

MINUTES FOR THE ASHLAND CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Wednesday, March 28, 2018
Siskiyou Room, 51 Winburn Way

1. Call to Order

Vice-Chair Risa Buck called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Commissioners Mark Weir, Roxane Beigel-Coryell, Jamie Rosenthal, and David Sommer were present. Commissioners James McGinnis and Marni Koopman and staff member Adam Hanks were absent.

Buck requested that a presentation from Zoom Out Mycology be added to the agenda after Public Forum and the commissioners agreed.

2. Consent Agenda

Rosenthal requested an update to the minutes to reflect that she, not commissioner Buck, made the announcement about Rogue Disposal limited their recycling services.

Beigel-Coryell/Rosenthal m/s to approve the minutes of February 28, 2018, with the corrections mentioned by Rosenthal. Discussion: None. Voice Vote: all ayes. Motion Passes.

3. Announcements

The next commission meeting will be April 25, 2018. There are no currently scheduled subcommittee meetings.

Rosenthal announced that the annual Earth Day event at ScienceWorks will take place on April 21st, May 5th will be the Firewise annual yard debris cleanup day, and the showing of “Plastic China” will be held on April 16th. Beigel-Coryell announced that SOU will be celebrating Earth Week April 16 – 22 (for a full list of activities to look on the SOU website or Facebook page), the Thalden Pavillion will have its grand opening on April 20th, the new student recreation center will have a partial opening next week with a full opening in April, and the renovated Theater building will also have a partial opening next week. Buck informed the group that there is a new coordinator for the bottle and can collection baskets, Master Recycler Katie Gomez.

4. Public Forum

Louise Shawkat – stated that at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, April 11, at the Medford Public Library, the Oregon Senate District 3 candidates will participate in a public forum about environmental issues.

Huelz Gutchen – stated that the difference between modeling and measuring is that measuring is done to existing items but modeling is just a fancy guess. It’s important that the two be separate, especially for the CEAP committee. Also understanding this difference is required to understand energy. He stated that BPA used to call everything conservation but have now started calling it efficiency. He stated he had suggested to the City Council at their last meeting that no one can exactly count carbons, but we need people to make educated guesses and just start thinking about carbons.

5. Presentation by Zoom Out Mycology

Bashira Muhammad of [Zoom Out Mycology](#) gave a presentation on their organization. They have recently expanded from their New Jersey roots to southern Oregon. They use mushrooms and sustainable fungi to help restore contaminated lands as well as increase local food production by improving soils. She gave examples of restoration projects they completed in New Jersey and gave information about some upcoming projects. Group thanked her for presenting and encouraged her to contact North Mountain Park to discuss either teach a class or setting up a demonstration garden.

6. Reports

Ashland School District Quarterly Report – Sommer stated ASD is in negotiations for the City to purchase Briscoe School. This will be a relief for ASD maintenance efforts while at the same time being a benefit to the community by preserving the park behind the building. The upcoming school bond has a requirement to spend 1.5% of funds raised on green technology. He expects those funds will mostly go to solar power installations. He stated this summer ASD expects to double their electric-powered maintenance equipment supply and usage. The use of electric-powered equipment to far has been a big benefit to the district in that they reduce fatigue for the user, as well as both noise and air pollution.

Group discussed ways to encourage other entities to increase the use of electric-powered equipment, and suggested Sommer consider writing a “white paper” with all the benefits for distribution to other school districts.

7. Old Business

Sneak Preview Column – Weir handed out a draft article for the May edition of the Sneak Preview. Group members read the article. Buck suggested Weir define the term “greywater” at the beginning of the article and that he use the term, “laundry to landscape,” in order to be consistent with City Conservation Department terminology. Rosenthal suggested Weir make the title something like, “Waste-Not Water, Want-Not Water,” to catch the reader’s attention.

Beigel-Coryell/Sommer m/s to approve the May Sneak Preview article written by Weir with the edits discussed. Discussion: none. Voice Vote: All Ayes. Motion Passes.

Group discussed potential future topics:

- June – Straws on Demand Pilot Program article written by Rosenthal
- July – Summer Sustainability Tips written by Beigel-Coryell
- August or September – a wrap up/lessons learned about the Straws on Demand Pilot Program written by the waste subcommittee

Subcommittee Updates -

Energy Conservation – no recent meeting

Water – no recent meeting, but the members have been working with Conservation Analyst, Julie Smitherman on organizing two upcoming educational workshops.

Renewable Energy – no recent meeting

Waste Prevention – Buck stated that she has been speaking to restaurants about the durable to-go container project, as the test run at Simple Café was so popular they ran out of containers. She is hoping to connect multiple restaurants to form one common program. Rosenthal stated the Lend Me a Plate program should be officially launching this summer. They recently had a tutorial for new volunteers.

8. New Business

Straws on Demand Pilot Program – Beigel-Coryell stated the Waste Prevention subcommittee is ready for the pilot program to run for three months, starting on Earth Day. They made a flyer with information for the pilot program participants and are working with City staff to create table-top information cards for restaurant patrons. They are asking participating restaurants to track information on # of straws used before and after the program, the cost per unit of the straws, customer feedback and staff feedback.

**Weir/Sommer m/s to approve the Straws on Demand pilot program. Discussion: none.
Voice Vote: All Ayes. Motion Passes.**

Commission Chair Selection Discussion – Beigel-Coryell stated that she is willing to be the Chair of the commission for the next year, so long as the group agrees to not do a major goal setting process or take on any major new projects in that year. Weir stated he would be willing to be Vice Chair under those same circumstances. Group agreed that a major goal setting process is unnecessary, but would like the option to review and make minor revisions to current goals, if necessary. Group agreed to wait on voting until the April meeting so Koopman and McGinnis could weigh in on the decision.

Commission Vacancies Discussion – Group discussed ways to encourage new members.

9. Wrap Up

Buck gave kudos to Recology for continuing to maintain recycling services, when the rest of the valley hasn't. Group discussed ways Recology might charge for the new increases in Recycle Center use, including requiring a \$2.00 fee to be paid by non-residents at the center.

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

- Approval of Commission Chair and Vice Chair
- CEAP 2.0 Update
- Recology Quarterly Update

Meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Diana Shiplet
Executive Assistant