

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
OF THE CITY OF LOS ALTOS, HELD ON MONDAY, AUGUST 13, 2012 AT
7:00 P.M. AT LOS ALTOS CITY HALL, ONE NORTH SAN ANTONIO ROAD,
LOS ALTOS, CALIFORNIA**

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Bray, Eyre, DeMichiel, Ardehali, Hedden

ABSENT: Keller, Reed

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

None

1. Commission Minutes
MOTION BY COMMISSIONER DeMICHEL, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER ARDEHAI to approve the minutes of the meeting of July 9, 2012. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

2. Climate Action Plan
Discussion of Community Survey data and outreach actions extended to August 31, 2012. There will be a complete update at the September 10, 2012 Commission meeting. Activity progress report by Environmental Commission Task Force.
3. Bird Protection and Habitat Enhancement in the City of Los Altos
Presentation by Shani Kleinhaus, local environmental advocate and member of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society followed by discussion.
4. Disposal and Management of Expanded Polystyrene (EPS) and Single-Use Bags
 - a. Status update on Environmental Impact Report for EPS and Single-Use Bags.
 - b. First public hearing for San Mateo County to receive verbal comments on the plastic bag ban environmental impact report (EIR) will be at the San Mateo County Planning Commission meeting on July 11, 9am, location at 400 County Center, Redwood City, CA.
5. Increasing Watershed Awareness and Stewardship in Los Altos
 - a. No activity on the Fremont Bridge Creek signage.
6. Summary of Cal Water City of Los Altos Usage Data
Presentation by Vice Chair Joe Eyre.

7. Environmental Commission Website
 - a. Staff report on monthly hits to website.
 - b. Discussion of information and resources to add to website.
8. Environmental Commission Work Plan Progress Review

Review and discussion of July action items in 2012-2013 Work Plan approved by Council at the Joint Meeting on April 3, 2012. Discussion lead by Chair Bray.
9. City of Los Altos 60th Anniversary Celebration

Historic Bike tour update presented by Commissioner Hedden.
10. Announcements and Items for Information
 - a. Environmental Commissioner Representative at July 24, 2012 Council meeting – Commissioner Ardehali. August 28 Council meeting assigned to Commissioner Hedden; Sept. 11 Council meeting assigned to Vice Chair Eyre.
 - b. Citizen concern- perfumed dryer sheets – correspondence and discussion with staff.
 - c. Info on West Nile Virus spraying. In Los Altos.

COMMISSION REPORTS AND DIRECTIONS ON FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Bray adjourned the meeting at 9:10 p.m.

J. Logan, Assistant City Manager and Staff Liaison

Los Altos Environmental Commission – Workplan 2012-13

Approved Projects & Projects for Approval

Goals approved by City Council April, 2012 Projects 2012-2013, updated 8/30/12	Goals -- Progress Updates
1 Provide approved community education and outreach activities to advance natural resource conservation and environmental quality in Los Altos. (Linda DeMichiel, Zahra Ardehali,) a. Maintain updated 'Los Altos Environment' website with relevant, high-value content, in a manner that is visually pleasing, navigates well, and ties into the city website. (Owner: Linda) b. Provide approved public information forums for topics of interest to the public. (e.g. Climate Action Plan) (Owner: Steve)	-- Linda will create 'Eating Green' page; Joe will take picture of Farmer's Market for possible use. - In the September/October timeframe, CAP documents, survey results, etc., should be included in a new website tab on the EC website (TBD). - Periodic reviews and updates to site content, news items on main landing page, and staff-provided website traffic statistics; regular item on EC meeting agenda; traffic of 337 since 7/1, ~1300+ ytd. - Joe, John and Zahra tabled at the History Museum Earth Day event; develop a one-page summary of EC background activities and plans and presented website. Good event; could use better signage next time. - Conduct forums, receive reports, etc. when there are specific opportunities related to city programs or policies. One upcoming opportunity will be for interim review and public input to Climate Action Plan development process.
2 Work with Planning Services Manager and city residents to develop Climate Action Plan for City Los Altos. (Joe Eyre, Don Bray, TBD) a. Aid in developing, reviewing, and facilitating public input to a Los Altos Climate Action Plan (Owner: Joe, Don)	- Don and Joe updated community surveys on transportation patterns and home energy use; survey finalized by PMC and city staff, and has been sent out electronically through various channels to the community, including survey links on the EC homepage. - Survey will be open ~6 weeks, mid-June to July 31; email address field added so that summary of results may be sent to participants - PMC/staff will present updated inventories, and inventory projections at September meeting. - At joint session, Council and EC discussed the question of the scope of the CAP vs an Environmental or Sustainability element in the General plan; agreement that potential scope additions would have to be identified and addressed after the CAP takes shape. - Work on the CAP began in March, with presentation of the project plan to EC and City Staff by the City's Planning Services Manager, and consultant PMC; EC providing GHG inventory data to PMC

		- The role of the Environmental Commission will be to: - o provide input and policy recommendations on reduction targets, reduction measures, and 'level of ambition' - o identify issues and opportunities and evaluate feasibility - o provide a forum for community participation
3	Improve watershed stewardship for the City of Los Altos (Joe Eyre, Zahra Ardehali)	- Re status Fremont Ave bridge over Permanente Creek, 'prevailing thinking' is that name of the creek will be on bridge signage, though not yet designed. J will bring signage recommendation from 'draft final submittal' to EC for review/input. Waiting for consultant to present design. - Likely assignment of council consideration in Sept/October timeframe for Storm Drain Master Plan (to be released in the mid-May timeframe?) and provisions for implementation of standard labeling at storm drain inlets 'NO DUMPING! - Only Rain Down the Drain - Flows to xxxx Creek'. Can it be validated that this labeling will be broadly implemented? Are there pros/cons/constraints? - Advance city storm drain labeling, incorporation of recently establish standards - Investigate development and implementation of creek signage, with possible initial focus on new Fremont Road bridge over Permanente Creek - Continue to support creek restoration activities and education, information on EC website - Monitor findings of quarry-related water discharges
	a. Investigate potential education and outreach, and best practices associated with watershed awareness and protection, and identify near-term actions for implementation - improved creek habitats - storm water & runoff (Owner: Joe, Zahra)	- E.g. selected muni guidelines for native landscaping, organic fertilizers/herbicides/pesticides Joe met with Damon (city staff); city doing progressive things. Joe and Zahra will meet to discuss, and possibly present background, potential ideas - SCVWD guidelines and standards for land use near streams – Joe reported that these are in place and being utilized by the city; creek testing done every eight years or so as part of Santa Clara County runoff and pollution protection program. NEW report due out in September of 20102 re analysis of local streams – Larry Lind is following this.
4	Continue to foster water conservation in Los Altos (Joe Eyre, Zahra Ardehali)	

	a. Work with Cal Water to develop detailed Los Altos water usage baseline and trends, and ongoing process for tracking. (Owner: Joe)	- Work with CalWater, City Staff and others to develop and present water use baseline, recent trends; General trend toward reduced water use. Joe presented summary of 2007-2011 data recently received from CalWater; will write up some ideas on what to do next with water data, e.g. possible incorporation into a dashboard that could be posted on EC website/incorporated with climate action plan management.
	b. Incorporate water conservation plans into broader Climate Action Plan above. (Owner: Linda)	- leveraging water baseline developed above, incorporate specific water efficiency measures into Climate Action Plan.
	c. Continue to actively support community outreach and education activities related to water conservation (Owner: Zahra)	- Additional co-sponsorship of CalWater conservation classes - Promotion of such elements as SCVWD rebates (landscape conversion and hardware upgrades), weather-based irrigation controllers in muni and residential applications
5	Monitor and advance solid waste diversion and source reduction practices in Los Altos. (Don Bray, Joe Eyre, John Reed)	
	a. Monitor MTWS diversion rate and look for ways to help meet and exceed contracted 78% diversion rate in 2013; make results available to community, along w/ education on how they can help improve outcomes. (Owner: Steve, Don)	- Overall diversion rate of 71.44% for calendar year 2011; need to achieve 78% in 2013; in 2011, estimate diversion rate for single family residential at 81% (75% of overall tonnage), commercial at 39% (23% of tonnage), and multi-unit residential at 52% (2% of tonnage). - Publication of 2011 results, and 'leading practices' article featuring top business/commercial participants in Los Altos; Feb 2012 - Discussed possible development of a news article featuring waste management efforts at leading local businesses – to highlight 'best practice' examples, and educate the public and other businesses; Don is working with GreenTown in developing an article for the Town Crier - Educational visit to Newby Island conducted with EC, staff, council, community participants; learned about 85-day composting process, and issues with certain items such as compostable tableware that requires substantially longer than 85 days to compost; also, some biodegradable foodscrap bags contain GMOs, so all such bags are placed in the garbage stream; Joe working with Teresa and GTLA on 'best practices' guide for what is best introduced to organics stream to fully enable composting. Cascadia doing testing on compostability of selected materials in MTWS processes. - Continue to work on supporting and communicating 'Green Events' guidelines, e.g. for 60th anniversary event. Steve Anderson will stay active with the 60th anniversary; also, Gary Hedden is involved in the Historic Bike Tour being planned as part of the event.

	b. Monitor overall solid waste volumes relative to source reduction and longer-term 'zero waste' concepts & practices; (Owner: John)	- Incorporate source reduction measure(s) into CAP - Support education and outreach v/v source reduction, zero-waste practices (e.g. participation in free-cycling networks, e-waste collection)
6	Evaluate and recommend program options, and assist in implementing effective city programs restricting use of selected environmentally-harmful products. (Chris Keller, John Reed) a. Engage in on-going analysis of program and implementation options v/v restricting use of expanded polystyrene and 'single use' plastic bags (Owner: Chris)	- Support city development and implementation of restrictions on use of expanded polystyrene, plastic shopping bags, etc. as recommended by the Santa Clara County RWRC, and required by the Santa Clara Valley Water District Water Board. Environmental Commission will study potential recommendations, timing, and approach. - Los Altos participating in San Mateo County EIR process for plastic bags; final recommendations due out in September/October timeframe. J will forward info on next steps in the DEIR/comment process and timeframes. - J will maintain dialog with staff on status of a potential EIR for EPS, and partnership options similar to San Mateo county for bags; timing for EIR likely late this year or early next year. Notes: In January 2012, the EC subcommittee studying EPS met with Los Altos city engineer and staff to discuss perspectives on potential issues such as EPS ban enforceability, inspection, budgets, burden to merchants, etc; It turned out that banning EPS is part of a new Water Board requirement, related to trash load reduction in storm water outflows. City staff has prepared detailed recommendations, including an EPS ban, to meet the Water Board requirements of 40% load reduction by 2014. After a thorough discussion the EC voted to support staff's 'Baseline Trash Load and Short-Term Trash Load Reduction Plan' as written, with two additional recommendations. Firstly, the EPS ban be made effective 1/1/13, consistent with the original RWRC recommendation, and secondly, that the EPS ban requires that replacement products are compostable or recyclable, consistent with the MTWS diversion program (also per the original RWRC recommendation).
7	Other Council goals as directed a. City position on potential move at state level to relax CEQA guidelines?	- J talked with City Attorney re knowledge of this; in Jolene's queue; does not believe this is a relaxation, more of a clarification

General Comment from Council: If any programs require funding, case must be presented in time for annual budget cycle.

Miscellaneous Topics for Possible Discussion/Consideration TBD

- disposal of prescription drugs – police department will take; 'drugs and sharps' also collected elsewhere in the city, including some pharmacies?
- use of outdoor chemicals
- use of environmentally-friendly cleaning materials