

MINUTES FOR THE ASHLAND CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Wednesday, December 16, 2015
Siskiyou Room, 51 Winburn Way

1. Call to Order

Roxane Beigel-Coryell called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Siskiyou Room.

Commissioners Bryan Sohl, James McGinnis, Mark Weir, Shel Silberberg, Risa Buck, and Cara Cruickshank were present. Staff member Adam Hanks and Councilor Mike Morris were present. Commissioner Marni Koopman and Councilor Rich Rosenthal were absent.

2. Consent Agenda

Buck/Silverberg m/s to approve the minutes of October 28, and November 18, 2015 as presented. Voice Vote: All Ayes. Motion Passes.

3. Announcements

The next commission meeting will be on January 27, 2016. The Earth Bowl subcommittee will meet on January 6, 2016, at 6:00 p.m. in the Hannon Library at SOU. The Conservation Classes subcommittee will meet on January 4, 2016, at 5:00 p.m. in the Hannon Library at SOU.

Buck stated the City of Talent is considering a Styrofoam ban. Recology's leaf drop off has been rescheduled for this weekend, due to inclement weather on the original date. She spoke at the Association of Recyclers' conference in Portland and discovered that Ashland has good ideas regarding education and outreach to teach other parts of the state.

Cruickshank requested a discussion of the SOU plan to use biomass for heating purposes. Beigel-Coryell suggested that Cruickshank read the minutes of the previous group discussion and if Cruickshank still had questions, she would be happy to connect her with someone at SOU to assist.

Weir gave an overview of some of the agreements made at the Paris climate summit. Stated that this as encouragement for the Commission to continue their work. Cruickshank stated that, in conjunction with the Paris agreements, Portland passed a resolution requiring no new fossil fuels related infrastructure be built.

4. Public Forum

Louise Shawkat – stated that RVTD was set to do a presentation at the Transportation Commission, but was unable to attend due to illness, they sent a memo instead. She read some of it aloud and stated that it appears RVTD needs education regarding use of natural gas and the need for more, rather than fewer, transportation options.

Huelz Gutchen – stated that at the last meeting he explained the four parts of energy and that as part of the recent Paris climate agreement 150 countries agreed to see what they can do to reduce carbons. Elon Musk gave a good talk about reducing carbons at the Paris event. Most important to him, though, was that Goldman Sacks representatives came and stated they have investors willing to spend lots of money on things like solar panels, electric cars, and windmills. Bill Gates stated this was all great, but what really needs to be done is to have good innovations.

5. Reports/ Presentations/ Updates

Downtown Recycling – Hanks stated he is not sure if they will meet the end of the year deadline. The subcommittee is working on signage and getting the Chamber of Commerce to agree to do the oversight.

Council Update – Councilor Morris stated that Council just adopted the Normal Neighborhood plan. He gave some details of the plan and answered the Group's questions. He stated Council also passed an ordinance regarding the growing and processing of marijuana. There are lots of regulations regarding the number of plants allowed and setbacks. He has concerns regarding indoor growing and the burden on the electric system this could cause. Lastly, he stated that in January Council will be considering options for the Railroad Property clean up.

City Conservation and Operations – Hanks stated that the refrigerator recycling provider the City has a contract with recently encountered financial difficulties. Recology has stepped up to take their place and the City will go out soon for a new contract. Hanks stated that the Greenhouse Gas Inventory is nearing completion, he is working with the contractor to complete the narratives. It will be presented to the Climate and Energy Action Plan committee on January 20th. Lastly, the Public Works Director, Mike Faught, has agreed to send a staff member to the February commission meeting to answer questions regarding water and storm water. To make this an effective use of staff time, Hanks requested the group send questions to him in advance.

6. Old Business

Sneak Preview Column – **Buck/Silverberg m/s to approve the BYOB update as written by Weir. Voice Vote: All Ayes. Motion Passes.**

Weir/Cruickshank m/s to approve the Climate Action Plan update with the red-lined updates submitted by McGinnis. Discussion : Group discussed whether this was intended to be detailed or just an update. Group agreed that as they are doing these quarterly, it is just an update. **Voice Vote: All Ayes. Motion Passes.**

Group discussed which months particular topics should be covered and determined that this would be the best schedule:

- March – Natural Yard Care Solutions, written by Cruickshank
- April – Earth Bowl, written by Silverberg and Weir
- May – Climate Action Plan Quarterly Update, written by either McGinnis, Beigel-Coryell or Sohl
- June – Water Conservation, written by Cruickshank and Weir
- July – Conservation Classes, written by Buck
- August – Climate Action Plan Quarterly Update, written by either McGinnis, Beigel-Coryell or Sohl
- September – Living With Wildlife, written by Cruickshank

Climate & Energy Action Plan – the committee met today, and most of the committee will be joining two staff members in reviewing the seven RFP proposals received. Final approval by

Council on this selection is scheduled for February 2, 2016, which should keep the process on-track. Councilor Morris expressed concern at having so many committee members involved in what typically is a staff-only job. Sohl stated the reason for the extra participation is that it is a community-led plan and the committee felt having more community involvement was important.

Solar Park Resolution Proposal – Sohl stated that a group of residents took a tour of the site. In his opinion, it is potentially a good location for a future solar program. He doesn't know all the particulars of the proposed project or of Public Works need for use of the site, but would like the group to consider the version #6 resolution, which has significant changes from the last version (this version is attached to these minutes).

Beigel-Coryell expressed concerns with this request going through the Conservation Commission and believes that it should instead be considered by the Climate & Energy Action Plan in their energy production section. McGinnis questioned the timing this resolution, and wanted to know why is there a need for it to be approved now, when the Climate & Energy Action Plan process is currently on-going. Councilor Morris stated the Council and Budget Committee declined this proposal when it was brought up during the budget process. He questioned why the proposal was then brought to the Conservation Commission. Hanks gave background information as to how and when the proposal was brought to the Commission. Group discussed whether the proposal would be approved by Council, most agreed it likely would not.

Sohl/Cruickshank m/s to support the proposed resolution, version #6. Discussion:

Cruickshank wondered if an updated version with additional clarifying changes regarding the timing would make the group more comfortable. Hanks stated that approving this resolution isn't the only option, the Group could approve a letter or memo to Council offering their encouragement to reserve the property and do a study of the proposal.

Group discussed whether it was appropriate to approve the resolution or just ensure that the project possibility be included in the Climate & Energy Action Plan process. Some believe that it is important to push Council into considering challenging issues, others worried about losing Council confidence in the Commission.

Group discussed timing of the proposal and whether there was any risk involved in delaying it. Determined there was little risk that the Council would sell the property, so there is little risk in a delay. Sohl stated that the important part is that many members of the community, including members of SOCAN, would like this project to be specifically addressed, if that's through the Climate & Energy Action Plan, then that would address their concerns.

Roll Call Vote: Silverberg – no, Weir – no, McGinnis – no, Sohl – yes, Cruickshank – yes, Buck – no, Beigel-Coryell – no. No votes = 5, yes votes = 2. Motion Fails.

McGinnis/Cruickshank m/s that the Conservation Commission recommend to the Ad Hoc Committee for the Climate and Energy Action Plan that the feasibility of a potential solar farm site on the Imperatrice Property be evaluated specifically, as a high priority, as part of the development of an energy plan for the City of Ashland within the new climate and energy plan. Discussion: Buck stated she has a personal issue with putting photovoltaic

anywhere other than on buildings, and therefore can't support the concept. She's not convinced that considering the feasibility, in general, is a good thing. Sohl stated that her opinion is exactly why there needs to be a conversation as part of the Climate and Energy Action Plan, so all sides can be heard. Group agreed that these discussions are an important part of that process.

Roll Call Vote: Silverberg – yes, Weir – yes, McGinnis – yes, Sohl – yes, Cruickshank – yes, Buck – no, Beigel-Coryell – yes. No votes = 1, yes votes = 6, Motion Passes.

7. New Business

Bag Ban Review – Hanks gave an update on the process to date and stated that there hasn't been as much response as he was hoping for, but there is enough to get a decent understanding of the retailers and grocers responses. The last piece is the Open City Hall topic, which should be open tomorrow.

Weir expressed concerns with the data given by the SOU class. Hanks stated that he is not giving Council all of the data, as some of their conclusions and recommendations have faulty assumptions.

Hanks stated that the most important bit of information out of this is that it appears the large grocery stores are using fewer brown bags, which means the purpose of the ban of getting more people to use reusable bags is working.

Buck stated that if Council isn't going to require more enforcement on the smaller retailers to follow the ban, including the 10-cent fee, then they should just repeal that portion of the ban. McGinnis stated that the purpose originally was to use the 10-cents to make people more aware, and make bringing a bag a habit. Weir stated that in order for these types of bans to continue to be effective, a raise in the fees is required. He would like to see both a raise in the fee to 25-cents and an increase in enforcement by code compliance on the smaller retail establishments.

Weir/Buck m/s that the Commission recommend to Council that the bag ban fee be raised to 25-cents per bag and that there be an increase in code compliance for those who are not complying with the resolution. Discussion: Silverberg stated that doing an increase could affect more change, but is concerned that bumping up the fee would erode any goodwill created in the community. McGinnis stated that this is all part of a larger conversation the group needs to have and would prefer a more focused discussion when they aren't under a time crunch. Most of the group agreed they were concerned with eroding the goodwill of the community.

Weir/Buck agreed to amend their motion to state that the Commission is recommending to Council that they increase code compliance on those who are not complying with the ban.

Roll Call Vote: Silverberg – yes, Weir – yes, McGinnis – yes, Sohl – yes, Cruickshank – yes, Buck – yes, Beigel-Coryell – yes. No votes = 0, yes votes = 7, Motion Passes.

Meeting adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Diana Shiplet
Executive Assistant

DRAFT
RESOLUTION NO. _____

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF ASHLAND TO SET ASIDE IN 2016
100 ACRES ON THE IMPERATRICE PROPERTY FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A POTENTIAL
SOLAR(VOLTAIC) PARK BY A PUBLIC OR PRIVATE CONTRACTOR/INVESTORS FOR NO LESS THAN
TEN YEARS.

RECITALS:

- A. The City of Ashland is owner of the 864 acres identified as the Imperatrice Ranch Property.
- B. The City purchased the Property in 1996 for the purpose of using it or portions of it for land treatment of treated wastewater as a method to diminish elevated temperatures of effluent discharged from the WWTP into Ashland and Bear Creeks especially in May and October.
- C. The Comprehensive Sanitary Sewer Master Plan, 2012, paragraph 10.2.1, states the effluent can only be applied on 412 acres of the Property "Due to steep terrain and other limiting features (TID canal, wetland swale) portions of the Imperatrice site are not usable for irrigation. Limiting irrigation to slopes less than 20% and providing necessary buffer zones for the canal, swale and property lines provides a usable irrigation area of 412 acres for Class C effluent or 433 acres for Class B effluent..."
- D. CSSMP, CH2MHILL's memo of June 8, 2015 addresses their study results to date. The critical time frame is May and October for temperature mitigation. (Paragraph 5, third and fourth bullets) Their options for mitigation are consistent with the master plan.
- E. Property for a Solar Park would not interfere with the 412 or 433 acres identified in the master plan because a solar park can be located on ~~the~~ slopes 20% or greater. See Map, Exhibit 1.
- F. The City of Ashland must have a redundant power source in light of the threat of natural disasters such as earthquakes, tsunamis, and drought that can and will effect the entire state including our primary power supplier Bonnieville Power.
- G. The City of Ashland must take measures to curtail its and the nation's carbon emissions. A solar farm on the Imperatrice Property would be an important contribution to getting Ashland and the Valley to zero net carbon emissions.
- H. Investors may be interested in what Ashland has to offer because California's [SB 32](#) dramatically increases the of energy the state is required to derive from renewables to 50 percent, reduces petroleum use 50 percent,—and requires improved energy efficiency of buildings by 50 percent, all by the year 2030. The strongest market for renewables is in California.
- I. President Obama - "Climate change is no longer some far-off problem. It is happening here. It is happening now," he warned the representatives of more than

20 countries attending the Conference on Global Leadership in the Arctic: Cooperation, Innovation, Engagement and Resilience... “Any so-called leader who doesn’t take this issue seriously or treats it like a joke is not fit to lead,” he said. “On this issue, of all issues, there is such a thing as being too late, and that moment is almost upon us.”

THE CITY OF ASHLAND RESOLVES AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. Provision for Renewable Electric Power

Ashland will set aside on the Imperatrice Property 100 acres suitable for a potential solar farm for a period of 10 years following passage of the resolution. See Exhibit 1 for technically acceptable acreage for a solar farm.

SECTION 2. Intention

The intent of the resolution is for all terms and conditions to be worked with and through the City of Ashland Ad-Hoc Climate and Energy Plan Committee that is responsible for development of the City of Ashland Climate and Energy Plan. The purpose of this alignment is to ensure good communication between city staff, the City of Ashland Ad-Hoc Climate and Energy Plan Committee, and the citizens of Ashland.

SECTION 3. Terms and Conditions

- a. Council appropriate \$10,000 for staff to research and uncover all relevant title, environmental, geotechnical and inter connectivity information in City files that could be useful to any party seeking to evaluate the site for a potential solar farm. This information must be formatted and linked on a city web page with a link to it on the City home page.
By no later than June 30, 2016 the City shall have completed posting the information above to a dedicated City web page with a link on the home page so that interested parties-can peruse the known, relevant information regarding the Imperatrice Property-
- b. The Conservation Commission recommends to the Ad Hoc Committee for the Climate and Energy Plan that the feasibility of a potential solar farm site on the Imperatrice Property by evaluated, as a high priority, as part of the development of an energy plan for the City of Ashland within the new climate and energy plan.

SECTION 4. This resolution was duly PASSED and ADOPTED this _____ day of, and takes effect upon signing by the Mayor.

Barbara Christensen, City Recorder

SIGNED and APPROVED this _____ day of

John Stromberg, Mayor

Reviewed as to form:

Dave Lohman, Ashland City Attorney