

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE
MARCH 10, 2008, 11 A.M. – 12:30 P.M.
MSCS Conference Room 4
Meeting Minutes

ATTENDING MEMBERS:

Mark Armstrong	Frank Kasimov
Jennifer Burke	Laura Kim
Chris Carrieri	Rita Miller
Barbara Firestone	Sam Pierce
Jennifer Henry	Jane Rozga
Elise Howard	Dell Tredinnick

Introductions: Dell Tredinnick introduced Jennifer Henry and Laura Kim of the Sonoma County Green Business Program. He passed around the issue of Popular Science magazine that contained the article about the 50 greenest cities in the US of which Santa Rosa was 23rd; a brief discussion followed.

Sonoma Green Business Program: Jennifer Henry explained that the Business Environmental Alliance (BEA) was started in 1995 by the Sonoma County Economic Development Board (EDB). She said that the purpose of the public-private partnership is to help businesses establish sound environmental practices while improving their bottom line profits. She said that she is the coordinator of the Sonoma Green Business Program (SGBP), run through the Bay Area Green Business Program, which is a pilot certification program that began two years ago: it certifies businesses that implement a series of environmental improvements as green. Jennifer added that the mission of the BEA is to promote environmental best practices and provide information and resources. She stated that their partner agencies include Sonoma County Water Agency, PG&E, Sonoma County Waste Management Agency, Sonoma County Department of Emergency Services and Northbay Corporation. Laura Kim stated that they are working with businesses that are not regulated by Certified Unified Program Agencies (CUPA), including wineries and auto repair shops. Laura passed out literature about their program. Elise Howard stated that Water Conservation does water audits for them. She added that there will be a Green Business event downtown on June 24th that will include PG&E, Water Conservation, and the Project Development Team.

Action Item: Barbara Firestone will continue to invite Jennifer and Laura to the Environmental Committee meetings.

Strategic Plan: Dell reported that the Strategic Plan was submitted on time, and that the next week the conveners will meet with the Executive Staff to go over the six goals submitted. Chris Carrieri stated that the priorities of the Community Advisory Board include zero waste, landfill issues, and compost facility locations. Dell suggested linking to the Business Alliance web site. Chris Carrieri reported the public's frustration with the City's new web site. Frank Kasimov recommended the use of an under construction disclaimer.

Action Item: Frank Kasimov will talk with Eric McHenry about the issue with the City's web site.

Downtown Recycling/ Zero Waste Update: Elise Howard said that she had been working with Autumn Buss , Economic Development, the Water Agency, and Northbay Corporation placing black garbage cans with blue lids Downtown for recyclables. She discussed the Downtown Recycling event planned for June 24th: participants include PG&E, the Water Agency, and the BEA. Elise stated that there are going to be classes, possibly on rebates, the BEA Program, green cleaning, and power washers: there will also be surveys on recycling in exchange for giveaways. Chris stated that clear stream bags are available for community activities, and Frank added that it is necessary to contact Northbay Corporation for information, delivery, and pickup. A discussion took place on recycling plastic bags, and Dell stated that the best direction to take is bringing your own bags.

Solar Projects Update: Dell discussed the 1 MEG West College solar project in development. He stated that a big array with multiple meters will require many regulatory changes. Sam Pierce stated that PG&E must address the issue of pay back for energy accumulation beyond customers' needs. Dell said that the initial CSR agreement was self generating power, and that our goal is to apply energy to our usage, to offset the high energy demands of the Treatment Plant in Utilities and streetlights in Public Works.

Communication Outreach: Dell announced that the Green Living Expo will take place at the Fairgrounds on April 12th. There was a discussion on ways to inform the public about what the Utilities Department does for the community: the website, the Grapevine publication available electronically, and the City Manager's weekly email were mentioned.

Environmental Management System (EMS): Elise discussed the status of the EMS program, a valuable tool for managing biosolids regulations. She stated that in April there will be staff training at the Laguna Treatment Plant (LTP) to prepare for the internal audit: when it is complete, an external audit will take place to review all of the biosolids processes: the auditors are paid to tell us how to do it better.

Grant Update: Dell announced that we were awarded a \$75,000 grant to fund Phase II of Algae Project: it will be used to build two digesters for the project. He added that we are waiting to hear about two additional grants. Jennifer Burke stated that Water Conservation received a \$75,000 grant for a Pilot Project to replace commercial washers with self contained ozone units, and that they will track the water and energy savings.

Announcements:

Frank Kasimov announced that later this month the Annual California Redevelopment Association Conference will take place, the focus of which is the elimination of urban blight: he said that Green Building sessions will take place throughout the conference.

Jennifer Burke stated that Rite Aid is not participating in the Safe Medication Disposal Program, but that the Program is a success and will run through July. She added that May is Water Awareness Month and explained that the first City Council meeting awards for water conservation will be on May 20th. Jennifer said that the Water Expo will take place in Court House Square on May 28th and will be focused on irrigation. She stated that the Water Conservation Demo Garden in Front of the Municipal Services Center South (MSCS) is almost complete.

Mark Armstrong discussed the PG&E rate changes for January 2008. He stated that there is a \$160,000 savings per year that results from the change to the appropriate rate schedules and that he is working with Jim Wright. He said that chillers have been installed at MSCN and the Annex and skylights are in the Chamber building

Chris Carrieri stated that it is the second year of the Community Advisory Board's (CAB) Community Improvement Grant. He said that CAB is accepting new applications from Santa Rosa neighborhoods for small public improvements projects that meet a community need and has community support. He added that applications and brochures are available on the City Web neighborhood page, and that the deadline is July 1st. Chris discussed this year's Cinco de Mayo events, that includes Spring Cleaning on May 3rd and 4th and a free festival from noon to 5 PM on the 3rd. He added that CAB is working on the Citizens Organized to Prepare for Emergencies (COPE) census, canvassing from block to block.

Laura Kim announced that there will be a seminar on April 14th at the Redwood Credit Union on how property managers can green their properties. She also said that the Green California Summit will take place May 2nd through May 4th.

Rita Miller stated that there will be a storm water booth at the Green Building event downtown on the 24th. She added that there was a Press Democrat article of interest in the March 1st edition, Down the Drain, that contained graphic pictures of different pollutants.

Action Item: Rita will send the PD link to Nicole Dorotinsky.

Sam Pierce stated that stated that he has nearly completed the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan. Dell said that he was reviewing the two drafts for the Laguna Treatment Plant and would give Sam feedback.

Elise Howard announced that she would be presenting the Environmental Champion Awards at the March 25th City Council Meeting: Cameron McDonald and the Redwood Credit Union are among the honorees. She requested that recommendations for awards be sent to her for presentations every other month. She added that there is information and simple forms on the Environmental Champion page of the Environmental web site.

Meeting adjourned at 12:30 P.M.

NEXT MEETING: May 12, 2008 at 11:00 A.M. at the Municipal Services Center South (MSCS) in Conference Room 4.