

ENVIRONMENTAL TASK FORCE MINUTES

April 21, 2011 5:30 P.M.

Police and Fire Community Facility
420 15th Street Manhattan Beach, CA 90266

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

In attendance: Environmental Task Force co-chairs Councilmembers Amy Howorth and David Lesser, Members Paul Beswick, Andy Cobb, Stacia Costa, Julie Gonella, Audrey Judson, Ann Lin, Greg Monfette, Gretchen Renshaw, and Daniel Salzman, Student Liaison Alina Heim, and Environmental Programs Manager Sona Kalapura.

2. BUSINESS ITEMS

Environmental Programs Manager Kalapura thanked the ETF volunteers who participated in the successful Earth Day festival at Polliwog Park. She then invited the attendees to a special Earth Day screening of the plastic pollution documentary, "[Bag It](#)" taking place on Friday, April 22nd. Other announcements included the Vitality City "[walking moai](#)" kickoff taking place on April 26th and the [Energy Upgrade California](#) workshop on April 28th.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL SPEAKER SERIES

[Centennial Committee](#) representative Trish Pietrzak spoke to the ETF about upcoming Centennial programs, and the potential to include sustainability-themed events as part of the Centennial program. She talked about upcoming City-wide events, fundraising opportunities, and a desire to have the ETF come up with an event that would promote sustainability citywide while tying in to the Centennial theme. Some possible events include a historical walk and photo tour, July picnic and parade, Black-tie Ball on the beach, advertising through street pole banners, etc. She asked ETF members and public to contact her at trish@MB100.org with ideas.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL TASK FORCE ITEMS

- a. [Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy](#) (Energy Work Group members: Andy Cobb, Stacia Costa, Audrey Judson, Kim Matsoukas, and Daniel Salzman)

Presentation: Daniel Salzman spoke on behalf of the Energy work group and gave an overview on the ETF mission, environmental legislative goals applicable to the ETF (AB32, California's global warming legislation), and commitments made by City Council to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement. He talked about some of the projects already completed by the City (e.g. green building codes, energy audit, climate action plan). The goals of the Agreement also included promotion of renewable energy, and education on energy conservation to schools and businesses. These tasks were identified as priorities through the first ETF, and were assigned to the current ETF in the Environmental Work Plan. He explained that the Energy work group has come up with several ideas to promote renewable energy, including a contest, and that they are

flexible in how the program will be designed and adopted in order to mitigate any perceived conflict of interest or legal concerns.

Andy Cobb then explained two other proposals dealing with solar energy: an educational solar display and an investment grade solar feasibility audit. The purpose of the display would be to educate the community on solar power generation, making it easy and fun to understand. The display could track the solar energy generated, and would be located in a visible area to create interest. Andy then spoke about the city's energy audit and the need to implement the recommendations in the audit to make use of existing rebates and potential efficiencies. He proposes creating an investment grade audit for the solar recommendations that the City can then put out to bid for the work to be completed. He pointed out that the solar recommendations in the current audit were not detailed enough for the City to obtain outside funding for the solar projects, such as a power purchase agreement (PPA), in which the City would not have to purchase the solar panels.

Discussion: Councilmember Lesser raised concerns about a solar display being seen as free advertising for Xero Solar. Andy explained that his company would not be supplying the solar panel for the display proposal, but that fundraising throughout the community could take place to pay for the installation. Daniel also explained that the purpose of the project is to promote solar power as an option, and give the public an example of how solar works.

Councilmember Howorth asked about the investment grade audit, and if this would also be used to develop return-on-investment potential for homeowners. Andy explained that this proposal was only for government facilities, and that Edison would have to sign-off on the assumptions made in the solar assessment. Daniel stated that the investment grade audit would help the City in obtaining solar panels leading to a reduction in GHG emissions, energy savings, and a means to educate the public on solar power. The City is already trying to promote solar power through educational events and the fee-waiver for solar permits.

Casey Beyer, a former ETF member in attendance, stated that there are large energy users in the community, including the commercial sector and school district. He said that more than just the solar audit needs to be completed, but that financing to implement the projects needs to be secured. He said there are several financial options to reduce the burden on city funds, and asked the Councilmembers not to be deterred by financial costs.

- b. [Water Conservation](#) and [Sustainable Landscaping](#) (Water Conservation work group members: Paul Beswick, Julie Gonella, Ann Lin, Greg Monfette, and Gretchen Renshaw).

Presentation: Greg Monfette gave an update on a proposal from the Water Conservation work group to develop a "sustainable landscape checkup" program. The idea centers around providing the community with a list of local landscapers that can conduct free landscape audits to help residents define what they can do to turn their properties into sustainable landscape. He also presented an idea for a municipal mulch service, free to residents. This would make mulch readily available to the public – a "one-stop" mulch program.

Discussion: Greg suggested developing a list of local resources so that the City would not be partial to one landscaper, as well as having the list vetted to ensure that those participating

have the necessary skills to service the community. The City of Santa Monica is an example of a city that provides this program and the city actually provides classes and certifies the landscapers that wish to participate. Councilmember Lesser asked if this type of program would just serve as free marketing for the landscaper because they then would likely complete the landscaping work for the resident. Greg stated that in a way it would be marketing, but that the landscapers would meet standards set by the City. Councilmember Howorth liked the idea of having the landscapers apply to participate in a program, and then adding them to a list available to the public, but was concerned about the staff time that might be needed to run the program. Greg explained that the ETF could develop a checklist of criteria to screen potential landscapers, ensure they have the proper certification, etc. Paul Beswick also suggested using landscapers on Santa Monica's list, but Greg assured that it would not be difficult to vet local landscapers because the criteria is simple. Daniel Salzman said that a resource like this would be a good tool for developers who want to install sustainable landscape on their projects. He said it makes a big difference in water consumption, and that projects that have sustainable landscape create the need for surrounding properties to do the same.

Greg also discussed ideas on a pilot mulch program, and raised several questions including: where would the City get the mulch from, where would it be stored, and whether a permit is needed. Greg mentioned that different permits are needed if over 500 cubic yards of mulch will be stored. He also gave examples of the City of LA and Long Beach's mulch programs. The City of LA recycles its tree trimmings and provides it for the mulch program, free to residents for pickup. The City of Long Beach mulches tree trimmings from municipal trees and provides a free mulch-delivery program to residents. Greg said there is a concern with using product from outside tree trimmers if you do not know what material they are bringing in. He said it is important to ensure that the mulch is clean and that there is a storage place identified. He suggested working with the City of LA to have some of their mulch delivered to Manhattan Beach because their mulch is "spread-ready." Staff would be needed to oversee the program, ideally someone from the Public Works department. He also suggested a strong public education program to highlight the value of mulch, what it can be used for, etc.

5. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Casey Beyer (South Bay Bicycle Coalition), Carolyn Miller (Transition South Bay), Jim Fulkerson (US Green Building Council), Craig Cadwallader (Surfrider South Bay), Cristian Vasquez (Manhattan Beach Sun), and Gary McCullough (Manhattan Beach Boy Scouts) attended the ETF meeting.

6. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned to the next ETF meeting, on Thursday, May 19th at 5:30PM in the Manhattan Beach Police Fire Community Room: 420 15th Street Manhattan Beach, CA 90266.

Regular meetings of the ETF are held on the 3rd Thursday of each month. Meeting information will also be posted on the Going Green webpage at www.citymb.info.