

MINUTES FOR THE ASHLAND CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Wednesday, March 22, 2017
Siskiyou Room, 51 Winburn Way

1. Call to Order

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

Commissioners Jamie Rosenthal, David Sommer, Roxane Beigel-Coryell, Risa Buck and Cara Cruikshank were present. Staff member Adam Hanks was present. Commissioner Mark Weir was late. Council liaison Rich Rosenthal, commissioners Marni Koopman, and James McGinnis were absent.

2. Consent Agenda

Buck/Beigel-Coryell m/s to approve the minutes of January 25 and February 22, 2017, as presented. Discussion: None. Voice Vote. All Ayes.

3. Announcements

The next commission meeting will be April 26, 2017.

The documentary, “We the People 2.0,” will be shown on Thursday, March 30th at the Ashland Unitarian Universalist Church, starting at 6:30 p.m.

SOU has lots of events planned for Arbor Day (April 14th) and Earth Week (April 17-21). Check their website for more info.

There will be a natural building workshop at the SOU farm on Saturdays in April and May. See the Farm Facebook page for details.

SOU has sent out an RFP for stadium lighting retrofit, and responses are due back tomorrow.

Commissioner Mark Weir arrived 6:10 p.m.

Tomorrow (March 23) a public hearing on the Jordan Cove pipeline will be held in the Medford library from 4:00 – 8:00 p.m.

The annual Earth Day event will be on April 22nd.

4. Public Forum

Louise Shawkat - announced that the People’s Climate march will take place on April 29th from 3:00 – 6:00 p.m. at Pear Blossom Park. On April 8th, from 10:30 a.m. – noon, will be a town hall with both Representative Pam Marsh and Senator Alan DeBoer. SOCAN is showing the documentary, “Before the Flood,” on March 29th. She also announced that the Siskiyou Singers will be performing on April 22nd and 23rd in a concert titled, “The Beauty of the Earth.”

Jeff Sharpe – stated that the February 21st update to Council regarding the 10x20 ordinance had lots of information from lots of groups. He offered kudos to staff for their recommendation to Council regarding an environmental assessment. He feels an assessment is vital not just for the

10x20 project, but the other proposed ideas for the site. He fears Council doesn't understand the time-sensitive nature of the solar-array project, with the financing options sun setting. He would like the group to encourage Council to move forward with the motion proposed by staff at the February 21st meeting regarding the site assessment.

Hanks gave an overview of the presentation to Council on the 10x20 ordinance status. Group requested that Councilor Rosenthal give an update of the 10x20 progress at the next meeting (either in-person or written).

5. Reports/ Presentations/ Updates

Ashland School District Quarterly Update – Sommer gave highlights of recent ASD activities:

- The solar array at Helman Elementary was not working (possibly for an extend time), but it's still under warranty and so is being repaired.
- ASD is reviewing proposals for adding solar to the parking lot area of Willow Wind school.
- They started purchasing battery-powered equipment from STIHL, and plan to continue to do so. They are finding the use of the equipment is good for more than just traditional environmental reasons, but also for high-fire season safety and for not disturbing classrooms with excess noise.
- They are also looking into the possibility of purchasing a battery-powered riding lawn mower.
- ASD is looking for incentives for artificial turf on the sports fields. Sommer gave an overview of the kind of turf they have installed and some of the issues they have encountered.

Group thanked Sommer and gave their appreciation for his enthusiasm in finding ways to make ASD more efficient.

City Conservation Programs and Operations – Hanks stated Conservation staff member Dan Cunningham participated in the Energize Rogue events. Hanks stated that preparing the budget for the 2017-2019 Biennium is currently the main focus of city staff. He gave an overview of some of the budget challenges and how positions such as the proposed CEAP staff member will be handled. He stated that out of the recent solar site assessment by Conservation staff member Larry Giardia two likely locations for new solar were identified - the roof of the Public Works building at 90 North Mountain and locations at the Airport. Finding funding sources will be the next challenge.

6. Old Business

Sneak Preview Column – **Buck/Cruikshank m/s to approve the bottle bill article as presented. Discussion: none. Voice Vote: All Ayes. Motion Passes.**

Group discussion potential article topics and agreed to the following:

- May – Low impact living class announcements, compiled by Hanks (group to send class information to him to collate)
- June – Water, written by the water subcommittee
- July – a CEAP recap, written by Sohl

Climate & Energy Action Plan – Sohl informed the group that the plan was approved by Council but the two ordinances (one for starting a new commission and one for the overall reduction goal) are being studied by staff and will be brought back to Council in the future.

Conservation Commission Powers and Duties Discussion – Sohl asked the group to consider the questions, “What is the need to continue this commission in light of the CEAP approval?” and, “What needs to be part of the CEAP commission that might be formed?” Buck stated she’s less concerned with a commission that isn’t yet formed but would like the group to consider what activities the group does that must continue. She listed recent activities she believes are valuable. Beigel-Coryell stated the group should focus on the strengths of the members, including education and outreach, which might not be a big part of the CEAP commission.

Group discussed the history of the Conservation Commission. Group discussed the ways in which this group has changed over the years. They agreed that the outreach and education has been valuable to the community.

Weir stated he sees no need for a separate CEAP commission. Instead, he would prefer the Conservation Commission to continue with expanded membership and the CEAP as a sub-committee of the commission. Sohl stated that this would be a fairly radical adjustment in thinking, but he does like the idea. He’s always thought that the CEAP should be a large group with very active subcommittees focused on water, electric and recycling/waste. Cruickshank agreed that it makes sense to have a more robust Conservation Commission with subcommittees of very specific focuses. She is concerned that if there are two commissions the group still needs a way to help divide the duties between the two. Group agreed to continue the discussion of the powers and duties at the next commission meeting.

7. New Business

Nomination of 2017 Chair/Vice Chair – Group discussed who might be willing to take this on and Buck informed the group about conversations she had with Koopman regarding the possibility of being co-chairs together.

Beigel-Coryell/Sommer m/s to nominate Koopman as chair and Buck as vice-chair.

Discussion: Buck wanted to be clear that Koopman had suggested co-chairs. Group discussed this but determined that co-chairs can’t really work. As Koopman agreed in her conversations with Buck to lead the meetings, it would make more sense to just call her the chair, even if they share the other duties. **Voice Vote: All Ayes. Motion Passes.**

8. Wrap Up

Group requested that there be a continued discussion of powers and duties at the next meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Diana Shiplet
Executive Assistant