

ENVIRONMENTAL TASK FORCE MEETING MINUTES

April 19, 2012

5:30 P.M.

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

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Sona Kalapura called the meeting to order, and went over upcoming event announcements, including the 20th annual Earth Day festival with a special display from the Wyland organization on water conservation.

2. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION (5 minutes)

Questions on the upcoming South Bay Solar Homes tour were asked, including the setup of the event, and number of participants. Kalapura and Dency Nelson noted that event setup is up to the homeowner, with some taking place inside the home, but most events setup outside. Previous tours have had approximately 50-60 participants.

Kaye Gagnon from VOICE made a special presentation to Julie Gonella as one of this year's Environmental Heroes.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL TASK FORCE: final update on projects (20 minutes)

Kalapura gave the update on the Environmental Task Force projects, with committee members and members of the public asking questions and adding comments.

a. Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy:

i. **Residential energy conservation program**

“Watt” Watchers contest has closed with 150 participants, and winners will be announced at Earth Day Festival in Polliwog Park on Saturday, April 28th at 1pm. Donations for prizes were raised by the ETF with Audrey Judson doing an incredible job securing sponsors. Daniel Salzman's company South Bay Green also contributed donations for the winning school, as well as secured a donation of energy monitoring tools from Belkin. Feedback from the program has been positive, with residents actually looking forward to receiving their Edison bills to see how much energy they have saved.

ii. **Green business challenge**

A free program for local businesses to monitor and implement sustainable business practices; Waste Management is leading the program and will award the first participating businesses certificates at the Earth Day festival. Five businesses have been certified so far, one of them being South Bay Green. Participants will receive a certificate and plaque, and be placed on the City's website for recognition.

iii. **Solar display in Metlox Plaza**

A Request for Proposals has been released for a solar vendor to install an educational solar display to raise awareness on the use of renewable energy at Metlox Plaza. Some donations for the project have been collected from local sponsors. However, this project is being placed on hold and will need to be reconsidered by staff.

- b. Water Conservation and Sustainable Landscaping:
 - i. **Landscape Sustainability checkup**

Free landscape audits are available to the community, and even through advertising the program has been slow to take off during the winter months. As summer approaches, with higher water use, and the Post Office garden is completed, more interest in the program is expected. This program takes no staff maintenance, and the vetted landscapers are willing to continue offering their services to the community.
 - ii. **Community mulch pilot program**

Free mulch is available to the community at the Public Works Yard, and the program is popular and continuously being refilled. Staff recommends continuing this program with the tree trimming companies identified by the committee. The committee agreed that this program is one the city should continue to provide to the community. Councilmember Lesser asked for the quantity of mulch delivered to the site.
 - iii. **Post Office Demonstration garden**

The Leadership Manhattan Beach class is moving forward with the re-landscape of the post office site, and is nearing completion of the project (expected May 1st). The project will be a hands-on example of the principles of sustainable landscape. The project is completely funded through community donations, and will provide continuity of design with the existing City Hall drought tolerant landscape. Gonella mentioned that the Historical Society has allowed the LMB class to use the shadow box adjacent to the site for 1 year to provide educational information on the project.
- 4. Environmental Programs – Next Steps: (40 minutes) Discussion on current environmental programs and items the committee recommends for future consideration
 - a. Several members provided their input on the success of the current programs, and ideas on which programs they would like to see the City continue with during each of the program updates.
 - i. Energy Contest - Salzman and Judson felt that it would improve the energy efficiency program success if Edison would become involved early on in the next outreach effort. The contest was notable because even without Edison support, the program did really well. Scott Gobble from Edison replied that he would like to partner with the City's especially to promote the smart-metering program expected to being in July. The Councilmembers asked for a definition of the smart meter system, and if a presentation could be given to City Council.
 - ii. Green Business – Jonty Pretzer suggested that resources be provided to businesses to save energy, such as incentives for LED use that have been added to Edison's programs. Pretzer also said that businesses could benefit from on-bill financing programs and from more education on resources available. Judson said that the green business audits are important, and is something that Waste Management will continue to provide as part of their new contract.
 - iii. EV charging for the public – Judson said she wanted to see public-access to EV chargers in the community. Jim Arndt noted that this would be a policy call for City Council to decide whether or not to provide free parking or have a fee for the public to charge electric vehicles. Councilmember Howorth felt the City could champion

electric vehicles, and said staff should look into the issue and present options to Council on providing free parking. Councilmember Lesser pointed out that there is already an EV charging station at Walgreens. Salzman noted that there are free applications for smartphones that will map the areas that have EV charging stations, and let users know if the station is available for charging. He mentioned that if business districts work together they can apply for State grants to get more charging stations. Nelson stated that there are Coulomb chargers in Hermosa Beach on the Charge Point network, but warned the City to be wary of “free” installation offers. He suggested that the city look into owning the chargers out right so we don’t have to deal with proprietary issues from other companies.

- iv. Metlox Solar project – Judson asked if the City will continue to move this program forward. Robinson stated that this project would really educate the community on the benefits of renewable energy, and that the bi-facial panels would generate excitement with the public and youth that utilize the plaza.
- v. Landscape Audits – Beswick stated that additional advertising, such as a bill stuffer during the summer should be pursued. Other low cost advertising measures, such as flyers at the Library, public counters, and events should still take place to promote the program. Andrea Robinson suggested targeting areas of the community that may be higher-water users to see a better result. Beswick also suggested promoting the fact that switching to drip irrigation could save homeowners 30-40% in their water bills. Lisa Mittleman added that she went through the audit program and suggested providing recommendations on plants to use to the homeowners. Gonella and Renshaw stated this is something the committee has, and can make this list available. Councilmember Howorth asked that this list of recommended plants be placed on the city’s green website.
- vi. Water Conservation & Schools – Councilmember Howorth mentioned a study conducted by a Mira Costa student on water conservation, highlighting how many gallons of water could be saved by taking shorter showers. She suggested that the City work with the High School to get middle school students engaged in water conservation. Arndt stated that this would fit into the City’s water conservation ordinance and that more outreach can be done. Robinson suggested starting in September with the beginning of the school year.
- vii. Demonstration Garden – Councilmember Lesser asked if there would be any permanent signage at the Post Office site, similar to the existing signage at City Hall. He did not want a separate sponsorship sign as was proposed by LMB, but is interested in seeing the plant identification signs to promote education. Gonella stated that currently there are only plans for the LMB plaque, but no other educational signage. Craig Cadwallader said that Surfrider would like to see an educational sign denoting the elements of sustainable landscaping and ocean-friendly gardening. He said it was important to have an educational component. Gonella agreed that there should be an interpretative sign at the garden, but it was outside of LMB’s project scope and suggested that this could be a future effort through the City and Surfrider to create an educational sign for the space. Councilmember Lesser asked staff to come to City Council will options for signage at the Garden that would not interfere with the use of the space.

- b. [California Green Communities](#): Chris Peck from Edison provided an overview of the CA Green Communities program as a way to structure future environmental initiatives. CA

Green is a recognition program that fosters innovative ways for participating cities to reduce carbon emissions and energy consumption while building vibrant, sustainable communities. He said that the program is a good platform for what the city is already doing. The City can decide which programs it wants to pursue, and using the ILG Best Practices Framework it can organize programs into ten areas of an action plan. The City will need to complete three activities in each area to become certified. Councilmember Lesser asked what value-added could be had by participating in this program since the City is already participating in the Beacon Award and other efforts. Peck mentioned that since the City is already participating in Edison's Energy Leader program, and is nearly at the Gold level, we would be able to get recognition and approval of the programs we are working on. He also said that the City's activities would be useful in influencing other communities and showing examples of leadership. Councilmember Howorth wanted to better understand the staff time and budgetary implications involved. She said it would be useful to have a list of items to pursue that are prioritized so council can decide which policy ideas to explore.

- c. Next Steps: ETF members also suggested rolling out the programs individually, instead of all at once so that each program would get enough attention by the public. Salzman suggested running 1 program each quarter, to avoid having any of the other programs suffer, and gain enough momentum in each area. Cadwallader suggested having more interaction and communication with other organizations to seek their support and partnerships, and take advantage of programs already in place. Salzman also stated that there should be more of an effort to incorporate the environmental programs into the schools and classrooms to see the effectiveness of each program. Judson noted that the science teachers are really interested in this, and that the City and school district should work with the ACE organization to bring climate awareness education to the schools.

Councilmember Lesser wanted to understand how to sustain these programs beyond the life of the Environmental Task Force, and what role the City would play. He does not want to be redundant and focus on issues that Edison is already working on. He said it is good to have citizen engagement, but the City needs a return on investment and staff time. Scott Gobble noted that these programs are important to show leadership among the communities, and as a good showcase for the city. He said that Edison was willing to help with these programs to provide education to the community. Councilmember Howorth noted that these programs are no longer political, but are of real interest to the community, as evidenced by the new attendees at each ETF meeting. She also stated that though the committee was small, it was mighty, and was able to launch each program successfully.

5. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION (15 minutes)
Cadwallader said that the City's decision on the plastic bag exemption for restaurants was a good one to avoid another long legal battle. He said that Surfrider would help promote businesses that are removing plastics voluntarily.
6. ADJOURNMENT: A status report on Environmental Task Force accomplishments will be presented to City Council in June, 2012. Future meeting information will be posted on the City's webpage at www.citymb.info.