ASHLAND CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Meeting Agenda
December 14, 2016 – 6:00 PM

Community Development Building, Siskiyou Room
51 Winburn Way

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1. **Call to Order**

2. **Consent Agenda**
   - **2.1.** Minutes October 26, 2016 Commission meeting

3. **Announcements** (10 min)
   - **3.1.** Next Regular Meeting: January 25, 2017
   - **3.2.** Upcoming Sub-committee meetings
   - **3.3.** Appointment of New Commissioner – David Sommer - ASD
   - **3.3.** Other Announcements from Commissioners

4. **Public Forum** (10 min to be evenly divided by public wishing to speak)

5. **Reports / Presentations/Updates** (40 min)
   - **5.1.** Council Update- Councilor Rosenthal (5 min**)**
   - **5.2.** City Conservation Programs and Operations – Hanks (5 min)
   - **5.3.** Downtown Recycling Pilot Program Update – Buck/Biegel-Coryell (15 min)
   - **5.4.** Water Subcommittee Update – Weir (15 min)

6. **Old Business** (30 min)
   - **6.1** Commission Monthly Column in Sneak Preview (5 min)
     a. January – CEAP Goal/target/Science based – CEAP Committee
     b. Feburary – Energy Efficiency – Hanks/Weir
     c. March – CEAP Update – CEAP Committee
     d. April – Water related??
   - **6.2** Climate & Energy Action Plan – Project Update (10 min)
   - **6.3** Earth Bowl – Discussion/Decision for 2017 – Weir (15 min)

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7. **New Business** (15 min)
   - **7.1** Boardman Plant – Coal to biomass conversion discussion (15 min)

8. **Wrap Up** (5 min)
   - **8.1** Items to be added to next agenda
   - **8.2** Adjournment

CITY OF ASHLAND

MINUTES FOR THE ASHLAND CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Wednesday, October 26, 2016
Siskiyou Room, 51 Winburn Way

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

Commissioners Mark Weir, Jaime Rosenthal, Risa Buck, Roxane Beigel-Coryell, Marni Koopman, Cara Cruickshank, and James McGinnis were present. Staff member Adam Hanks was present. Council liaison Rich Rosenthal was absent.

2. Consent Agenda
Weir/Buck m/s to approve the minutes of September 28, 2016 as presented. Voice Vote: All Ayes. Motion Passes.

3. Announcements
The next commission meeting will be December 14, 2016.

Sohl stated he e-mailed the Ashland School District Superintendent, who replied she would be appointing a representative to the commission soon.

November 9, 2016, from 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. will be the next Low-Impact Living class at North Mountain Park. This class is regarding waste prevention and costs $5.

McGinnis encouraged the group to listen to the Tom Ashbrook episode of the On Point podcast regarding the future of electric cars.

This year's annual leaf drop-off will occur on November 6 and December 11 from 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. at the Ashland Recycle Center. Talent's leaf-drop off day is November 13th. Additionally, leaf-bags can be purchased at Recology until November 4th.

4. Public Forum
Jeff Sharpe – observed that the CEAP is doing great work but seems overwhelmed. He thinks its too overwhelmed to do anything about implementing the 10x20 ordinance and so he would like this Commission to take on that role.

Group discussed the status of the 10x20 ordinance – that it is currently in the hands of the City Council and until such time as Council decides to assign work to either staff, or a commission or committee, this group has no role. Hanks suggested the group attend or watch the Council discussion of on November 2nd. He additionally agreed to send links to the agenda packet for Council's discussion when it has been posted.

5. Reports/ Presentations/ Updates
City Conservation Programs and Operations – Hanks showed the group the new residential conservation program and new construction handouts. Commercial conservation and solar information handouts are in the process of being created.

Downtown Recycling Pilot Program Update – Beigel-Coryell stated they are looking at a "soft" expansion of the program while still looking into ways to do a permanent program through the City, Recology, or Parks & Recreation. Hanks informed the group there will be an ad in December's Sneak Preview thanking the current basket sponsors and encouraging others to join in.

SOU Quarterly Update – Beigel-Coryell gave a list of acknowledgements recently received by SOU, including (but not limited to): Sierra Magazine's list of "cool schools", the Princeton Review's list of green schools (SOU scored 97 out of a possible 99 points), and an honorable mention in the Climate Leadership awards. The SOU Sustainability program has a new website - sustainability.sou.edu. The site contains lots of news and information. She updated the group on the current progress of new construction and/or remodeling occurring on campus and the LEED certifications each building is seeking. Beigel-Coryell handed out information on SOU's greenhouse gas emissions tracking and discussed the challenges they have encountered in obtaining actuate information. Group asked some questions for clarification on the numbers presented.

Grey Water Subcommittee – the subcommittee members requested that the name of this group be changed to the *Water Subcommittee*, as it more accurately reflects the variety of topics they wish to cover. They met on the 20th of October and came up with a list of goals they want the group to approve, alter or add to. The goals are as follows:

1) start discussion/engagement with Public Works staff (Mike Faught and Julie Smitherman) about existing programs related to water conservation (grey water, catchment, etc.)
2) set a goal for doubling the number of grey water systems in town by October of 2017
3) update/refresh the grey water information page on the city's website with the assistance of Public Works staff
4) add a grey water information class to next year's list of Low Impact Living classes
5) add a water catchment information class to next year's list of Low Impact Living classes

Cruickshank stated she is also interested in adding a goal of finding ways to incentivize new grey water systems. Beigel-Coryell stated this seems to be a natural part of the discussion with staff regarding existing programs.

Beigel-Coryell/Koopman m/s to approve the five goals of the subcommittee as presented.
Discussion: Beigel-Coryell stated she is glad the subcommittee started this process. Sohl wondered how their efforts will tie into the CEAP process, particularly as water has been discussed so little in that process. Buck gave an overview of the previous grey water class and how it resulted in many of the current systems in Ashland. Cruickshank reiterated her desire to include finding incentives in the list of goals.
Cruickshank moved to include incentives discussion to the list of goals. Motion failed for lack of a second.
Voice Vote on original motion: All Ayes. Motion Passes.

6. Old Business
Sneak Preview Column – Group praised Rosenthal for her well-written article.
Beigel-Coryell/McGinnis m/s to approve the article for the December edition of the Sneak

Preview as presented in the packet. Voice Vote: All Ayes. Motion Passes.

Group discussed the schedule of articles for the next several months. They would prefer to see a January article regarding the science-based targets CEAP just approved, a February article regarding Energy Efficiency Programs by Weir and Hanks, and a March article regarding the final plan presented to Council in February.

Beigel-Coryell/McGinnis m/s to donate the January and March Conservation Commission Sneak Preview space to the Climate and Energy Action Plan Committee. Discussion: Buck asked the group how it knows the CEAP will use the spots? Sohl stated that since a good number of CEAP members are also Conservation Commission members, he's comfortable that the CEAP will use the space. **Voice Vote: All Ayes. Motion Passes.**

Climate & Energy Action Plan – McGinnis gave an overview of the October 15th meeting, which included discussions on the 10x20 ordinance, an approval of science-based goals and targets. He stated that the group ran out of time to discuss a Vision Statement so Councilor Rosenthal is drafting one by compiling all the suggested statements from committee members. Koopman stated the targets discussion was a particularly difficult decision and the group did not make its decision lightly. McGinnis stated the group also recognized that it won't be possible to achieve the targets without either purchasing offsets or coming up with some creative thinking outside the box options. Group discussed ways in which the CEAP may affect the Conservation Commission (or, at the very least, the Commission's Powers and Duties).

Earth Bowl – Weir stated he reached out to Rogue Climate, who informed him they are unable to assist in this project. He is meeting with SOCAN on October 28, 2016, at 5:00 p.m. to see if they are interested in assisting with the event. He will update the group at the next meeting with any progress.

7. New Business

Electric Department Cost of Service Study – Hanks informed the group that this will be presented and discussed at the Council Study Session of October 31st. He gave an overview of the process leading up to the study and how it will likely set the table for rate designs in the next few years. Group raised concerns that there is no information regarding the CEAP and Hanks stated that the CEAP started after this study was contracted, so it hasn't been taken into consideration.

8. Wrap Up

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

- Water Subcommittee update
- Biomass change to the Boardman power plant

Meeting adjourned at 8:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Diana Shiplet
Executive Assistant

FUEL OF THE FUTURE?

Portland General Electric will stop burning coal at its Boardman power plant in 2020, replacing coal with biomass including a bamboo-like cane.

OCT 18, 2016 / JOHN HARRISON /

The roasted cane of a cellulose-rich grass that can grow up to 18 feet tall in a year may be the fuel of the future for the only coal-fired power plant in Oregon. The plant near Boardman, majority-owned by Portland General Electric, is scheduled to stop burning coal at the end of 2020.

Torrefied arundo donax, ready for the grinder.

PGE is exploring alternative, low-emission renewable fuels for the plant as part its strategy to rely increasingly on energy efficiency, demand response — voluntary reductions in customer electricity use during periods of high demand and limited power availability — and renewable energy including hydropower to serve its 848,000 customers. With the approval of the Oregon Public Utilities Commission, the Boardman plant could convert to burn only biomass fuel.

The challenge to burn a biomass fuel in a power plant designed to burn pulverized coal is that the new fuel must look and burn like the fuel it is replacing.

"You have to make the biomass conform to the way we burn coal at Boardman," Wayne Lei, who is in charge of research and development at PGE, told the Council in October. "You have to make it crispy so you can pound it into a really fine powder — like pulverized coal. We have to ensure it will grind well, burn well, and that the ash performance will be similar to coal."

Biomass can be defined as any organic matter that is used as a fuel, from dried grass to wood waste. The process of making it crispy and grindable — much like roasting and grinding coffee beans, Lei said — is called torrefication. Working with its partner, Oregon Torrefication, PGE has tested more than 30 varieties of plants and wood, from corn stalks and wheat straw to fir chips and mint, and also invasive species including English ivy, Himalayan blackberry vines, and Russian Olive wood. "This might be a very good way to get rid of invasive species in the future," Lei said.

Of them all, though giant cane, *arundo donax*, has shown the greatest promise. It has a high cellulous content — the part of the plant that remains after torrefication — compresses well into charcoal-like lumps, grinds well, and burns almost precisely like the Wyoming coal the Boardman plant uses now.

Most likely, if PGE gets regulatory approval to go ahead, the plant would burn a combination of torrefied arundo donax and wood waste. PGE is working with Sustainable Northwest, the Blue Mountains Forest Partners collaborative, and other partners in eastern Oregon to develop a source of wood for fuelstock. PGE also plans to work with local landowners to grow the giant cane.

The next step is to conduct a multiple-day test burn at the Boardman plant in December and monitor air emissions and fuel performance. Converting to plant-based, torrefied renewable fuels could require additional pollution controls at the plant for particulate matter and nitrogen oxides, Lei said.

Tags: Renewable energy, Boardman power plant, Portland General Electric, Coal, Arundo donax

Biomass day planned at Boardman Coal Plant

By GEORGE PLAVEN - *Associated Press - Thursday, September 1, 2016*

PENDLETON, Ore. (AP) - Cleaning up forest clutter might be good for more than just curtailing large wildfires in Oregon.

It might just be the answer Portland General Electric is looking for to convert the Boardman Coal Plant to 100 percent biomass.

Later this year, PGE will use nothing but woody debris to power the station for one full day as the utility continues to test alternative fuels at the 550-megawatt facility. A successful test burn was conducted last year at Boardman using a 10-to-1 mix of coal and biomass, which has project leaders feeling optimistic. But this will be the first time the plant is fed exclusively biomass for 24 straight hours, which will go a long way toward determining whether the plan is feasible long-term.

The future remains uncertain at Oregon's only remaining coal-fired power plant. Rather than install expensive new emission controls, PGE has decided to either convert the station to cleaner burning biomass, or shut it down entirely by 2020.

Wayne Lei, director of research and development for PGE, said biomass is an intriguing though challenging concept for Boardman. First, in order to feed biomass into the plant's pulverizers, it must undergo a process called torrefaction - similar to making charcoal, or roasting coffee beans.

The result is a dry, crispy material that can be ground up and burned as fuel.

"It's about a half-step below making charcoal," Lei said.

At its peak generating capacity, the Boardman Coal Plant blasts through roughly 300 tons of coal every hour. Since torrefied biomass behaves similarly to coal, that means it will take 8,000 tons to keep the facility humming for a full day.

To get that kind of supply, PGE has partnered with a newly incorporated company called Oregon Torrefaction, which will use small-diameter and beetle-killed trees to create the final product. The full day test burn will be conducted later this year.

Oregon Torrefaction registered as a benefit corporation with the state July 1, incorporating environmental quality into its bottom line. Its partners include the U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities, Bonneville Environmental Foundation and Ochoco Lumber Company, based in Prineville.

Bruce Daucsavage, president of Ochoco Lumber, said their goal is to prove torrefied biomass can become a viable and sustainable commercial business in Oregon, providing rural jobs while also improving forest health.

"There's so much interest in this," Daucsavage said. "The technology is already proven."

With the decline of the timber markets, Ochoco Lumber now owns the last remaining sawmill in John Day. The company was rejuvenated in 2012 by a 10-year stewardship contract with the Malheur National Forest, purchasing wood off federal restoration projects at fair market value.

However, Daucsavage said a significant portion of what's harvested from those projects can't be used at the lumber mill. The trees are either too small or too damaged to make boards. They could be chipped, but those markets aren't worth enough for Ochoco Lumber to turn a profit.

On the other hand, if the clutter isn't harvested, it will simply dry out and become nothing more than kindling for explosive wildfires, like last year's Canyon Creek Complex. Torrefaction could be the solution, Daucsavage said, especially if biomass can gain traction as a coal substitute.

"It's a really interesting green story," he said.

The majority of biomass for the PGE project will come off national forests, Daucsavage said. Oregon Torrefaction is in the process of installing a large torrefier at a chipping yard in the Port of Morrow, and from there the material will be trucked eight miles to the Boardman Coal Plant.

It will take approximately 800 truckloads to deliver all 8,000 tons of biomass. Daucsavage said they hope to start torrefaction in the next few days. "The idea is to invest dollars back into forest health and rural communities," Daucsavage said.

Matt Krumenauer, of Salem, is the CEO of Oregon Torrefaction. He said the project with PGE is a perfect opportunity to see if the markets for biomass and utilities can match.

"PGE was already planning to cease coal operations," Krumenauer said. "They've been the most progressive and most interested in seeing if this could be a viable alternative energy solution for them."

Brendan McCarthy, PGE's state environmental policy manager, said a number of factors will come into play before they decide whether biomass in Boardman makes sense for ratepayers. Cost and supply of the fuel is all part of the equation, as well as what it would take to retrofit the plant's emission controls for a new power source.

If the full day test burn is successful, the next step will be to see if biomass can be used to power the plant for multiple days in a row. So far, McCarthy said they are encouraged by what they're seeing but it will continue to be a major effort moving forward.

"It's complicated," McCarthy said. "You can see how creating this whole new way of energy, you really need to work through everything."

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Information from: East Oregonian, http://www.eastoregonian.com

Questions?

Making smart choices for Oregon's energy future