to give a history and timeline of the CEAP process as a lead up to the Council’s consideration of the plan in February.

Climate & Energy Action Plan – Sohl stated the open house was good, though there was limited attendance. McGinnis stated he appreciated the way the event was set up which lead to good discussions. He appreciated Rosenthal reiterating that the action plan creation is just the beginning of the process.

Group discussed the challenges with attendance – marketing, date, weather, location, “middle-of-process” low-interest, etc.

The next open house is December 7th and public meetings continue several times a month between now and then.

6. New Business

Earth Bowl – Weir stated that holding the event would be a matter of finding the balance between the effort required to plan it and the payout in educating the community. Group discussed ways to alter the previous event planning to make it more effective/easier to manage on limited time resources. Group expressed concerns that every member of the group may be too busy with other activities to devote enough to make this successful. They did acknowledge that it

is a worthwhile event.

Hanks stated that Energy Trust is offering kits to middle schools to help with energy efficiency education, which may help the committee feel okay with not devoting their limited resources to the schools.

Buck asked if there was a way to partner with Rogue Climate or SOCAN to hold the event? Weir agreed to get in contact with those groups and report back at the next commission meeting.

Grey-Water Usage – Buck stated that she was contacted by Molly Winters from Recode, which has been tracking grey-water permits issued in Oregon. 30 have been issued, 11 of which are in Ashland. Group discussed why Ashland has such a large concentration of the permits, what education events were held in the past and how they can possibly help motivate more grey-water use.

Cruickshank/Buck m/s to reestablish the grey water subcommittee. Discussion: Buck, Weir, Cruickshank, and Sohl all volunteered to be members of the subcommittee. **Voice Vote: all ayes. Motion Passes.**

Composting Classes – Weir stated that the vermiculture class he taught was attended by eight people and that it went well. Having the class as part of the Parks and Recreation programming seemed to make attendees have more buy-in. Group discussed ways to promote the upcoming classes.

7. Wrap Up

Group requested that the following topics be on the upcoming agenda:

- SOU Quarterly update
- Earth Bowl
- Grey Water subcommittee update

Meeting adjourned at 7:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Diana Shiplet
Executive Assistant