

MINUTES FOR THE CONSERVATION AND CLIMATE OUTREACH COMMISSION

Wednesday, December 16, 2020

Held Electronically via Zoom

1. Call to Order (item starts at 1:23 on the video)

Chair Rebecca Walker called the meeting to order at 3:03 p.m. Commissioners Risa Buck, Larry Cooper, James McGinnis, Jamie Rosenthal, and Bryan Sohl were present. Staff members Stu Green and Bridgette Bottinelli were also present. Commissioner Marni Koopman and Council liaison Stefani Seffinger arrived later in the meeting.

2. Consent Agenda (1:37)

2.1. November 18, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Walker requested that the project suggested by Seffinger to collaborate with the Ashland Food Bank on reducing food waste be moved to after the project list details as a general suggestion. Buck/Cooper moved/seconded to approve the minutes with the correction mentioned. Further discussion: none. All ayes; motion passed unanimously.

3. Announcements (4:08)

3.1. Next Regular Meeting: January 27, 2020

Walker announced the next meeting will be held as regularly scheduled.

3.2. Other Announcements from Commissioners

No announcements were given.

3.3. Reports from Members of Other Commissions

No reports were given.

4. Public Forum (4:37)

Two submissions were received: one regarding a Climate Holiday Virtual Mixer and one regarding the restriction of leaf blowers. Cooper stated that he responded to the leaf blower restriction email as this is an ongoing issue that the Commission has discussed previously. Sohl announced that the Climate Policy Commission (CPC) is also working on this issue. Walker will contact CPC regarding their progress on this issue.

5. Reports/Presentations (8:18)

Walker gave a debrief of the annual report to Council given the night before based on what the Commission approved at their last meeting. Cooper asked for an outline of the report. Walker will send out the outline and presentation to the Commission for reference.

5.1. Council Update

No Council update was given as Seffinger was not present for this section of the meeting.

5.2. Staff Update (10:26)

Green updated the Commission the following:

- One of the public chargers recently installed had a manufacturing defect and will be replaced. There are still nine operational chargers for public use.
- The electric vehicle incentive for both bikes and cars are available. These programs were funded by a Bonneville Environmental Foundation grant.
- Walker and Green submitted a materials flow grant to Oregon Department of Environmental Quality.
- Green is working with CPC to expand on-bill financing for home energy loans.

- The Rogue to Go pilot program is finishing up. The program will continue after the pilot portion ends and has already expanded to more restaurants.
- Green is working to get an employee e-bike loan program for City employees.
- CPC and Green are working on a master plan for the Electric Utility and establishing a home energy score program for Ashland.
- There is a potential to add electric vehicle chargers at the Grove.

Bottinelli gave an update on the new Climate and Energy Action Plan (CEAP) website. Buck asked if programs like the bag ban, downtown bottle and can baskets, etc. could be included on this website. Bottinelli stated that the program details could be added to subpages that have similar content. Cooper asked how frequently the website would be updated to make sure the information is up to date. Bottinelli stated that the core content will be designed so minimal updates are needed. Green followed up that specific programs and events can be displayed but will be linked to other internal or external pages for more information. Bottinelli stated that a Facebook page for CEAP will be created and presented at the next meeting.

6. Old Business

6.1. Decision: Commission Monthly Column in Sneak Preview (21:21)

Buck asked if the article could change Ashland Electric to Ashland Utilities. Green suggested to replace Ashland Electric with Ashland Electric Utility as only customers with an electric account can apply for the incentive. Buck/McGinnis moved/seconded to approve article with clarification on Ashland Electric Utility not Utilities. Further discussion: none. All ayes; motion passed unanimously. Buck will send those changes to Koopman for the article.

Cooper and Sohl will write the Water Conservation article for approval at the next meeting. The article to be published in April will be by Walker with the general title on the COVID-19 pandemic and sustainability. This article could also include community connectedness announcing the new website and Facebook page. Green volunteered subjects like preparedness, electrification or using less fossil fuels, efficiency and reducing consumption, and renewable energy as future article topics. Rosenthal also proposed an article on the household waste event in May even though it might be postponed.

6.2. Update on Different Channels for Articles and Future Outreach (33:39)

Walker reiterated the different channels discussed at the last meeting. Koopman had previously volunteered to post on social media pages. Walker and Buck met with Lorrie Kaplan of Southern Oregon Climate Action Now who will write a climate spotlight article every two weeks in the Ashland Tidings.

6.3. CEAP Project Update (35:40)

- Responsible Consumption and Single Use

Walker stated that the group previously discussed single use alternatives and consumption. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, an ordinance restricting single-use items was discussed. As many businesses have been affected by COVID-19 restrictions, the group decided to instead focus on providing alternatives to single use items and education on what is recyclable within Ashland's current recycling infrastructure.

- Climate Resilience

Sohl stated the group was interested in collaborating with CPC. Walker asked how this fit in with the project description approved at the last meeting. Sohl stated that based on group's meeting three items need to be addressed: climate adaptation and resilience (as previously approved by CCOC), how to collaborate with CPC, and how to educate new City Council members on CEAP. Walker stated that these three items will still need to mainly focus on climate adaptation and resilience as agreed upon by the Commission. She also emphasized the need to collaborate with all Commissions not just CPC.

Koopman arrived at 3:55 p.m.

Koopman explained that the outreach and priorities would be aligned with CPC and other staff or Council efforts. One CEAP resilience goal was educating and empowering City staff so climate change is embedded in every decision made which could include education for the incoming Councilmembers. Two other projects the group discussed were outreach for minimizing public health impacts and increasing public safety. Koopman also emphasized the need for social equity and to gear outreach towards reaching vulnerable groups.

Cooper wanted to revisit the collaboration with CPC. He suggested having a monthly meeting with both Commissions to stay up to date on each other's projects. Green reminded everyone that CPC is mainly focused on policy recommendations and the Conservation and Climate Outreach Commission (CCOC) is focused on outreach and education. The two Commissions can mutually support each other but should not go outside of what their specified focus areas as determined by Council. Green encouraged talking to other Commissioners for input, but if there is a request for another Commission to take on work that request needs to be approved by the whole Commission before anything is initiated. Green stated that a good way to stay informed on other Commission's work is to read the minutes or watch the meeting video.

Seffinger arrived at 4:16 p.m.

- Water Use and Conservation

Cooper stated that Julie Smitherman, Water Conservation Analyst, will be taking a job with the Medford Water Commission. He would like to advocate for that position to be filled by an equally qualified person. The group also discussed climate resiliency and the Alameda Fire shutting down Talent Ashland Phoenix Intertie (TAP) water supply. Cooper stated that future emergencies like a power outage at the pump station and a delay in upgrades to water lines and storage tank could affect the TAP water supply and needed to be addressed immediately.

Cooper and Sohl will work on the water conservation article for next month with resources provided by Smitherman. Cooper would either like Scott Fleury, Public Works Director, to attend the next Commission meeting for an update on City water plans and projects or to have him join the next focus group meeting. Buck requested that the focus group write a letter to Council celebrating Smitherman's work and emphasizing the importance of her position getting filled. This letter will be brought back to the Commission for approval in January or February.

6.4. 20's Plenty Update (1:28:30)

Sohl met with Gary Shaff from CPC and Mark Brouillard from the Transportation Commission on the recommendation to reduce the speed limit across Ashland by five miles per hour. The group is looking into safety and climate considerations to back up this effort to help keep Ashland safe, bike friendly, and more fuel efficient. Buck asked if there were staff implications

to enforcing this new speed limit to consider. Sohl stated that he would bring up that issue with the group to see if City staff needed to be involved with the discussion.

6.5. Compost Recommendation Letter Update (1:38:03)

Walker stated that the approved email was sent after last meeting and the response from Adam Hanks, Interim City Administrator was included in this meeting packet. Seffinger had come from a meeting with Gary Blake, Recology General Manager and some interested citizens regarding implementing a city-wide or regional composting program. Walker participated on a call regarding a composting strategy for the city as well. As there are multiple discussions and interest in the topic, Walker proposed the Commission could take on the role as collaborators with interested parties.

Green stated a waste water concept would be in vessel aerobic composting for waste water solids. The program would need funding, but part of operations study coming up. For a composting program for residents, Green would like to see a drop off location for voluntary participation rather than curbside pick-up which would cost more to develop and implement.

Buck hopes that Recology Ashland will be able to talk to other Recology franchises who have created composting programs for data on costs and implementation. Rosenthal agreed, but stated that other Recology composting programs are done on a much larger scale. This item will continue to the next meeting.

7. New Business

7.1. Commission Vacancies (1:49:01)

There are two current vacancies: one member of the public and one representative of the Ashland School District. The School District is unable provide a representative until the end of the school year. The Commissioners discussed about searching for an applicant that would bring diversity to the Commission.

8. Wrap Up (1:52:25)

8.1. Items to be added to future agendas

- Letter to City Council Regarding Clean Fuel Credits (TBD)

Buck asked Rogue to Go participants to go to Rogueetogo.com and complete the survey that will help the future planning of the program.

The meeting was adjourned by Chair Walker at 4:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Elizabeth Taylor