

**CITY OF SOUTH PASADENA
NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
MINUTES - August 23, 2016**

Roll Call – The meeting was called to order at 7:03p.m. Present were Commissioners: Chair William Kelly, Vice-Chair Scott Kuhn, Al Benzoni, Stephen Leider, and Nancy Wilms. Commissioner Al Benzoni arrived at 7:33pm. Absent were Commissioners Kay Findley, and Noah Puni. Also present were Council Liaison Robert Joe, and Staff Liaison Jenna Shimmin.

Minutes – Minutes from July 26, 2016 were approved with language update from Commissioner Wilms regarding the West Coast Arborist Contract Update. She was requesting that staff should consider revisions to the contract now, before proceeding with negotiations with West Coast Arborist; and replace the word “transparency” with “clarity” (Benzoni, Wilms 5-0; Absent: Findley and Puni).

Public Comments and Suggestions – Laurie Wheeler, South Pasadena Chamber of Commerce: Thanked the commission, Bill and Noah for their efforts in regards to the business meetings as well as the general outreach effort regarding the polystyrene ban. She gave a brief update on what was discussed at the two business community meetings. This included the concerns expressed by local restaurants, particularly the lack of alternatives, or viable alternatives.

BUSINESS ITEMS

1. **South Pasadena Polystyrene Ban (Shimmin)** – Jenna Shimmin informed the commission of the success of the second business community meeting, held July 27th. The meeting drew business owners of several different kinds of restaurants. The overlying message was that the community understood, and could support, the ban of expanded polystyrene products (aka Styrofoam), but that they expressed concerns about availability of alternatives to Polystyrene 6 products. The two main reasons were cost of alternatives, particularly when purchased in small quantities, and in some cases availability availability of alternatives that would work the needs of their establishments.

The commission discussed the sample language, and the possibility of a rewards or incentive program for those establishments that go above and beyond. One possible incentive would be the waiver or reduction of related fees (e.g. Business license).

Kuhn: Feels the item needs further discussion once the language is finalized and has been review by legal counsel. Feels there should be more research done on alternatives. Discussed having exemption periods be for two years, versus one.

Wilms: Had some comments on the language, regarding the restricted items “limited to” and “does not include” sections; as well as clarification in a few other areas. She also wished to see the “exemptions” list narrowed more.

Chair Kelly: Asked about the possibility of adding language that calls for a review after a given period of time. He would like to look into a “Green Business” type of recognition system, possibly based on a point system, with increasing incentive levels. Feels that based on community feedback, this level of ban is a good starting place, even if there are other products that could be a good idea to include.

Council Liaison Joe: Emphasized the importance of education outreach before the City imposes a more restrictive ban. He also mentioned the possibility of adding language regarding a mandatory review every 6 or 12 months (depending on what makes sense). This type of ban can be used to establish a sustainability plan and outreach program. He agreed with the idea of an education and incentive program, such as the “Green Business” recognition program.

2. Work Plan Review (Kelly) – Reviewed the work plan adopted by the NREC on May 24, 2016.

Kuhn: Would like to have someone engage the school district regarding the material of their pipes. Mentioned asking Public Works if they know what year the schools were remodeled.

Benzoni: Feels that the use of permeable materials in sidewalks and other viable areas is a good idea. He requested that “Cool Roofs” be on the agenda for next month.

Chair Kelly: Mentioned that French Drains on driveways are good for infiltration, and that it may be a good idea to promote residents to install them.

Council Liaison Joe: Requested that a member of the Renewable Energy Council give a presentation on their recently adopted assessment report.

3. NREC 2015-16 Annual Report (Kelly) – The NREC’s annual report is due to the City Clerk’s office on August 26th, and will be presented to the Council on September 7th. Motion to approve the 2015-16 Annual Report was made by Bill Kelly, and was Seconded by Nancy Wilms (5-0; Absent: Findley and Puni).

4. Water Conservation Programs and Drought Actions (Shimmin) – The City had a total water reduction of 25% for July 2016 versus the same month in 2013. This gives the City a cumulative reduction of 27.8% since June 2015. The commission reviewed the possibility of going to Stage 1 of the Water Conservation Plan, which allows for outdoor irrigation three days a week. Staff advised the commission that sometime in late September, an item would be brought before the Council to request this change.

INFORMATION ONLY

5. Urban Forest Update – Jenna Shimmin provided an update that trimming is complete in the following grids: Phase 1 Arterial Streets, Phase 2 Arterial Streets, Grid 6B, Grid 7A, and Grid 8A. Grid pruning for the 2016/17 fiscal year will begin in Grid 9. Staff is currently in the process of planning the remaining grid pruning, tree removals and replacements.

Drip irrigation tree rings are currently being installed on Huntington Dr., once this project is complete, staff will create an RFP for the remainder of trees in medians and parkways (where possible). In the meantime, trees are being hand watered by staff and Landcare.

6. **Tree Care and Watering Article Update** – Staff advised the commission that a tree care article was released, and ran in the local paper. The article will be placed on the City’s website as well. Staff also advised the commission that two handouts have been created regarding the ease of proper tree care, using information provided by West Coast Arborist (WCA) and Tree People. It was requested to have Tree People speak at a future meeting.

Kelly: Brought up the idea of a public assistance program where residents can opt to pay a nominal fee to have trees on their property watered by City or WCA staff.

Also mentioned that staff should consider creating a unique web site address for tree watering tips, e.g. “www.yourtreesarestillthirsty.com”.

Wilms: Would like to see an emphasis on watering of established trees in outreach.

7. **Commissioner Training** – Staff advised the commissioners about a training on August 24th.
8. **Upcoming Events** – Household Hazardous Waste and E-Waste event August 27th, Clean Air Car Show & Green Living Expo September 10th, and the Descanso Garden Event - Rain Barrel event September 18th.

Chair Communications- Chair Kelly advised that the Renewable Energy Council presented their report to Council at the July 20th council meeting, and it was favorably received. Council directed staff to look into putting solar panels at City Hall and the reservoirs. He also asked that at the next meeting the commission review its work plan to take stock of progress.

Commissioner Communications-

Commissioner Wilms: Spoke with Kristine Courdy regarding the WCA contract, staff are currently negotiating because of the prevailing wage decision. She and Kristine will reconnect in October.

Commissioner Kuhn: No updates at this time.

Commissioner Leider: Had asked for a synopsis of the Arbor Access demo.

Commissioner Benzoni: No updates at this time.

Council Liaison Communications-

Expanded on the staff liaison’s discussion regarding the Lighting and Landscape Maintenance District (LLMD) update. Council asked staff to postpone the item so that more research could be done on costs as well as the expected energy savings from lighting retrofits.

Staff Liaison Communications-

Staff advised the commission that the LLMD item that was supposed to go to council in late 2016 will now go before them in early 2017.

Adjournment – Commissioner Kuhn motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:47 p.m., Commissioner Benzoni seconded. Ayes: All (Absent – Findley and Puni), Nays: None.

NEXT MEETING – The next regular meeting of the Natural Resources and Environmental Commission will be held on September 27, 2016 at 7:00 p.m.


William Kelly, Chair