

**Sustainability Commission  
CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA**



**MINUTES  
Regular Meeting**

Tuesday, November 19, 2013, Palm Springs City Hall, Large Conference Room

**CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Klein called the meeting to order at **5:00** p.m.

**FLAG SALUTE:** The flag salute was done by Manager Mician.

**ROLL CALL:** A quorum was present for this Regular Meeting of the City of Palm Springs Sustainability Commission.

**AGENDA APPROVAL:** The agenda was presented by Sustainability Manager Mician. Commissioner Bettinger motioned and Commissioner Jackson seconded the motion to pass the agenda.

	This Meeting	Present to Date	FY 2013/2014 Excused Absences	FY 2013/2014 Unexcused Absences
Brett Klein, Chair	X	27		
Thom Bettinger	X	16		
Kate Castle, Vice Chair	X	17	2	
Paul J. McCreesh	E	19	2	
Joe Jackson	X	9	1	
Grant Wilson	X	10		
Brielle McNeel	X	4	1	
Mark Polischak	X	5		
Victor Yepello	X	5		
Travis Armstrong	X	4		

X = Present

L = Late

E = Excused (notified Chair and Staff of absence)

U = did not notify of absence

**CITY STAFF PRESENT:** Michele Mician MS, Manager, Office of Sustainability  
Gary Calhoun, Recycling Coordinator

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:** This time has been set aside for members of the public to address the Sustainability Commission on Agenda items and items of general interest within the subject matter within jurisdiction of the City. Although the Sustainability Commission values your comments, pursuant to the Brown Act, it generally cannot take any action on items not listed on the posted Agenda. Three (3) minutes are assigned for each speaker.

**A. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

**B. PRESENTATIONS**

**1. Friends of the Desert Mountains, John Purcell, Board Member**

- Mr. Purcell provided information in regards to their organizations history, goal and request for future sponsorship from the City of Palm Springs. He stated that the organization has been working in the Coachella Valley under a 75 year permit though the Multiple Species Conservation Plan, ranging from the San Jacinto Mountains, Santa Rosa Mountains, Salton Sea and extending through Joshua Tree. Their organization has been working under that permit for over 25 years with the conservation of multi-species plan, which not only focus on protecting the native animal and plant species, but also the habitat where they exist. Of the 80,000 acres of conservation land, they manage 50,000 acres. The organization focuses on conservation, acquisition but also education. Through education, they provide the younger generation the awareness and importance of

protecting the environment and be the future sustainability directors. Mr. Purcell gave one example of their success, the Fringe-Toed Lizard, which is a native of the Coachella Valley and a nuisance to contactors. The lizard's habitat was being threatened, which had been reduced to only 5% of their natural habitat. With the help of the Endangered Species Act, they were able to preserve their habitat.

- Chair Klein asked if that was the reason that there are no road boundaries on Gene Autry. Mr. Purcell stated he was unaware of the reason but it makes sense.
- Manager Mician asked Mr. Purcell which other cities have contributed to their organization. He answered that Palm Desert has given \$2500.00. Manager Mician requested for any materials regarding sponsorship levels and rates, which Mr. Purcell stated he would forward the information to her. Mr. Purcell stated that their organization will be having the Wild Flower Festival on March 1, 2014 and asking other cities for contribution.

## 2. **California State University, San Bernardino, Susan Knollenberg, Director of Major Gifts**

- Director Knollenberg is requesting from the City of Palm Springs a grant of \$2500.00 for the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Environmental Expo, which the City sponsored last year with an amount of \$1000.00. The Expo's purpose is to expose high school and middle school students in the Coachella Valley to a college environment. With the valley's low college enrollment rate, Director Knollenberg stated that this expo encourages students to attend college. There will be key note speakers and provide sponsors with tables to promote the programs they have implemented. Last year, there were approximately 500 to 550 students that attended the Expo, of which 120 were resident of Palm Springs, 80 high school and 40 middle school students.
- Vice Chair Castle asked what would the funds be used for. In response, Director Knollenberg stated the grant would be used to pay for bus transportation, lunches and replacement teachers. The total budget for the Expo is around \$13,000.00 and will be held on May 8<sup>th</sup> and May 9<sup>th</sup>.
- Manager Mician stated that the City's participation with CSU, San Bernardino was established 2 years ago as part of the Mayor's Sustainability Plan. The City has provided a sponsorship of \$1000.00 to cover part of the cost of the bus transportation. Director Knollenberg added that the estimate cost for the bus transportation is between \$3000.00 and \$3500.00.
- Chair Klein stated that the Expo is amazing. Students are actively participating and he looks forward to the Commission to provide support in the future.
- Vice Chair Castle asked Manager Mician if the City had the funds to sponsor the Expo, in which Manager Mician stated that there are funds to provide the sponsorship. Manager Mician requested Director Knollenberg, for future sponsorship with the Environmental Expo, to submit earlier next year for the fiscal year 2014-2015.

## 3. **American Beverage Association, Dustan Batton, Government Relations Director Southern California**

- Director Batton thanked Manager Mician and the Commission for inviting the ABA to provide a presentation. He stated that the California beverage industry, non-alcoholic, provides 27,000 jobs. The industry's goal is to use 100% recyclable containers and environment friendly transportation fleet. He stated that Pepsi Co. has a 105 electric vehicle fleet and Coke Cola has the largest hybrid vehicle fleet. The industry strives to produce and distribute beverages locally, as much as possible, which are FDA inspected. As an example, Dasani Water is actually filtered tap water from the City of Downey. The industry is also partnering with local recycling companies, such as Carbonlite, in Riverside, to reuse the plastic instead of shipping the plastic to China that had been pick-up curb side redemption. Director Batton stated that Coke Cola has started manufacturing biodegradable bottles made from plant materials. The ABA has partnered with the Drink Up initiative, led by Michelle Obama, which promotes water as the primary beverage choice.
- Commissioner Yepello stated that, based on what he has read, only roughly 5% of plastic bottles are being recycled. He avoids bottled water and canned beverages, and would prefer using only tap water. Director Batton responded that once the water bottles are in the public, it is difficult to track how they are disposed.
- Commissioner McNeel asked if ABA was organized by the multiple beverage companies they represent or formed to monitor the beverage industry. Manager Mician also added by asking Director Batton, who was monitoring them. Director Batton responded by stating that the ABA was organized by the multiple beverage companies to help with governmental, political and consumer issues and concerns.

He stated that the beverage industry is monitored by the California Endowment and Public Health Advocacy.

- Commissioner Yepello asked Director Batton why he was asked to attend the Commission Meeting. Director Batton answered that he was invited by Manager Mician to present ABA's role in the beverage industry and what the industry is doing to lessen the use of petroleum based plastic bottles.
- Commissioner Polischak asked Director Batton if the beverage industry is looking into using more boxed water containers and what is the percentage. In response, Director Batton stated the percentage of boxed beverages is small, mainly used for juice beverages. The industry generally will roll out packaging on limited products and see the reaction from consumer before expanding to other products. Manager Mician raised the concerns regarding boxed beverage containers, are they easier to recycle than plastic bottles and the amount of energy required to recycle. Manager Mician also noted the need for plastic bottles in emergency situations.
- Vice Chair Castle stated in Germany, the emphasis is using and recycling glass bottles and raised the question if the beverage industry is looking into that. Director Batton stated that the industry is not looking into glass but instead is focused in plant based biodegradable plastic bottles. He stated that the beverage industry is consumer driven and has nothing to gain by polluting.

### **C. CITY MANAGER'S REPORT**

City Manager Ready reported that Measure J implementation is starting to matriculate into implementation, and a spreadsheet has been created with the projects and timelines. A large portion of the funds, \$1 million, will be used for the City's Non-Motorized Transportation Program. He will articulate in the next couple of weeks on how they are to proceed with implementation, such as bike racks and street lane implementation. Manager Mician stated that Ryan Snyder has been contracted with the implementation of the Program. Chair Klein asked what would be the protocol once the Commission is ready to communicate their recommendations. Manager Mician answered that Dave Barakian would be the person to present the Commission recommendations. She also stated that Mr. Snider would like to meet with the Commission.

City Manager Ready advised the Commission regarding the "Trolley" that he would prefer an electric vehicle but a more practical choice would be a CNG vehicle. An electric vehicle would not be the best option because, at best, it would have only an 8 hour charge. Commissioner Yepello asked if the City would consider a CNG/Hybrid option, in which City Manager Ready stated that may be a subcommittee opportunity. Chair Klein stated that he would invite staff from the Convention Center and Bureau of Tourism to join the subcommittee with implementing a plan.

### **D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

October 15, 2013 Regular Meeting

Vice Chair Castle motioned for the approval of minutes.

Commissioner Yepello seconded the motion.

All approved.

- Vice Chair Castle requested that hardcopies of the Agenda and Minutes be three holed punched.
- Manager Mician stated in the future, Agendas and Minutes will be sent electronically and will only have three hardcopies made available during Commission Meetings.

### **E. RECYCLING UPDATE, Gary Calhoun – Recycling Coordinator (5 MINUTES)**

- Coordinator Calhoun stated November 16<sup>th</sup> Recycling Event, held behind City Hall, was successful. The event had 247 vehicles brought electronic waste and shredding materials. The event had two trucks, and both were filled to 80% capacity, which is about 8 tons of waste. He also stated he is still waiting for results from PSDS with the Fall Clean Up Event held on October 14<sup>th</sup>.
- Coordinator Calhoun advised the Commission that he received an e-mail regarding a Beverage Grant for recycling containers in the amount of \$12,500.00 that the Commission may want to consider.
- Coordinator Calhoun stated the Police and Fire Department are doing a great job with recycling. In coordination with Manager Mician, he is working on viability of compostable green waste recycling program to include residential properties.
- Commissioner Yepello inquired if there is a recycling program in place at Village Fest. Coordinator Calhoun stated at this time, there is not. Manager Mician added that in the past they have tried but the

public just does not pay attention. Unless we have volunteers monitoring the waste disposal areas, it just does not work.

- Commissioner McNeel inquired what PSDS is doing to promote and educate recycling residentially. Coordinator Calhoun answered that the Commission invite PSDS to a meeting and provide information, but presently he does not know what they have in place. He stated that they could insert a reminder with their bill, in which Commissioner McNeel stated that they could also send reminders electronically and place recycling information in the City's website.
- Vice Chair Castle stated that some HOA refuse to use recycling bins but the best course is to educate the populous, as recycling will not be an option in the future. Coordinator Calhoun agreed as there is no enforcement, educating would be the best option. He added that the City of Rancho Mirage will soon have an ordinance in place for commercial properties to enforce recycling, which will include heavy fines.
- Commissioner Armstrong inquired if there is a recycling program in place at the City's parks, which Manager Mician answered, she will look into that. Coordinator Calhoun stated that the Fire and Police Departments are doing well with recycling. Manager Mician added that other City facilities will need re-education, especially what can go into the blue bins, which is almost everything.

## **F. SUSTAINABILITY MANAGER REPORT**

- City Employee Bike Sharing Program Purchase
  - Manager Mician advised the Commission of her intent of purchasing 2 or 3 bicycles to be used by City staff to run errands, instead of driving. Commissioner Wilson asked what type of bicycles would be purchased. Manager Mician responded that she would seek recommendation from a bike shop. Vice Chair Castle recommended maybe purchasing tricycles instead, but Manager Mician stated that would not fit into existing bike lockers. Commissioner Wilson volunteered to assist Manager Mician with different options on the type of bikes. Commissioner McCreesh recommended that the bicycles should have flags on them, preferably with the City's seal.
  - Manager Mician advised that she would like the program to begin early next year.
- 1. 2014 Mayor's Healthy Planet, Healthy You Race Posters
  - Manager Mician reported that has added three new special guests, Billy Blanks from Tae Bo, Cassey Ho a Pilates Instructor and Doonya a Bollywood Dancer. New swim events have been added, which fits with the Clinton Foundation foot print of throughout the valley, and updated the active.com website.
- 2. Dero Bike Rack and Hitch Order
  - Manager Mician reported that the initial order for bike racks have been ordered through Dero. The funds to pay for the program will be paid through MSRC grant in the amount of \$65,000.00. She would like to order 50 more but that would have to go to bid for proposal, as it will be a larger orders. The City will provide sponsorship forms to local businesses if they want to have bike racks installed at their locations.
  - Manager Mician advised that the MSRC grant amount will be used for \$40,000.00 for purchasing bike racks and hitch, and the \$25,000.00 for educational programs. She stated in order to meet the grant's requirements, which consist of three educational components: branding, safety and community outreach. Commissioner Yepello inquired on how the Commission can be re-assured that education is conducted on a yearly basis at the schools. Coordinator Calhoun stated that the Commission can contact the Police Department, as they conduct yearly safety education and may include bike safety. Vice Chair Castle stated that the public should also be educated, which maybe be included in the Bike Trail Map.
- 3. Chevron ESCO Performance Contract and Contracted Position
  - Manager Mician reported to the Commission that ESCO will be a hit on the budget, probably around \$150,000.00 lessen in the following 5 years. Fiscal year 2014-2015 will have a tighter budget.
- 4. Downtown Parking Garage Re-lamping, SCE Direct Install Program
  - Manager Mician reported to the Commission that the Downtown Parking Garage qualified for the SCE Direct Install Program with replacement of the lighting at no cost to the City.

## **G. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

1. Education Subcommittee, Commissioner McNeel

- Commissioner McNeel reported that she has approached the Principal of Cahuilla Elementary School for advice, via e-mail, on how to approach the School System. She is in the process of creating an outline curriculum but is getting complicated but she will have a flyer with the Commission's initiatives.
2. Green Building/Solar Subcommittee, Commissioner McCreesh
    - Vice Chair Castle has been working with the City's Building Department regarding the Green for Life program by disseminating the information to contractors, which would be aligned with the City's Sustainability Plan.
    - Commissioner Wilson stated "net zero energy" ordinances have been halted in the City of Palo Alto, as the State has surpassed their requirements.
  3. Wellness Subcommittee, Commissioner Jackson
    - Commissioner Jackson reported that the subcommittee has now 4 members: Commissioner Polischak, Commissioner McNeel, Commissioner Bettinger and himself. They look forward to working with HARC.
    - In regards to urban chicken, Commissioner Jackson stated they are still working on an ordinance with animal keeping but will not address bee keeping, as there is a permit already in place. The Subcommittee will have a more comprehensive report no later than January to present to the Commission for a Recommendation. Manager Mician stated that the Planning Director is ready for your recommendation.
  4. Waste Reduction Subcommittee, Vice Chair Castle
    - Vice Chair Castle reported PSNIC, on October 28<sup>th</sup>, has officially endorsed a city wide ban on single use plastic bags and that she is working with CVAC for a valley wide plastic bag initiative. She stated that there are already 87 cities/counties in California that have plastic bag ordinances. Vice Chair Castle would also like to support Senator Padilla's resolution for a state wide ban.
  5. Water Subcommittee, Commissioner Yepello
    - Commissioner Yepello had 2 meetings in the past month, one as a subcommittee and the other with Manager Mician. The subcommittee will continue not to endorse artificial turf to be included in the Lawn Buy Back Program. There is numerous question regarding artificial turf and the recycling nightmares. The subcommittee does endorse the Lawn Buy Back Program to include commercial and non-profit properties, and also to fund dual flush retrofit kits or Water Sensed labeled products.
  6. Non-Motorized Transportation Subcommittee, Chair Klein
    - Chair Klein reported he and Manager Mician attended the California Bike Summit. He stated that the summit was well attended from bicycle groups, city and county governments. There were several informative break-out sessions. Chair Klein was surprised that a lot of people were asking about the City of Palm Springs' Non-Motorized Program. The summit is held every two years, and the organizer of the event would be inclined to have Palm Springs to host the next summit. Chair Klein sated that he has not seen the application.
    - Commissioner Armstrong requested from Chair Klein if there can be someone from the subcommittee to attend the Parks and Recreation Commission, as the bike program is not accepted in a positive way. Commissioner Yepello volunteered to attend the next Parks and Recreation Commission meeting.

## H. NEW BUSINESS

(20 MINUTES)

1. Water Subcommittee Proposal: Open the Lawn Buy Back Program to Commercial and Non-for-Profit Properties

**Recommendation:** Motion to exclude artificial turf from any City reimbursement or incentive programs and to expand the Lawn Buy Back Program to include a rebate of \$1000.00 for commercial and not-for-profit properties and to increase the funding available in Account # 138-1270-58021 by \$20,000.00 to accommodate this change. A motion to vote was initiated by Commissioner Bettinger. Vice Chair Castle seconded the motion. Manager Mician conducted a roll call due to large expenditure of the Recommendation. Vote conclusion: A unanimous vote in favor of the Recommendation

2. Water Subcommittee Rebate Proposal: Dual Flush Toilet Kits or Water Sense Products

**Recommendation:** Motion to approve funding for Fiscal Year 2013-2014 in the amount of \$5,000.00 for dual flush retrofit kits or Water Sense labeled products.

A motion to vote was initiated by Commissioner Wilson.  
Commissioner Polischak seconded the motion.

Vote conclusion: A unanimous vote in favor of the Recommendation  
Commissioner McCreesh requested clarification on exactly what dual flush meant, which Commissioner Yepello provided.

3. Sponsorship Request from California State University, San Bernardino Environment Expo  
**Recommendation:** Motion to approve funding not to exceed \$2,500.00 for California State University, San Bernardino Environmental Expo Transportation.

A motion to vote was initiated by Vice Chair Castle.  
Commissioner Polischak seconded the motion.

Vote conclusion: A unanimous vote in favor of the Recommendation  
Chair Klein requested Manager Mician to notify Director Knollenberg of Commission's approval.

## I. OLD BUSINESS

1. January – April 2014 Sustainability Film series Flyer, Commissioner Bettinger
  - Commissioner Bettinger presented the final list of movies that will be shown at the Camelot Theatre and the flyer reflects December through April 2014 Sustainability Film Series. He did recommend that the flyer should provide website links to each movie, for internal use only. Commissioner Klein stated that the December 14<sup>th</sup> movie, Ingredients, will have the Executive Chef of the Citron Restaurant at the Viceroy Hotel in attendance for presentation. He also added that the January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2014 showing, Food Stamped, the Farmers Market will match \$10.00 to individuals receiving government help and will have a presenter who was receiving aid.
  - Chair Klein recommended the flyer needed some refining.

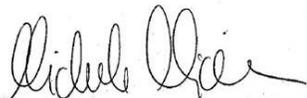
## J. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

- Commissioner Yepello commented that the Desert Sun has reached out to him to conduct seminars regarding water conservation. The one will be held at the Mizell Senior Center on December 3<sup>rd</sup> in the evening and last about a couple hours. The Desert Sun will be advertising and providing speakers for the seminars. The seminars will be held once a month, moving eastward to each city in the Coachella Valley. Eventually holding a final conference at Sunnyland, which will have no political association but entirely educational.
- Commissioner Polischak commented that the Tree Lighting will be on December 5<sup>th</sup> held at Frances Stevens Park. The Commission will be providing the LED lights exchange.
- Commissioner Wilson commented in regards to Item B1, the Fringe-Toed Lizard and its habitat. He stated Edom Hill Sand Dunes has the largest sand dunes in North America, but it is static. He added, the reason there is no road barriers on Gene Autry is due to nature of sand. Sand acts like water and would build up against barriers and placing fences would only provide perches for birds that would prey on the lizards.

## K. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting of the Sustainability Commission adjourned at 7:00 pm. The first motion was by Vice Chair Castle and a second from Commissioner McCreesh. They will adjourn to the Regular Meeting which will be held at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, December 17th in the Large Conference Room at City Hall. The Sustainability Commission's normal meeting schedule is at 5 p.m. on the third Tuesday of every month except August unless otherwise noted or amended.

Respectfully Submitted,



Michele Mician, Manager, Office of Sustainability