



**SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
DRAFT MINUTES**

City Hall Conference Room
1000 San Pablo Avenue
March 19, 2008 – 7:30 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Cooper at 7:40 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Members Present:

Thomas J. Cooper Suzanne Schrift
Dan Lieberman Caryl O'Keefe

Members Absent: Miya Kitahara, Janet Smith-Heimer, April Yang

Staff Present: Nicole Almaguer

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

3-1. Approve minutes from February 20 meeting (attached)

Minutes approved as amended. Motion by O'Keefe, seconded by Lieberman.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

5. ANNOUNCEMENTS/COMMUNICATIONS

5-1. Earth Hour Event – March 29th 8-9 p.m.

Almaguer announced that the City is promoting Earth Hour – the community is encouraged to turn off their lights for one our on March 29th from 8-9 p.m.

Cooper read an email send by Smith-Heimer regarding the economic development consultant interviews conducted by the City. Smith-Heimer sat on the interview panel along with Allen Cain, Tom Abbott, and City staff Jeff Bond and Judy Lieberman. Mayer was selected as the most suitable firm, Management Partners was ranked second and Wahlstrom was ranked the lowest. A scope of work will now be developed with Mayer. Smith-Heimer will be assisting City staff in developing the scope of work and getting the consulting firm up to speed with Albany needs. It is envisioned that the Committee will have a role to play in this project as it begins to be developed.

6. DISCUSSIONS AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON MATTERS RELATED TO THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:

6-1. Presentation by City of Berkeley Staff – Solar Energy Program

Alice LaPierre from the City of Berkeley provided a presentation on Berkeley's energy efficiency and solar energy programs. City of Berkeley voters passed Measure G in November 2006, which sets a citywide goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 80% by 2050. The Berkeley FIRST program is a program aimed at providing a means for property owners to install solar devices and pay for associated costs on their property tax bills. The Berkeley is in contract with the DOE to develop the Berkeley FIRST program, and as such the details regarding the planning of this program cannot be discussed in detail until the program is officially launched. Berkeley will utilize creative financing strategies based on the Mello-Roose precedent that allowed for financing for underground utilities to be placed on property tax rolls. Berkeley expects to launch this program within approximately four months. Once Berkeley has launched their program there may be good opportunities for other cities to conduct similar projects using Berkeley's example. Berkeley adopted an energy efficiency ordinance for both residential and commercial sectors in the early 1980s. Berkeley is also working on a number of projects and partnering with several local organizations to conduct outreach to the community on energy efficiency opportunities.

Almaguer asked how Berkeley would be financing the program, and whether there was an opportunity for Albany to partner with Berkeley on a bond measure.

LaPierre stated that Albany was located outside of the financing district and that due to Berkeley's contract with the DOE there is not an opportunity to partner.

LaPierre noted that there might soon be legislation proposed by Loni Hancock regarding solar financing. Almaguer will forward a copy of the presentation to the Committee.

6-2. Review /Prioritize Clean & Green Task Force Recommendations – identify possible subcommittees

The Committee agreed to postpone this item until the April agenda when additional Committee members would be in attendance.

6-3. Discuss concept of a paid parking program and relevance to Sustainability Committee

Cooper stated that he inquired with Council Member Javandel regarding this item to identify whether there are examples of how paid parking has contributed to a reduction in vehicle use. Council Member Javandel provided an email to Cooper encouraging the Committee to discuss the item, identify any aspects related to sustainability, and possibly forward the item along to other groups including the Traffic & Safety Commission and the Social and Economic Justice Commission. Javandel's email noted that he has not seen any studies related to the Berkeley portion of Solano Avenue and whether the parking meters in this area have any impact on minimizing vehicle use. Schrift stated that many business owners are likely concerned with the concept of parking meters as it could possibly serve as a deterrent for customers.

Cooper noted that parking on upper Solano is difficult to find and that there appears to be little impact on this by parking meters in this area.

O'Keefe stated that she believes there were also other areas identified for paid parking including residential streets and other commercial streets beyond Solano Avenue. O'Keefe would like to know the real objective behind the paid parking program, whether it is to encourage less driving, raise revenues, or other goals. O'Keefe asked whether the Committee should look at the economic component of a paid parking program.

Cooper noted that the Social & Economic Justice Commission should look at the equity issue for businesses, and clarified that the Committee's role is to focus on environmental sustainability as opposed to economic issues. This Committee should focus on whether meters would get people out of cars, however Cooper does not think it would be a deterrent.

Lieberman stated that meters would likely not be a deterrent for someone doing errands, as compared to a situation that does encourage alternative modes of transportation such taking BART as opposed to paying daily parking rates in San Francisco.

Public Comment:

Rhoda Bennett: Served on an Ad-Hoc Committee to fight against installation of parking meters in the past. This item has been reviewed by the City Council before, and the community did not support it. Suggests making streets more pedestrian friendly if the goal is to encourage less driving.

Cooper motioned the Committee refer the issue to the Traffic & Safety Commission and the Social & Economic Justice Commission as the item is not an appropriate topic for the Committee. The Committee evaluated the item and do not believe there is a connection between prevailing paid parking rates and the reduction of car travel within Albany. Seconded by O'Keefe. Unanimously approved.

7. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

7-1. Next meeting April 16, 2008

The Committee agreed that the April meeting would include:

- Review /Prioritize Clean & Green Task Force Recommendations to identify possible subcommittees
- Overview of the City's Stormwater Program
- Presentation by the City's Urban Forester
- Plastic Bag outreach (City Council will be taking action to discourage the use of plastic bags on April 7th).

Lieberman noted he will not be able to attend the April meeting, and requested the leaf blower ordinance be included on the May agenda.

8. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.