

Joint meeting of City Council Subcommittee and Open Space and Ecology Committee

Minutes

Wednesday, October 8, 2014 6:30 PM

Community Meeting Room

Brisbane City Hall

50 Park Place, Brisbane, CA 94005

Call to order:

Chair Ebel called the meeting to order at 6:40 PM.

Committee members present:

Abney, Ebel, Fieldman, Hayuk and Salmon.

Committee members absent:

N/A

Staff members present:

Senior Civil Engineer Kinser

Management Analyst Muñoz

City Councilmembers present:

Ray Miller

Lori Liu

1. Adoption of the Agenda.

- Fieldman and Salmon adopted the agenda.

2. Oral Communications for items not on the agenda.

- Day in the Park: many people did the carbon footprint calculator, the piñata was a success, there was low turnout compared to previous years (possibly due to heat and other weekend events in neighboring cities). Glitter glue was messy, probably not a good idea to repeat for next year. Day in the Park subcommittee will meet to discuss further and bring to November meeting.

3. Work plan prioritization.

- Ebel: According to the letters written by Miller and Liu, the South East Ridge, Ridgeline and the Open Space Plan are important.

- Muñoz will order items in order of prioritization.

- Kinser mentioned the letters address item 5 (Lot coverage and interior courtyards) on the agenda.

- Salmon said she felt it was difficult to rate some items because OSEC may not be able to impact. Focus should be placed on top priorities and what can be accomplished.
- Fieldman felt that some categories should not be separate and the work plan should be redone.
- Hayuk agreed that the current work plan is unmanageable and some items are out of OSEC's reach to change.
- Kinser said the liaison would like to ask OSEC to work on the Energy Action Plan.
- Hayuk would like to know what OSEC has been tasked with to prioritize.
- Ebel feels it is important for OSEC to work on projects that are of personal interest, as well as what the city needs accomplished.

4. Levinson property and priority conservation status.

- Mountain Watch is working on the PCA application. They are touching base with surrounding cities to join.
- OSEC can also write a letter in support in addition to the resolution that council adopted.
- Salmon said OSEC should work on the preservation of the Levinson property. Grants applications and city support to acquire the land. Land is not currently for sale. The first step is to get PCA status.
- Kinser mentioned getting guidance from OSEC liaisons.
- Subcommittee for writing the letter of support for PCA status: Salmon and Fieldman.

5. Lot coverage and interior courtyards.

- Kinser said the language should be altered by the Planning Commission. The concept will be conveyed to City Council.
- Ebel and Salmon would like to give previous crafted language to the Planning Commission.
- Based on the letters written by Miller and Liu they agree with OSEC on this matter.

Review of the letters written by Miller and Liu:

- Hayuk would like to clarify the meaning of "Density Transfer", building more density lower, in the main part of town rather than high, to result in the same number of housing. Salmon said the acres are limited in housing that can be built, if you owned acres above and land below, you could preserve the acres and build twice as much below.

- Salmon said it is more critical to maintain the living habitat, rather than the visual beauty. Ridgelines are important habitat for the Calipee.

- Correction on Liu's letter to include interior courtyards in lot coverage.

6. Subcommittee status.

- There are a few subcommittees that have not been functional and need to be revived.

- Ebel and Salmon to revive the Education and Outreach Subcommittee.

- Green Building subcommittee, is waiting to see how the new codes are going to be implemented. Recommendations to council will be voted on.

- Sustainability Subcommittee: Fieldman

- Energy Strategy Subcommittee: Fieldman and Ebel.

- A list of subcommittees will be sent out via email.

7. Approval of the minutes.

- Minutes will be approved at the next meeting.

8. Meeting with OSEC liaisons for work plan review

Ebel read the questions to be addressed with the OSEC liaisons and dialogue ensued:

1. How to address pavement of backyards (yards) in Brisbane. Suggested from Ken Johnson to bring to council to then bring to the Planning Commission for review.

- Ebel mentioned there are a few properties with wall-to-wall pavement. Ebel would like direction from council.

- Kinser mentioned in the last meeting that OSEC was going to educate the public on needing grading permit and liability of properties that are downhill. There were 4 grading permits in one year.

- Liu said a letter can be addressed to council, which then can be given to the Planning Commission.

- Ebel said there is nothing in the Municode that prevents yards from being paved over, thus there is no enforcement mechanism. Next steps: Public education and write a letter to City Council. Ebel and Fieldman will draft the letter. Salmon added that commercial properties should be considered as well.

2. Can OSEC address land use issues with respect to the Energy Action Plan?

- Fieldman asked for guidance from the liaisons on how to proceed.
- Miller said Council would like for OSEC to complete this plan. The plan is needed to gain funding.
- Salmon would like a sample of completed plans and timeline. Abney would like a copy of Palo Alto's plan. Liu said it will be difficult to compare because Palo Alto has their own utility, not the right comparison for Brisbane.
- Fieldman said the previous attempts to complete a Climate Action plan was not successful. Miller said currently many things are being done that needs to be documented in the plan.
- Salmon would like to get information from the previous subcommittee. Miller will search for them. Adaptation conference gave out material on this topic as well.
- Fieldman asked if Council can require facilities to get an energy audit. Miller said this will have to be run by the City attorney.
- Kinser mentioned there is a working group in San Mateo County with consultant support for staff.

3. Will OSEC be looking at the General Plan and submitting comments?

- OSEC will be reviewing the General Plan. Miller mentioned there is a short definition of Sustainability in the 1994 General Plan.

4. Will OSEC review the Recology EIR?

- OSEC's role should provide high level policy direction, rather than read the document line by line.

5. Can OSEC add questions to the survey that will be going out about the Baylands?

- Miller is on the council subcommittee for this. A firm has been hired. Focus groups have been completed to determine what people know and don't know. It has been made clear that people do not know what sustainability is.
- Survey will go out after there is a variety of information available to the public.
- No questions have been composed yet. Spring 2015 is when the survey may go out.
- Hayuk suggested the length of the survey should not be long. Miller said a possibility is to have more than one survey.

6. Can the Levinson Property be acquired and preserved as a PCA? The current biological assessments are old on this property, can those be updated to determine the current state of the species and the (potential) habitat?

- Salmon would like to ask for council support that the Levinson property and the Peking-Handicraft properties are included in the PCA and acquiring Levinson property.

- Salmon said OSEC agreed last meeting on a motion to inform City Council about their interest in acquiring the Levinson property. Abney mentioned that the interest for acquiring is based upon availability of purchasing the property.

- Miller mentioned the Open Space Plan includes the upper part of the acres and not the lower part, it has development priority. Find out if Council members are comfortable with this. Last time this issue was mentioned was during the housing element, at the time the lower part was not included. Priorities have to be set for acquisitions, Miller thinks the priority is the SE Ridge due to critical habitat.

- Miller suggests having a public discussion about this with Council. Liu suggests writing a letter with policy recommendations.

- Salmon mentioned designating the Levinson property as a PCA does not mean that it will not be developed. There are no current maps that determine if the Levinson property will be included in the PCA. Liu mentioned the Baylands is both designated as a PDA and PCA, designation opens the property for grant funding.

- Salmon and Fieldman will write the letter to Council.

7. Bring interior courtyard/ lot coverage in the acres issue to the liaisons to discuss moving further with this issue or how to proceed.

- Salmon said the interior courtyards should count against floor area ratios. Salmon said this is contradictory to homes in the acres.

- Liu suggests writing a letter with a policy recommendation to council.

- Miller said the Planning Department will be getting more staff soon to address issues such as this.

- Liu asks staff how to proceed with this. Holstine said the Council as a whole will hear it. Council can then direct this to a subcommittee. Liu and Miller may create an ad hoc subcommittee to address this if other City Council members agree.

- The letter should address broader ecological issues.

- Salmon and Abney will form a subcommittee to write this letter.

Other questions addressed to city council members:

- Miller would like OSEC to educate the public on sustainability.
- Fieldman feels that the public should be informed on what sustainability is rather than focusing on the definition.
- Salmon would like to discuss next meeting.
- Ebel feels this could be a focus in the Education and Outreach subcommittee.
- Fieldman suggests presentations during the City Council meetings. Liu said the target audience may not be those who watch council meetings.
- Ebel would like to stock a shelf in the library with environmental documentaries and books.
- Abney asked for guidance from the liaisons on what to focus on. Hayuk would like to know what Liu and Miller's priorities are. Annually the committee should produce the following reports to council: Vegetation Management plan and Report of accomplishments.
- Miller said the Vegetation Management plan is preservation and care of acquired acres. This is done through the vegetation management plan. This is spelled out in the charge.
- Report of accomplishments. Strategy must be set on how to complete tasks on the work plan.
- OSEC members would like a copy of the past report of accomplishments and vegetation management plans. Fieldman said the Vegetation Management plan is approved by OSEC and a consultant writes it.
- Liu said the Sierra Club has a group called Cool Cities. The economic development subcommittee will meet with them to gauge interest. This may go through OSEC since it is about reducing carbon emissions.
- Liu suggests Wetlands restoration work.
- Liu suggests Green Building Ordinance subcommittee.
- Liu suggests working on solar panel bulk purchases for commercial and residential (Energy plan).
- Rain barrel rebates. This information was at the Community Festival, Muñoz will give information to the rest of the committee members.

- Sea level rise task force. Dave Pine and Jacky Speier. Creates vulnerability assessment and funding. Looking for technical backgrounds to attend meetings.
- Miller and Liu offered to look at OSEC's revised work plan when it is complete.

9. Adjournment

- Meeting adjourned at 9:20 PM.