



CITY OF TACOMA SUSTAINABLE TACOMA COMMISSION MEETING NOTES

DATE: July 12, 2011

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: Jane Moore, Bliss Moore, Phil Coughlan, Jim Gawel, Steve Garrett, Elaine Ott, Bill Anderson, Ellen Moore, Carol Shiflett

COMMISSION MEMBERS EXCUSED: Dale Anderson, Dan Dzyacky

OTHERS PRESENT: Elliott Barnett, Kristi Lynett, Lisa Rennie, Bill Smith, Catherine Taylor

▪ **Approval of the June 14, 2011 Meeting Notes**

The June 14, 2011 meeting notes were approved and adopted.

▪ **Review of the July Agenda**

The July agenda was approved.

▪ **STC Rules and Regulations and Chair and Vice Chair Elections**

The Rules and Regulations of the Sustainable Tacoma Commission were amended and adopted by the Commission to read as follows:

“Election and Terms of Office

- *The Commission shall elect its own Chair and Vice Chair from time to time it may determine it requires, all of whom shall be members of the Commission.*
- *Nominations and Elections – Chair and Vice Chair shall have one year terms. They shall be nominated at the first meeting in June of each year. Elections shall be held at the following meeting. New officers will assume duties at the meeting following their election.*

Duties of Officers

- *Chair – The Chair shall preside over all meetings of the Commission and assist staff in development of agenda and other official Commission communications. All resolutions adopted by the Commission and Commission correspondence shall be signed in his/her name as Chair of the Commission.*
- *Vice-Chair – The Vice Chair shall preside over all meetings of the Commission where the Chair is absent and assist staff in development of agenda and other official Commission communications.”*

The Commission nominated Phil Coughlan and Elaine Ott as Chair and Vice Chair, respectively. Motions were made and adopted for Phil Coughlan to serve as Chair and Elaine Ott to serve as Vice Chair of the Sustainable Tacoma Commission.

▪ **Open Space Transfer to Stormwater Utilities – Elliott Barnett**

In 2008, a new element of the City’s Comprehensive Plan was adopted and open space was defined broadly in that document. The open space policy goals are for

- A green Tacoma
 - Natural areas - conservation and stewardship of habitat areas
 - Promoting Citywide green infrastructure
- A livable and active Tacoma
 - Parks, trails, community gardens, waterfront connections, etc.
- Empowering citizens to become actively involved
 - Volunteer stewardship activities

(The main focus being on habitat corridors: forested areas, streams, gulches, shorelines, etc.)

Current status of the open space program

- Funding comes primarily through Street Vacations. Street Vacations are when the public right-of-way is sold to the abutting property owners because it has been determined no streets will be built and there is no other identified public use. One-half of the revenues received from the sale go directly into the City's open space fund
 - 2003-2008 revenue averaged \$210K/year
 - 2009 revenue \$29K
 - 2010 revenue < \$15K
 - 2011-2012 projected revenue \$35K/year
- Low staffing levels
 - <.3 dedicated FTE general fund (which can result in slow implementation)
 - City planners are not set-up to manage lands and are required to reach out to other departments, which may result in a less efficient operation.

Open space 2009-2010 progress

- Conservation
 - 21 acres acquired (8-10 acres being pursued for 2011-12)
- Management
 - Green Tacoma Partnership is the primary outreach tool to support volunteers (1,030 volunteers, 3,672 hours)
 - Volunteer guidance produced
 - Coordinate with Streets & Grounds / community based services programs
 - Stewardship plans –Julia's Gulch, First Creek corridor currently underway
- Program and funding gap (suggestions as to where the City would allocate more resources if they had them)
 - Increase staffing for open space program coordination, volunteer coordination and maintenance
 - Management and restoration
 - Street trees and connecting natural areas from one to another
 - Ongoing acquisition
 - More community outreach/education about what people can do on their own land
 - Conservation grant programs to assist the current volunteer groups

Other municipalities are putting open space/urban forestry programs under their stormwater utilities, and making the connection around open space and native vegetation and its benefits to stormwater. Therefore, the City's stormwater utility fees may be an appropriate funding source to support some urban forestry/open space functions and lands, as they reduce runoff and provide pollution abatement.

- Current status of urban forestry program
 - The urban forestry program, adopted by City Council in 2010 with a goal of 30% canopy cover by 2030, was moved to the Environmental Services, Surface Water Division (only one FTE to-date)
 - Currently in program development – new municipal code changes to better protect trees and set more consistent guidelines, etc.
- Propose that staff begin research on
 - Definitions of which properties/activities fit the stormwater nexus
 - Refining programmatic recommendations
 - Benchmarking what other jurisdictions are doing

- Developing a draft ordinance which would also allow the utility to set new appropriate rates to support these new functions.
- Next steps – to obtain more formal approval from the Commission to bring to EPW on July 27. This will be a joint presentation to EPW by members. Carbon sequestration benefits subcommittee: Elaine, Dale and staff will work on presentation preparation.

▪ **Healthy and Sustainable Food Policy Recommendations**

A July 6 draft of the food policy was presented to members for approval. Members were pleased with staff's restructuring of the food policy draft – very well organized.

In recent meetings with staff, the SMT had an opportunity to provide feedback on the draft policy. For the SMT, it appeared they may have been somewhat overwhelmed or cautious. It could be that the SMT have not been made aware of STC's many sustainability priorities for the year, and with the issues outlined in the policy being so different in their minds, and so diverse - they may not be accustomed to thinking about these things in these ways. There even may have been some confusion on how to look at healthy and sustainability at the same time – possibly thinking they should be separated (healthy foods and sustainable foods).

One of the essential functions of the STC is to take ideas and educate the policymakers on the importance's, allowing them to make policy that affects a wide range of people.

Members engaged in discussion on ways to make minor changes to certain sections of the policy for presentation at the July 13 EPW meeting. The SMT will have an opportunity to give feedback to EPW at that time; STC members will be present to provide public comment.

▪ **Updates from Commission Subcommittees**

- Update regarding Seattle's phonebook; is now an opt-out program. Seattle residents/businesses will receive their phonebook(s) unless they formally opt-out.
- Construction and Development – staff met with the Tax and License Department and is moving forward on a regulatory permit. Those people who haul will have to report each load and obtain a City permit. This will allow the City to better track the loads and where they are going, and to rid of illegal dumping.
- Styrofoam – the landfill is building a machine that will eventually take Styrofoam blocks and liquefy and re-extrude them. The storage facility is currently under construction at the landfill.
- Staff met with City planner, Chelsea Levy to discuss minimum and maximum parking regulations as part of the CAP, but also to look at through a planning commission code amendment. Ms. Levy verbally passed on to the planning commission the STCs recommendations of keeping maximums and even lowering the maximum threshold, and eliminating parking minimums in some key mixed-use and larger downtown areas. Currently, the planning commission still wants to keep the maximum, however staff recommendation is to lower some. The planning commission's public comment period will be announced to members for their participation.
- Stand-alone surface lots (parking lots not associated with a building/business on the property). One council member suggested banning new stand-alone surface lots on primary pedestrian streets (specific streets and blocks were identified).
- Anti-idle campaign at schools (the STC needs to do more) – staff met with the school district transportation manager. The school district has an anti-idling policy for their school buses, special needs buses and contracted buses; all buses have gps on them. The subject of anti-idling was moved to the Outreach subcommittee (from the Land Use/Transportation subcommittee) with anti-idling at schools on their next meeting agenda.
- The streetcar task force met to come up with some priority consensus goals on what a streetcar should do and how it might benefit.
- Solar – staff has a local contractor doing assessments on two City facilities (transfer station and convention center) and will be looking at TPD headquarters, a couple of Pierce County facilities and possibly Metro Parks. The expectation is to have some baseline general assessments that could be used for community solar in the future.
- Home Depot Foundation funds – the Outreach subcommittee will meet in August to discuss a second round of grants.

- Staff will be developing a website resource guide for residents. The OoS intern will be working on putting together some resource links (category organization).
- The City libraries are looking at doing a sustainability campaign during the month of October. A lot of different events will be held as a way for people to save money, as well as resources. The STC will participate.
- Green Building committee – having to develop a green building policy in a year, staff had an initial exploratory meeting on what they envisioned a green building policy might look like.

▪ **Staff Updates**

- STC members will provide public comment at the July 13 EPW meeting, encouraging the City to make the Pacific Avenue streetscape re-design a showcase sustainability project.
- TV-12 – often time in between programming or dead time, the City will scroll messaging. The OoS intern will be working to put some sustainability tips on-screen that can scroll during these times.
- The OoS manager will be attending the Local Government Sustainable Leaders conference in Washington DC.

▪ **Public Comment**

- There was no public comment.

The next meeting of the Sustainable Tacoma Commission will be Tuesday, August 9, 2011, 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., Tacoma Municipal Building North, 733 Market Street, Room 16.