

Climate and Energy - Ashland
Ashland Conservation Commissioners:
James McGinnis, Marni Koopman, and Roxane Beigel-Coryell
Conservation Corner – December 2017

PRELUDE: In our July Sneak Preview article, “We Have Met the Heroes... And They Are Us!” we announced that the Ashland City Council unanimously approved the Climate and Energy Action Plan (CEAP), and eagerly awaited further establishment of the foundation for plan implementation. Well, we are pleased to report since then:

ONE: In September the Council voted unanimously to adopt an historic Climate Action Ordinance introduced and promoted in a large part by the community’s young citizens. The ordinance commits the City to science-based goals of carbon neutrality by 2050 that will result in local job creation.

“When someone actually figures out how to do something that others have not been able to figure out yet, that is something that can start to change the world. I think this is a challenge and an opportunity for our creativity,” Mayor John Stromberg stated.

Councilor Lemhouse deftly challenged the younger generation by saying that it is important to realize this is the beginning of the hard work, and that it is critical to remain actively involved throughout the whole process. His insights apply to all of us, young and old!

Thank you Counselor Rosenthal for your passionate support and excellent leadership, beginning with your tenure as the Conservation Commission Council Liaison, followed by leading of the CEAP-1 ad hoc Committee, through your support during the two-year budget process in finding funding sources for a new Climate and Energy Analyst position, and your support in passing the CEAP Ordinance.

TWO: Earlier in June the Council approved funding for a new CEAP-related position (2017-2019 biennium). The City followed up by selecting Stuart Green, formerly the Ashland Food Co-op Sustainability Manager, as the Climate and Energy Analyst for the City. Stuart will lead the City in implementation and continuous improvement toward the successful implementation of the CEAP. "I'm proud of Ashland for adopting such a comprehensive climate plan. Climate action is the defining issue of our times, and I'm looking forward to serving our community in this new position," stated Stuart when asked to comment on his new position. Welcome Stuart!

THREE: In late October Mayor Stromberg began the process of inviting citizens to become part of the new CEAP-2 ad hoc Committee, whose charge will be to review, provide input and make recommendations on a variety of areas ranging from co-benefits, progress indicators and equity, to public outreach and reporting. You can learn more by typing, “090517_CEAP_Implementation_AdHoc_Scope.pdf” in your browser search window.

FOUR: The CEAP plan calls to designate potential funding sources for individual actions and identify additional funding needs and opportunities for ongoing plan implementation. The City staff and CEAP-2 ad hoc Committee will address this important topic.

CALAMITY: Regrettably, there are many new victims emerging on the world landscape as a result of human caused climate change. Locally, the Rogue Valley suffered the

worst air quality its experienced, maybe ever. The U.S. Forest Service is continuously breaking records in the amount of money spent on putting out fires each year (fire suppression in the past is partly to blame). Nonetheless, wildfire season has lasted about two and a half months longer since 1970 (a trend that's expected to continue).

Then there was the destruction caused by Harvey (Houston), Irma (Florida) and Maria (Puerto Rico). And to top it off, 42 deaths and another 68 people missing at last count, along with close to 7,000 homes and businesses destroyed by fire in Northern California. That doesn't take into account the many other climate-related disasters around the globe this year and over the past decade.

FORWARD: On an upbeat note... we are so proud of our community for asking what is needed, and in working together with the City Council to find solutions. Seven years ago, the Conservation Commission approached the Council to support a proposed Sustainability Plan. In its place, we were tasked to be more concise and come up with a proposal for Climate and Energy (thank you, Pam Marsh). We went back to the drawing board and have arrived where we are today with the CEAP. Again, as Counselor Lemhouse remarked, "the real work begins now." We cannot pause in our resolve!