

MINUTES FOR THE ASHLAND CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Wednesday, January 27, 2016
Siskiyou Room, 51 Winburn Way

1. Call to Order

Commissioner Marni Koopman called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. in the Siskiyou Room.

Commissioners Cara Cruickshank, Risa Buck, James McGinnis, Mark Weir, and Shel Silverberg, were present. Staff member Adam Hanks and Councilor Rich Rosenthal were present. Commissioners Roxane Beigel-Coryell and Bryan Sohl were absent.

2. Consent Agenda

Buck/Weir m/s to approve the minutes of December 16, 2015 as presented. Voice Vote: All Ayes. Motion Passes.

3. Announcements

The next commission meeting will be February 24, 2016. The Earth Bowl subcommittee has no meeting set at this time, but they have been working to get teachers on-board in order to recruit student participants. The next Conservation Classes subcommittee meeting will be February 11, from 2:00 – 3:00 p.m. in the Siskiyou Room.

Koopman stated that there will be an Eco Summit on February 19, 20, and 21 at the historic Ashland Armory. Check their website for more information. Group discussed whether there was an opportunity to use the event for furthering their work but felt it was too short a notice.

4. Public Forum

Jeff Sharpe – stated that he was glad the RFP process for the Climate & Energy Action Plan had lots of people involved. It helped him be more comfortable with the outcome and hopes that it also helps to get more people involved in the overall process. He hopes a good plan is created and not one which just sits on a shelf. His company is happy to assist with any connection to K-12 students. He is part of a group that is pushing forward with an Imperatrice property solar proposal. He described the proposal they are working on and stated that he hopes to be able to present the final idea to the commission and the Climate & Energy Action Plan ad hoc Committee so they can make an informed decision.

Deb Evans – stated that she is here tonight to ask for support for legislation being put forth this session regarding carbon pricing. She stated that we are currently not on-target to hit previous emissions reduction goals, and that something, “with more teeth” is needed. The proposed legislation gives more directives, rather than relying merely on DEQ to develop policy. She gave additional details and passed around a handout regarding the legislation. Group asked her to stay so they could ask questions.

Huelz Gutchen – stated that there were 196 countries at the recent Paris summit, who now agree that solar, windmills, LED lights, etc. work to reduce carbons. Their agreements have led to lots of discussions as to what to do next. He showed the group a carbon dioxide monitor and stated that he will monitor carbon they produce during the meeting. He stated that it’s been proven that

trees eat carbon and explained how he monitors the difference between before and after the wind blows through the forest area.

5. Healthy Climate Bill

Deb Evans joined the group, stated that the legislative session starts February 1, 2016 which means they are on a quick timeframe. This bill, SB1574, is currently in committee. The group she represents is happy with this version, which mostly is only different from last year's bill in that it defines the funds to be created, has funds geographically distributed rather than distributed based on population, and some funds must go back to offset costs for low income families and to programs which help lower the carbon footprint of high producers. Group discussed what the timing of the bill is and what Deb is requesting of the commission.

Weir/Silverberg m/s to encourage the City Council, Mayor, and Director of the Electric Utility Department to send Sen. Bates, Rep. Buckley, Senator Edwards & Senate President Courtney a letter of support for SB1574. Discussion: McGinnis stated he is concerned that the group has not been able to do enough research on the differences between what they supported last year and this new bill. He is concerned about losing their hard-won credibility with the City Council. Weir stated that the substantive changes are limited to defining where funds go and the timing of implementation. He believes that the changes are minor and as the group supported this legislation in the past they should support it again. Cruickshank is supportive of this effort and understands that this is speed at which the legislative processes work. She feels it is more important to do something rather than waiting and possibly doing nothing. Koopman stated that she trusts the opinions of the groups who are in support of the bill. **Voice Vote: All Ayes. Motion Passes.**

6. Reports/ Presentations/ Updates

Downtown Recycling – Hanks stated city staff fabricated connectors and he is now just waiting on final messaging. They will post the signage on laminated cardstock, until such time as the group feels the messaging is 100% correct. Buck stated they were approached by a master recycler who has agreed to oversee the project/ act as ambassador to the businesses who are handling the daily work.

Council Update – Councilor Rosenthal apologized for missing the last meeting. He gave an overview of upcoming agenda topics, including the plastic bag ban one-year review and the downtown smoking ban ordinance.

City Conservation and Operations – Hanks stated the city held a solar workshop last weekend. About 70-75 people were in attendance. They are planning other workshops on a variety of topics. The City also held a defensive driving training class for city employees and he asked the presenter to incorporate efficient driving in the training. It went so well the presenter has decided to make that a regular part of his presentations. Hanks stated there have been challenges with some new construction energy programs, which are now being re-worked to get better buy-in from builders. Once it's completed, he hopes it will be added to the City's land use ordinance.

7. Old Business

Sneak Preview Column – **Buck/Weir m/s to approve the Natural Yard Care article as written by Cruickshank. Voice Vote: All Ayes. Motion Passes.**

Group discussed the possibility that the Earth Bowl will not occur this year. If that is the case, Koopman agreed to write an article regarding the Climate Challenge.

Climate & Energy Action Plan – Rosenthal stated that the next meeting will be next Wednesday, February 3. He stated that the RFP process went well. It involved lots of non-staff participation, which isn't typical but as the hiring of the contractor is a key part of the process including committee members made sense. McGinnis agreed and stated he found the process engaging and helpful for the group to fully understand all the options. Hanks stated the notice of intent to award was released last Thursday, which means the appeal period ends on Friday. He will then begin the process of negotiating contract details. He stated that at the last meeting they had a greenhouse gas inventory 101 presentation, which should be helpful for their February 17 meeting, when the final inventory is presented.

Group discussed why forestry and agriculture were not included in the greenhouse gas inventory request. This was mostly because the scope was limited to those things which the City has regulatory control over (i.e. those things within city limits). Rosenthal stated that if the ad hoc committee feels it is important, they can request an updated, expanded inventory be done at a later date. He reminded the group that the inventory and the plan are both starting points, expansion or changes in direction are always possibilities in the future.

Solar Park Resolution Proposal – Hanks stated that as a follow up to last month's decision, he wrote a memo (included in the packet) to be submitted to the Climate and Energy Action Plan ad hoc Committee, formally requesting they add a discussion of this to their process.

Bag Ban Review – Hanks informed the group that due to other more time sensitive items, this was moved to the February 2 Council meeting. There were 49 on-forum responses on Open City Hall, most of which were pro-ordinance. The grocers who gave feedback all had substantial reductions in paper bag use. Group discussed whether they want to propose any changes to Council. They agreed to stick to their decision from last meeting to request more code compliance on those not following the ordinance rather than increase the fee at this time.

8. New Business

RV Earth Day – Group asked Paige Prewett to join them. She gave some history of the event and explained how this year's event will be connected to Geos' on-going Climate Challenge. She discussed previous funding sources and requested that the group consider sponsoring the event as well. Ms. Prewett left the meeting so the group could discuss her request.

Hanks stated that the Conservation Division is already planning on funding the event, but if the group wants to give additional funds, that is their choice. He knows that energy conservation will be giving \$1,000 and assumes that water conservation may contribute as well.

Weir reminded the group that six months ago he requested \$900 be set aside for the Earth Bowl, which means only \$100 of their budget is available. He stated that the Earth Bowl was a more successful way to engage the community last year and would prefer that the commission focus on that event. Silverberg agreed that the Earth Bowl is important but believes that the group can raise funds to offset some of the Earth Bowl costs. Koopman stated she would like to see Earth

Bowl and Earth Day more closely linked and would like to see at least \$500 given to Earth Day. Buck stated that support from the city for Earth Day seems important, but reminded the group that the entire reason they created the Earth Bowl was due to frustration with the Earth Day event. She feels that the commission would be going backward if they were to try and financially support the Earth Day event. Cruickshank stated she would like to see the group give \$500 in support. McGinnis stated that he likes the synergy of connecting Earth Bowl and Earth Day and would like to see equal financial support for both (i.e. if we have \$1060 in the budget, \$530 should go to each group).

McGinnis/Koopman m/s to give \$530 to both Earth Day and Earth Bowl. Discussion: Silverberg stated that he would be comfortable with giving \$250 to Earth Day but without at least \$800 for Earth Bowl the event will not be successful. **Voice Vote: 2 Ayes, 4 Nays, Motion Fails.**

Silverberg/Buck m/s to spend \$200 on Earth Day. Discussion: Cruickshank stated that this doesn't seem to be high enough, the value of connecting the Climate & Energy Action Plan and the Climate Challenge to the Earth Day event seems like it should be higher. Weir stated that having participated in the Earth Day event in the past, he doesn't think it has much value for either the commission or the ad hoc committee. **Voice Vote: 2 Ayes, 4 Nays. Motion Fails.**

Group agreed to continue this discussion at the next meeting.

9. Wrap Up

Group had no additional requests for the next agenda.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Diana Shiplet
Executive Assistant