



CITY OF TACOMA SUSTAINABLE TACOMA COMMISSION MEETING NOTES

Date: April 12, 2016

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

Commission Member Excused: Peter Hickman

Others Present: Kristin Lynett, Emily Watts, Jeanne Walters, Jim Parvey, Jetta Antonakos, Hwakong Cheng

▪ **Roll Call**

The meeting was called to order at 3:32 pm

▪ **Approval of March 8, 2016 Meeting Notes**

The March meeting notes were approved with no changes.

▪ **Review of April Agenda**

The April agenda was approved with the following change:

- An item was added to discuss the approval of a letter to be sent to Council to support budgeting items in the Environmental Action Plan.

▪ **Environmental Action Plan 2017-2018 Priorities**

- Kristi explained that the Environmental Action Plan (EAP) will be going before Council on April 19. It was asked that someone from the STC speak for 30 seconds. At this meeting there will also be an Earth Day proclamation.
- City departments are just starting to develop their budget request for enhancements. Currently, the focus is on creating the baseline budget; therefore, it might be a good idea for the STC to highlight their support in a first letter now and send a second letter later after reviewing budget requests relevant to the EAP.
- Nick noted that it would be prudent for members to be aware of any big-ticket items in the budget requests and enhancements; not just those that pertain to the EAP. The STC is then less likely to be caught off guard by any large projects.
- Phil, as a liaison from the Environmental Services Commission, can bring a capital overview and it will be important to get the same from TPU and Public Works.
- Kristi noted that while it is important to be aware of the big projects, members should keep in mind education and programmatic elements that add up over time.
- Phil agreed to create a draft letter outlining the STC's support of the EAP; expressing that the STC looks forward to commenting on line items as the budget process moves forward; the STC is available to answer any questions; and that the EAP contains real actions with real targets. Motion passed to approve this framework for a letter to send to Council and City Manager.

▪ Sustainability Grant Program

- Jeanne emphasized some points of the new sustainability grant, including a maximum of \$5,000 per grant. The application also requires a clearly defined scope, schedule and budget. It also requires that applicants get 10% match in funds and qualify as a Green Merit Event.
- The STC was previously asked to give example project ideas but more are still needed. As a way to test the application, each member will fill out the application and go through the process.
- The sustainability grant program won't be able to roll out for quite some time because funding comes from both Environmental Services and the General Fund. The general funds must still benefit the Environment Services Utility and will not be available until 2017, if granted.
- It isn't clear whether applications will be accepted continuously or once a quarter. The applications will need to be reviewed by City staff, then by members, before finally going to Jim Parvey.
- It was asked how many events are usually turned down. This year there has only been one so far, but usually it is that the amount given is less than the applicant asked for. The criteria are quite clear in the application.
- It should be made clear that efforts are being made to broaden the applicant pool and bring in new projects or events as well as continue previous events. It was noted that perhaps preference should be given to new applicants.
- The point system or grading system for the grant application has yet to be created. With the current sponsorship, if the applicant meets the criteria they get something. After test applications from members are created, they can be examined to see what would work best for a ranking or grading system.
- It was noted previously that a minimum amount given for the grant might be useful in making sure the award is worth staff time. However, Jim mentioned that often with the smaller events and projects you get a lot of bang for your buck. Often the smaller projects won't happen without awards such as these.
- The grant disbursement of funds is made after the event when receipts are submitted. For larger items, grant invoices can be submitted or if stipends need to be made.
- By the next meeting, each member should try completing the grant application to test the process. Agnes, Phil, Chrissy and Emily have agreed to do so. The old project applications could also be used by taking the name off and running them through the new process to see if they'd still be eligible, given the new application.
- Quarterly submittals should work as that would give staff, members and Jim enough time to review. Or perhaps requiring applicants to submit 60 days before their event.
- There is concern that enough of the community, and specifically schools, don't know that the grant application is available for cash funds on their events and projects. It was asked how many non-event applications there are - not many.

▪ Environmental Sustainability Outreach Overview

- Kristi presented the list of outreach and communication methods that is intended to give context on the different ways the City conducts education on environmental sustainability.
- Felicity noted that on surveys like the disposable bag survey, the respondents were overwhelmingly highly-educated people. She noted with urgency, that outreach should be conducted to other populations of the community.
- It was also noted that the STC isn't well known in the community. If this weren't the case, the STC might have more leverage and be a group that people can bring their concerns to. It will be a tremendous amount of work to get out into the community, but would be worth the raise in profile of the Commission.
- Possibilities for the Commission to conduct outreach include public events. There could be a baseline of five or so events that are attended every year to explain the big picture surrounding the STC.
- It was noted that the STC already had a subcommittee on education and outreach and their purpose was to bring outreach opportunities to the STC. However, the subcommittee was needed to work on the disposable bag project, meaning they did not come back to the STC with outreach opportunities. Being a part of the original charter, it is important for the STC to get back to this work. The EAP and Climate Risk Assessment allow for good talking points at events to give context around City action currently being taken. The sustainability grant opportunity will help keep members informed of events they should probably be doing outreach at.

- It should also be included that the subcommittee would be bringing a list of questions to address in creating this list. This was also brought up during a previous STC meeting last year around September, but attention shifted to work on disposable bag items and it was left on following agendas.
- Sitting behind a table may not always be effective for outreach. Time and money might be better spent on getting some t-shirts and buttons that people often ask for at events. Something similar to a sustainability ambassador that was previously talked about. However, talking in front of a booth can engage people in good conversations when you ask intriguing questions or have incentives to draw people in. Reusable wood name tags would also be nice.

▪ **Subcommittee Report-Outs**

Electric Vehicles Subcommittee

- There was no update from this subcommittee.

Outreach and Education Subcommittee

- Sarah and Felicity are the two current members of this committee. At the next meeting they will come with a list of possibilities for events to conduct outreach at.
- Chrissy asked if it would be appropriate to send each Councilmember a letter asking what the largest event is in their district. A list of events can also be supplied by the OEPS.
- Members should be conducting outreach at all types of events not just sustainability-themed ones. Areas where there are fewer responses on surveys should be targeted for outreach.
- Chrissy asked what the procedure is for writing to Council members. One should always be transparent, somewhat formal, and let the STC know when it is being done. After checking the rules of procedure, members should be notified and aware of what is being sent. It was recommended to that when asking Councilmembers what their favorite event is, it might be a good idea to include the purpose, of which is to diversify outreach techniques.
- All members should rotate through the role of serving on the outreach and education subcommittee.
- Felicity asked if there is an archive of commission letters, achievements, etc. Kristi noted that everything is saved on the computer it would just take time to assemble. Felicity thought it would be a good idea of listing the past achievements and projects with a short synopsis by each as a way of introducing new members to the STC. This creates an opportunity to utilize the google drive; however Alyssa noted she's had issues accessing it from her computer.

Responsible Bags Subcommittee

- The forum about the disposable bag ordinance went well. There were approximately 60 people in attendance with 22-32 people who spoke. Of those who spoke, it was split about 50/50 for those in support and those against the possible ordinance.
- Chrissy noted concern that those in support of the ordinance felt the event was redundant and perhaps burned out, whereas those against were only getting revved up.
- Kristi noted that the purpose of the forum was to get specific feedback on the ordinance language and implementation strategy. Very little of this was actually commented on.
- This was the first City-sponsored forum for people to share their feelings on the ordinance.
- People who showed up were clearly passionate for or opposed to the ordinance.
- The draft ordinance will be going to IPS on April 27.
- The only significant difference from the Bellingham model is that the Tacoma model will have a ban on thin plastic and a \$.05 fee on any bag carried out (not just paper bags like Bellingham).
- One question brought up is whether the Legal Department is including language about future increases in the minimum fee. The retailer is able to increase the fee at their discretion but can the City raise the minimum fee? At minimum, there should be explicit language that the fee will be reviewed and evaluated in the future.
- Jeanne noted that even at a nickel there is behavior change. Phil noted concern that the fee amount will wear off eventually and that an initially higher fee but have a larger impact for longer.
- The ordinance included generation two legislation for bags, so that retailers don't just give away free bags that are just over the 2.25 ml limit.
- One statistic is that the hidden cost of bags is \$37 per person.
- The City is not promoting that people pay \$.05 per bag, but rather promoting people to bring their own bag and pay nothing.

Green Building Subcommittee

- There was no update from this subcommittee.

Comprehensive Plan Subcommittee

- There was discussion of a letter previously sent and the issue of height limits. Outreach to the design committee is needed.

▪ **Staff Updates**

- Kristi noted that the EnviroNews ListServ is moving hands and going over the Citizens for a Healthy Bay (CHB). No major changes are expected; it's just that it has become politically difficult for the City to manage the system. There are sometimes inappropriate comments that have to be screened and subject matter cannot contain political advocacy. It is unknown whether CHB will enforce the same rules, but the City has a contract to transition the system over to them in the next year.
- Diane Wiatr is leaving the City for a new job with WSDOT. It is unknown who will host Urban Green. The City should replace her with someone competent to ensure support for active transportation moving forward. Chrissy noted that she hopes the City doesn't drive away talented people by not supporting their work.
- The Environmental Action Plan website will soon be live and be sent out on the EnviroNews ListServ.
- Alyssa will not need to interview again for her STC position.
- Jetta gave an update on the food waste prevention campaign she is working on. She will give a presentation to the STC next month. The campaign follows another called "Food: Too Good to Waste." The City is running a pilot program, and have many people signed up who measure their food waste in cups during four weeks. The last two weeks are measured, while at the same time implementing smart tips to aid in food waste prevention. The project allows people to examine their own behavior and make measureable changes. The website is coming soon.

▪ **Public Comment**

- No public comment.

▪ **Objectives for Next Meeting**

- Utilize google drive
- Outreach opportunities
- Sustainability grant exercise
- Examine pro-economic development opportunities at the Port

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:36pm

The next meeting of the Sustainable Tacoma Commission will be Tuesday, May 10, 2016, 3:30 to 5:30 p.m., Tacoma Municipal Building, 747 Market Street, 9th Floor Visibility Center.