

ENVIRONMENTAL TASK FORCE MINUTES

December 15, 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-chair Councilmembers Amy Howorth and David Lesser, ETF Members Daniel Salzman, Audrey Judson, Andy Cobb, Julie Gonella, Greg Monfette, and Paul Beswick; and City Staff City Manager Dave Carmany, Public Works Director Jim Arndt, Maintenance Superintendent Juan Price, Utilities Manager Raul Saenz, Public Works Management Analyst Clay Curtin and Environmental Programs Manager Sona Kalapura. Vickie Wipple from Waste Management was also in attendance. Several members from the 2012 Leadership Manhattan Beach class attended the meeting, including project leader Loli Mazhar. An additional nine residents and members of the public were in attendance and participated in the meeting.

2. BUSINESS ITEMS

Kalapura welcomed attendees to the year-end meeting, and then began introductions of the ETF and public in attendance before continuing on with the ETF timeline and key project dates. She gave an overview of the upcoming timeline for 2012 as the ETF works through the programs approved by City Council, and gathers information to report on the progress made.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL TASK FORCE ITEMS

I. Water Conservation and Sustainable Landscaping (Water Conservation work group members: Paul Beswick, Julie Gonella, Greg Monfette, and Gretchen Renshaw)

The bulk of the discussion centered on the Post Office Demonstration Garden (see discussion notes below the program summary section).

- i. **Community mulch pilot program:** Julie Gonella gave an overview of the pilot program offering free organic mulch to the community is going well. Multiple loads have already been delivered to the Public Works Yard, at 3621 Bell Avenue. The program is available to the entire community and is self-service. So the public needs to bring their own tools and bags to gather the mulch.
- ii. **Post Office Demonstration garden:** Gonella explained that the goal of the demonstration garden is to illustrate the feasibility of sustainable landscaping, while educating the public. The garden proposal highlights the use of drip irrigation, mulch, and climate-appropriate planting. The 2012 Leadership Manhattan Beach class has selected the Post Office Demonstration Garden as their class project, and is developing a budget to cover purchase and installation of the plants, and other design features.

Gonella discussed the issues with the trees on the site. The City's arborist assessed the condition of several trees and found that the Monterey Pine is leaning significantly, and is diseased. The Monterey Pine tree has a fungus, for which there is no cure. The ETF and

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Manhattan Beach Botanical Garden volunteers recommend removing the tree and replacing it with a climate appropriate species. The Leadership Manhattan Beach class will discuss tree replacement options. The Victorian Box tree on the site is also diseased and is nearly dead, and needs to be replaced as well.

There are three other trees in the parkway, which have limited space to grow. While there are some root issues and potential trip hazards, the trees are in fair health. If these trees are removed, they can be replaced with more appropriate trees for the area.

The rest of the landscape is inefficient with over 4,000 square feet of sod and turf, and a landscape that is over 30 years old. The sod is mounding, and water runs off the property. The landscape needs to be leveled, the turf removed and mulch placed to kill the remaining lawn. The draft design recommends removing over 50% of the lawn, including circular paths, installing drip irrigation, and plants that retain water onsite.

- iii. **Landscape Sustainability checkup:** Greg Monfette discussed the free landscape audit program available to the community. He explained how to access the information on the website, which links directly to the website and contact information of the landscapers vetted by the ETF. A workshop to vet the contractors was held on November 2nd. ETF members now need to promote the program, and plan to share the program information at upcoming public meetings. Paul Beswick also mentioned that the Post Office project will be a hands-on demonstration of the sustainability audit.

One of the vetted landscapers, Melissa Carnehl from Landscape Matters was present at the meeting and stated that she did one audit for a resident already. She said it is important to do irrigation audits for homeowners because she will often find leak. She can show the residents how to fix these simple problems. Carnehl also stated that the City's landscape audit was a really good educational tool, that was easy to follow and covered all the aspects of sustainable landscaping.

- iv. **School-wide water conservation contest:** Paul Beswick noted that this program will have to be put on hold because there was not enough time to coordinate with the Centennial Committee art contest as requested by Mayor Tell.

Discussion:

Loli Mazhar from the LMB class said that the class will be taking over the design of the Post Office project, and they need some direction from Council on the sod removal and mulch installation, as well as any tree removal based on the arborist report to develop a design that is consistent with the site demolition. If possible, LMB would like to begin laying down mulch on the site in early January 2012.

Councilmember Lesser suggested that the information be presented to City Council in January. He wanted to know what the budget for the project was, and Gonella mentioned that the cost from Public Works to remove the sod is about \$1,000. Councilmember Lesser also said that the residents may have an issue with the removal of trees. Gonella responded that while the trees look good on top they are diseased, and that while there are plans to redesign the site, the plans

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should also include making the area safe. She mentioned there is a brief arborist report explaining the condition of the trees. Councilmember Howorth suggested discussing this issue with the members of the former Tree Canopy Committee.

Daniel Salzman stated that it was important to reiterate the goals of any tree removal on the demonstration garden site are to remove disease, increase safety, and reduce runoff. He also said to make it clear that any trees removed will be replaced with native trees that still provide shade.

Jim Arndt said that the City does not have a process in place yet to deal with these types of issues, but that the City's commissions can be consulted. Councilmember Lesser said to discuss the issue with City Council first, and then refer to the Commissions if needed.

Gonella reminded the group that the site preparation for the project needed some lead time, up to two months for the mulch to remain on the ground before plant installation. Mazhar said that the LMB class would come back to Council with the project details and final design, but would like to get started on the site preparation including laying the mulch during the first week of January.

Councilmember Howorth said that there needs to be a public process in place first so that comments from the community can be obtained. She doesn't want the project to have any negative feedback, and does not believe starting the mulch process early in January is realistic.

Dave Carmany mentioned that because of the tree removal involved, the project should go through a similar process that a resident would have to in order to remove a tree.

Councilmember Lesser stated that the partnership with LMB is a good one, but that the groups still need to go through a public process to gather comments.

Craig Cadwallader, MB resident and Surfrider representative, said that volunteers from Surfrider would be willing to help with the garden project.

II. Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (Energy Work Group members: Andy Cobb, Stacia Costa, Audrey Judson, Kim Matsoukas, and Daniel Salzman)

- i. Solar display in Metlox Plaza: Andy Cobb gave an update on the solar project. He said that the funds for the project are being raised, but that we still need to have the design plans approved by the City. He mentioned not wanting to go through a long RFP process because the project is so small. Because it is such a small project, he does not want to make the process too difficult and discourage bidders.

Councilmember Lesser asked if companies might still consider the project from a social partnership perspective, even if it was a small project? Cobb said that if the process to bid for the project is too difficult companies would not consider applying because it is so small. Councilmember Howorth said that local companies would consider the project.

- ii. Residential Energy "Watt" Watcher program: Audrey Judson discussed the energy contest, and mentioned that the kickoff of the contest was delayed in order to wait for a

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response from Southern California Edison as a potential partner in the program. A response was not received, so the program has been released to the residents. Other companies have been willing to participate and sponsor the contest and there are prizes for residents and the schools. Belkin was able to sponsor the contest with a significant donation of energy saving products to help participants measure their energy usage.

- iii. Green Business Challenge: Vickie Wipple discussed the partnership with the City and ETF on the green business certification program. Waste Management will take the initial information provided by the ETF to develop a comprehensive certification process that will be free to all businesses. The program will be web-based and easy for business to use in order to begin monitoring and implementing sustainable business practices. Waste Management wants to assist the ETF in recognizing early adopters of the program by Earth Day 2012 and has committed to conducting several audits in person with those businesses that are interested. The ETF has a list of potential businesses to work with. Wipple mentioned that Waste Management will use the certification program available through the California Business program. She said that the Chamber of Commerce is supporting this effort, and Waste Management will work with SBESC to offer any additional rebates and resources to the businesses.

Wipple also mentioned the upcoming food waste pilot program, which will help businesses move towards a zero waste goal. She said the food waste was taken to a site in Antelope Valley and converted to natural gas. Councilmember Lesser wanted to know how many businesses could really achieve a zero waste target. Wipple said that if businesses implement recycling and composting, they could easily reach that goal.

III. Environmental Task Force Future Projects

The group briefly discussing next steps for the ETF. Audrey Judson noted that the ETF should continue, but that a larger group of volunteers was needed, as well as more time to accomplish the tasks. Councilmember Lesser said that we should integrate the environmental programs in the City's strategic planning process. He wants to make sure there is opportunity for public input.

4. Audience Participation

Carl Swanberg from WindStream, a local renewable energy company, attended the meeting and suggested that renewable energy should continue to be explored by the City. He mentioned that the WindStream products were now in production, and a previous pilot program proposal could now be implemented. He said that Manhattan Beach receives enough wind to offset approximately 20-25% of a home's energy needs. He said there are incentives for renewable energy still available which reduces the costs of small-wind turbines significantly.

5. ADJOURNMENT

The next ETF meeting will be determined in January 2012, and information will be posted on the Going Green webpage at www.citymb.info.