



CITY OF TACOMA SUSTAINABLE TACOMA COMMISSION MEETING NOTES

DATE: June 12, 2012

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: Jane Moore, Bliss Moore, Elaine Ott, Carol Shiflett, Holly Williams, Karen Hamilton, Dan Dzyacky, Phil Coughlan

COMMISSION MEMBERS EXCUSED: Bill Anderson, Ellen Moore

OTHERS PRESENT: Charlie Solverson, Sue Coffman, Frank Terrill, Kristi Lynett, Jessica Ludwig, Bob Mack, Lisa Rennie, Bill Smith, Allison (UWT student), Catherine Taylor

▪ **Approval of the May 8, 2012 Meeting Notes**

The May 8, 2012 meeting notes were amended at Page 3 to add "Phil attended the South Tacoma Neighborhood Council." The meeting notes, as amended, were approved and adopted.

▪ **Review of the June Agenda**

The June agenda was reviewed and approved.

▪ **Green Building Implementation Plan – Charlie Solverson, Sue Coffman, Frank Terrill**

Charlie Solverson gave a presentation on the Green Building Implementation Plan that is being developed by BLUS. BLUS is responsible for permitting, inspections and plan review. In 2007, BLUS permitted over \$500M worth of work and \$223M in 2011; 25% is focused on larger commercial-type projects, 75% is working with the homeowner that is doing a small remodel project or building a new home. BLUS staff is currently working from a set of goals that were provided in 2011 by the commission in support of the climate action plan:

- **Goals**
 - Education – have repurposed some education dollars to sustainability. The WA Association of Building Officials, through their annual education institute, offer a variety of topics around sustainability, and have worked with BLUS staff to focus on training opportunities in those areas.
 - Participate in green building forums – staff frequently attends Cascadia's Tacoma/Olympia LEED Users Group (TOLUG) meetings.
 - Identify incentives and remove barriers – in terms of code development, looking at current BLUS processes and where incentives can be identified; where development might be connected to opportunities for green building.
 - Transition to green business processes – automated permitting process with the goal for customers to be able to do permitting over the internet. BLUS currently has a number of permit applications that are now available for customers to submit applications online.
 - Website development and outreach – website: tacomameansbusiness.com was developed by local consultant Rusty George. Staff is in the process of entering into a contract with Mr. George to update the BLUS website giving it a similar look and feel. The goal is for customers to be able to access the website, submit an application, and

trigger a permitting process or check the status on permitting plans, and/or schedule inspections. All website updates should be completed by August/September.

- Participate in regional code evaluation – BLUS staff is participating with a regional group (to include Seattle, King and Snohomish Counties and others) on code evaluation and updating codes for the 2012 Building Code update, in terms of sustainability and green construction.
- *BLUS tools for sustainability* – as part of the BLUS website development, links to green tools using a series of icons will provide information on the following, in an effort to connect customers to a variety of City resources:
 - Water conservation
 - Waste reduction and recycling
 - Water quality
 - Codes and ordinances
 - Indoor air quality
 - Energy efficiency
 - Building and site design
 - Case studies

BLUS is working closely with Solid Waste Utility to automate a notification process that goes to Solid Waste when customers come in for demolition permits, as well as implementing a pilot project to enable contractors to develop waste management plans. Staff is also working with TPU on energy conservation and water conservation.

Along with other jurisdictions, BLUS has started the process in developing high-performance code requirements. Whether voluntary incentives or required under the code, staff is working to develop a list of provisions that have been proposed on a regional basis with some common provisions, and out of that may have some options when going through the code update process. Staff is also looking at code changes that could incent adaptive reuse (live-work/work-live situations), where there may be an ability to reduce offsite improvement requirements.

In 2010, BLUS began work with Cascade Collective (to include northern jurisdictions - Bellevue, Seattle, King County, etc.) in looking at the International Green Construction Code to determine if there are portions of it that would make sense to adopt within the Puget Sound region. And that has moved into the Regional Code Coordination effort, not only looking at the IGCC but other codes, in trying to identify code provisions that may be appropriate for the Puget Sound.

Following the work and coordination between the jurisdictions, there will be a period of stakeholder outreach going into the last half of the year; work will then begin with the Board of Building Appeals on building code changes at the local level, from there, on to the Committees and City Council.

■ **Commission Priority Reports Work Plan Updates**

- *Disposable Bag Reduction Program – Phil Coughlan*

Phil presented a background on some of the work he and his previous firm had conducted in 2008 on disposable shopping bags for the Seattle City Council and Seattle Public Utilities. At that time, there had not been a lot of ordinances passed; only San Francisco had passed a fee on bags but received pushback from retailers and the plastic industry. As a result, CA passed a law that local jurisdictions could not direct retailers to recycle or charge a fee for bags; San Francisco then simply banned bags.

The City of Seattle was interested in doing something similar, and asked for outside assistance in evaluating the environmental and cost benefit impacts for various strategies around all disposable shopping bags.

Research approach

- Identify environmental concerns
- Summarize lifecycle impact based on a review of lifecycle assessments that had been produced, mostly internationally and some domestically
- Assess alternative products – they did not want to look at a strategy unless there were alternative products

- Range of strategies that could be applied to all disposable shopping bags
- Develop possible Seattle strategies

Environmental concern - with both paper and plastic bags

- Litter and marine ecosystem impacts
- Energy use
- Global warming and resource consumption

Management strategies – range of options for policy implementation by local jurisdiction

- Education;
- Curbside recycling;
- Voluntary measures on the part of stores;
- Mandatory advanced recovery fees;
- In-store recycling;
- Extended producer responsibility;
- Product bans and product restrictions; and
- Using credits or deposit system for bags

Policy options – for Seattle’s consideration and the firm to continue evaluating

- Status quo;
- Provide education;
- Straight ban on disposable plastic bags;
- Mandatory fee on disposal plastic shopping bags; or
- Mandatory fee on disposable plastic and paper shopping bags

In the context of looking at the lifecycle assessments of all the different products, there was also the essential part of the behavior change as a result of the policy. What was known and discovered in the research, based on the more limited sample of people that had implemented policies, is that when it was put in place there was a switch in behavior. As an example of what was modeled (a fee on plastic and a fee on paper) 80% bag use was plastic, 20% was paper.

Environmental findings – anything that is done to promote the use of reusable bags and not use disposable paper or plastic is better environmentally across all lifecycle categories. And what was found on an environmental basis, was the fee on both paper and plastic resulted in more environmental benefit across more categories than any of the other options.

Cost benefit assessment – where/how costs (both direct and indirect) accrue to either the City of Seattle, consumers, retailers or the region. The fee option appeared to be the choice.

Suggested next steps for the STC

- Complete research on how other cities have addressed and implemented
 - Engage the Council, retailers and the public on the range of options that could be done and obtain their feedback
 - Determine implementation
 - Phased and step approach;
 - Combination - ban on plastic and fee on paper; or
 - Take what other cities have done and replicate for consistency
- *Citywide Idle Ban – Dan Dzyacky*

Dan was asked to research how other municipalities have approached the problem of idling, and also did research based on his own experience with other public transit agencies.

Typically, for those municipalities and agencies that have active anti-idling policies, there is a typical three-minute window of acceptability, and anything beyond that the municipality decides what course of action is appropriate.

One of the biggest challenges that municipalities face are certain myths that circle around why vehicles need to idle 1) vehicles should idle before driving in order to warm up, and 2) idling a vehicle is more fuel efficient than restarting it. Actually, all research argues for the opposite. In in-climate weather, it should not take more than 30 seconds for a vehicle to warm up and axles do not begin to warm until they are in motion.

When anti-idling polices are introduced, certain exceptions are resurrected for emergency vehicles, periods of weather extremes and/or construction equipment, these policies exempt those practices during those types of situation.

What the challenges are for enacting a citywide ordinance is changing people's behavior. Public transit agencies have had a lot of success introducing these bans by bringing manufacture representatives to the various work locations and demonstrating that today's starters are made out of titanium (indestructible).

If Tacoma had a citywide idle ban, the consequences for not following it would need to be defined (i.e., counseling the vehicle operator; would fines be associated with it, and/or what would be the proposed timeframe (3, 5, 6 minutes).

- *Coal Train Implications – Bliss Moore*

Bliss attended the Climate Solutions program at PLU as they spoke to the proposal of coal trains transporting through our local communities. For economic reasons, there is a big push to export coal to Asia from the west coast and the coal industry is working hard to find export sites.

There are several issues with coal transport 1) public health, and 2) climate. Tacoma could see a huge increase in these open-car trains moving through the communities (anywhere from nine to 20 trains a day). Another concern is the impact these trains would have on the flow of traffic; possible delays for emergency vehicles and noise.

City staff has been in talks with Climate Solutions staff that is working on a draft resolution for the Council, and is scheduled to present to the EPW in July. The STC is ready to assist in any way possible with this initiative.

- **Environment and Public Works Presentation Previews**

On June 13th, staff will give presentations to EPW on "Sustainability Accomplishments" and the "Municipal Green Building Policy."

- *Sustainability Update* - Members were asked to briefly review the draft presentation document to ensure all accomplishments to-date were recorded.
- *Municipal Green Building Policy Update* – The Municipal Green Building Policy draft presentation document will be sent to members via email for their review and feedback in time for the June 13th presentation.

- **Staff Updates**

There were no staff updates

- **Public Comment**

- *Municipal Green Building Policy – Lisa Rennie*
As per the City resolution, TPU has chartered a team with staff meeting regularly and have a draft policy coming soon to begin the management review process. It closely follows the City's resolution, though staff did spend a lot of time reviewing King County's
- *Pierce Transit – Jane Moore*
Pierce Transit is going to have another ballot issue in November. The steering committee that is organizing a campaign in support of the ballot measure will have a kickoff at The Hub on June 26th or 27th, 5:00 to 7:00 pm. Confirmation will be sent to members.

- **Objectives for Next Meeting**

The objectives for next meeting were not identified

The next meeting of the Sustainable Tacoma Commission will be Tuesday, July 10, 2012, 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., Tacoma Municipal Building North, 733 Market Street, Room 16.