



## CITY OF TACOMA SUSTAINABLE TACOMA COMMISSION MEETING NOTES

**Date:** March 8, 2016

**Commission Members Present:** Chrissy Cooley, Philip Coughlan, Alyssa Illich, Felicity Devlin, Nick Cutting, Sarah Chessman, Agnes Pate

**Commission Members Excused:** Peter Hickman

**Others Present:** Kristin Lynett, Emily Watts, Lisa Rennie, Jeanne Walters, Jim Parvey, Ron Stewart, Jocelyn

- **Roll Call**
  - The meeting was called to order at 3:36pm
- **Approval of February 9, 2016 Meeting Notes**
  - The February meeting notes were approved with no changes.
- **Review of March Agenda**
  - The March agenda was approved with no changes.
- **Review Draft Disposable Bag Ordinance**
  - Chrissy reiterated that the bag ordinance is based on the Bellingham model.
  - There is interest in doing more outreach to get further input from the community.
  - The City's Legal Department is currently looking over the ordinance.
  - Previous communities that have implemented the Bellingham model are being examined again so as to look closer at their implementation strategies.
  - Additional outreach will come in the form of a workshop or open house at the Tacoma Main library on March 29.
  - The draft ordinance should be accompanied by an outreach plan directed at businesses, shoppers, individuals, and all those who would be impacted if the ordinance were to pass.
  - It was asked whether it is ordinary for a draft ordinance to be shown to the public for feedback. It was not known by anyone present whether it is considered ordinary but it does happen. Kristi mentioned that a draft ordinance involving chickens was publicized for comment. Jim also mentioned that similar outreach was conducted for a side sewer ordinance.
  - The post ordinance plan will include general outreach, and outreach to specific businesses that includes phone calls, presentations and a template outline that can be used for letters to let the public know an ordinance is coming.
  - The City will be providing reusable bags throughout the community and should consider the idea of sponsorships to get other organizations to contribute and help provide them.
  - There could be bag exchange sites or bag drop sites where you can donate reusable bags you aren't using.

- A waiver needs to be developed that businesses can apply for should they have special circumstances surrounding the ordinance.
  - There are too many “where as” points in the draft ordinance. Many were eliminated as they were deemed already represented in the ordinance itself. RCW’s were also combined to shorten the list.
  - It is unclear whether farmers markets are allowed to have small plastic bags for produce. This needs to be reviewed.
  - There was confusion surrounding the definition of a “reusable bag.” The definition includes cloth or other fabric, but “other material” may need to be included as plastic of a certain width is permitted. Instead of “other material” you could also say “bag with handle designed for multiple use trips.”
  - Tires also come in bags, but it is unclear whether they are exempt.
  - The label for single-use plastic carryout bag needs to be changed to “J. “
  - One member asked about how much material at the dump is collected that could be collected to be recycled into reusable bags.
  - Feedback from the public should help decide how many days before the ordinance becomes effective after enacted (if the ordinance passes).
- **Discussion on Sustainability Grant, Sponsorship and Green Event Programs**
    - Jeanne Walters introduced the first draft of a possible sustainability grant program. She requested feedback from members, and was hoping they would add the project example list.
    - The maximum award amount would be \$5,000. Groups applying repeatedly year-after-year would not be turned away. There are applicant requirements and a schedule would be included that the applicant would need to fill out along with a budget. Ineligible activities and elements are also included in the application.
    - There was confusion about whether a non-profit using the services of a for-profit company would be eligible. There would need to be clarification on the purpose of the activity or project to ensure the end result is non-profit.
    - There would most likely be four times a year where applications are accepted; similar to what TPU does.
    - It would be similar to Make A Splash Grants in that anyone can apply, but applicants must understand that if they are not a registered non-profit, the amount will be included on their income taxes.
    - The purpose of this grant program is to help wean off groups that use Environmental Services sponsorship for projects and activities that don’t involve environmental stewardship components.
    - One member asked if the definition of for-profit would be included. For example, would the installation of an electric vehicle charging station be eligible for this program? It would have the opportunity for-profit given they can change the amount charged per kilowatt.
    - In the old grant program there was more language about desirable projects. Perhaps some of this should be included in this program.
    - STC members are requested to send a list of project examples to Kristi or Jeanne so they can be included.
    - Requests for grants from the old grant program before Environmental Services sponsorship came into being should be looked at.
    - There was some confusion about the grant amount and whether applicants could only receive a reward once a year, even if it was less than the maximum amount \$5,000. A better alternative might be “up to \$5,000 per applicant per calendar year.”
    - There might also be the need for a minimum amount of \$500 so as to make it worth staff time.
    - Recipients can be highlighted at an annual event such as the Sustainability Expo or something else.
    - This program will not go live for a few months.
    - Applications for the program could be accepted through the first quarter and funds allocated within a couple weeks of the closing date.
  - **Sustainability Expo Debrief**
    - Kristi began the Expo debrief with an overview of the event. Approximately 330 people took the exit survey. There were less attendees this year than last year but the weather outside was sunny and nice.
    - There was less attendance in the workshops than expected but in the exit survey people still requested there be even more workshops.
    - In the exit survey, people were asked what they liked or enjoyed most. The responses were very diverse and covered many sustainability topics present at the event.

- At the STC booth, members tried to push recruitment. There was some discussion of the methanol plant.
  - Members thought the farmers market location in the ballroom was a good choice for event flow.
  - Members would like to focus more on education and outreach at their booth next year and make it more interactive for the public.
  - It was mentioned that it is difficult differentiating or explaining the differences between the STC and the Office of Environmental Policy and Sustainability (OEPS). Something next year that might help is having a separate booth for each and having them placed next to each other. This would allow for differentiation and the opportunity to explain what each entity does uniquely.
  - Members should have business cards to hand out and perhaps a Gmail account should be created.
  - Kristi mentioned that approximately 70% of attendees came to the event for the first time. One member voiced concern that the event might not be doing enough to retain attendees' year-after-year.
  - Members should keep in mind that next year is the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Expo so there will most likely be rebranding. Ideas for using Tollefson Plaza, having food trucks, and more vehicles is also being considered. If the third floor ballroom was used again, Expo organizers could add the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor lobby as another level, as it is an open space with lighting.
- **Subcommittee Report-Outs**
    - Electric Vehicles Subcommittee – There was no update from this subcommittee.
    - Outreach and Education Subcommittee – There was no update from this subcommittee.
    - Responsible Bags Subcommittee – There was no update from this subcommittee.
    - Green Building Subcommittee – There was no update from this subcommittee.
    - Comprehensive Plan Subcommittee – There was no update from this subcommittee.
- **Staff Updates**
    - Kristi mentioned that STC member recruitment will go out on the EnviroNews list serv and a press release will go out. Previous applications for membership should be looked through so that those applicants can be contacted. If any member(s) knows of someone they think should apply, reach out to them. Keep in mind people you think would be successful at it but also enjoy the job, and provide meaningful feedback. Applications are due April 10, 2016. Interviews will be conducted April 27.
    - A new urban forester is being hired and will start March 21. **\*Update\*** It should be noted that one of the vacant positions is due to Rus Higley's resignation in February from the STC.
    - Patrick Babbitt is now a City of Tacoma employee.
    - Kristi will send the new updated Environmental Action Plan (EAP) to members. The work with the consultants is almost finished, but they are the ones who have to make edits to the final document. Currently, budgets are being created for any action items that need funding. Members would like to see these budgets if possible, and give feedback on what they believe should be prioritized.
    - Budget estimates for applicable EAP items should be formally submitted around May or June. As there are five new STC members coming aboard, it should be made clear to them what they can and cannot influence on this project. Having new members and wanting to take action can be disruptive to the finalization process that may no longer allow editing, so it should be directly and clearly communicated to new members that the EAP is finalized.
    - The STC meets April 12 where the EAP can be looked at a final time before hopefully going to Council on April 19. If the STC would like to create a letter outlining budget prioritizations, it should be submitted before or at this time.
- **Public Comment**
    - Lisa Rennie shared information about TPUs community solar projects. 70% of all the units have been sold but they have not yet targeted small businesses for the program. If members know of any businesses that would be interested please let Lisa know. The vendor list from the South Sound Sustainability Expo will also be sent to Lisa. All of the units installed are up and running.
    - There was concern regarding a current house bill with a striker amendment including a poison pill. There is concern the incentives are too low. Current projects are grandfathered into the incentive program, so marketing can push that this may be the last chance to get in on the current incentive program in case the bill changes that. This should also be shared on the EnviroNews list serv.
    - Member of the public, Jocelyn, asked why the assessment of the disposable bag ordinance in California is not being included. It was noted by a member that it does not hold good context for the situation in Tacoma.

- **Objectives for Next Meeting**

- City environmental outreach and promotion
- Disposable bag ordinance changes
- EAP budget prioritization
- Sponsorship program feedback
- Expo recap
- Potential green building advocacy actions
- Reminder that applications for STC member positions can come in at any time, but are due April 10.

**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 5:36pm

The next meeting of the Sustainable Tacoma Commission will be Tuesday, April 12, 2016, 3:30 to 5:30 p.m., Tacoma Municipal Building, 747 Market Street, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor Visibility Center.