

CITY OF CUPERTINO SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION

Environmental Education Center, 22221 McClellan Road

Thursday, January 16, 2020 4:00 p.m.

SPECIAL MEETING

MINUTES

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

At 4:20 p.m. Chair Weber called the meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Anna Weber, Gary Latshaw, Angela Chen, Meera Ramanathan (arrived @ 5:07 p.m.).

Absent: Vignesh Swaminathan.

Staff: André Duurvoort, Sustainability Manager; Gilee Corral, Climate and Utilities Analyst; Vanessa Shin, CivicSpark AmeriCorps Fellow.

Guests: Member of the public.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Draft minutes of December 19, 2019 meeting were reviewed. Vice Chair Latshaw moved and Commissioner Chen seconded to approve the minutes. The motion carried unanimously with Commissioners Ramanathan and Swaminathan absent.

POSTPONEMENTS - None.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – None.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

Chair Weber noted the Written Communications attached to the agenda related to item #4.

OLD BUSINESS

2. Subject: Sustainability Speaker Series planning

Staff reviewed the Sunnyvale Sustainability Commission's ideas on collaborating on an event for FY 2020/21: California's Carbon Neutral Future (proposed speaker Jared Blumenfield, CalEPA) and What Moves You - Active, Shared and Electric Transportation (proposed speaker Jeff Tumlin, Nelson Nygaard Consulting). The Commission asked clarifying questions.

Chair Weber opened public comment and the following individual spoke:

Eric (Cupertino resident) talked about inviting a speaker from a corporation that has pledged carbon neutrality, i.e. Sam Arons. He offered to connect the Commission with contacts. Commissioners asked clarifying questions.

Chair Weber closed public comment and the Commission discussed the topic; issues / ideas included:

- Preference for the Carbon Neutral Future idea (Weber).
- Transform CA, nonprofit promoting transit, will be speaking on Feb. 12th at 7:00 pm at San José Library, West Valley Branch (Latshaw).
- Various suggestions: meatless diets, greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction policy, arctic threats, etc. (Latshaw, distributed written comments).
- Staff noted that the Speaker Series Work Program item was fulfilled for FY20 and the Commission could opt to skip a second event. The Commission briefly discussed this option.
- Tie to reach code, i.e. induction cooking, electrification and transportation (Weber).
- Link to Cupertino lifestyle: electric cars, reach code, garbage reduction / Recology contract; short presentations by different speakers on sustainability the Cupertino way (Chen).

Sustainability Manager André Duurvoort suggested involving staff to speak on topics related to Cupertino. General agreement on this approach. Chair Weber nominated Commissioner Chen, and Commissioner Chen nominated Vice Chair Latshaw to serve on a subcommittee to plan the event.

Commissioner Chen moved and Chair Weber seconded to form a subcommittee to plan the second Sustainability Speaker Series event for FY20 with the theme of “Sustainability the Cupertino Way,” with Vice Chair Latshaw and Commissioner Chen as subcommittee members. The motion carried unanimously with Commissioners Ramanathan and Swaminathan absent.

The Sustainability Speaker Series Subcommittee will bring ideas for discussion at the next Commission meeting.

3. Subject: Green Building Ordinance and options for addressing emissions impact of concrete in construction

Duurvoort gave a presentation on Cupertino’s Green Building Ordinance (GBO), building electrification reach code progression, and next steps with the GBO Commission Work Program item; topics covered included:

- Reach code expected to be adopted on Jan. 21 with enforcement estimated to begin March 1.
- Council expressed a desire to have a discussion on the GBO specifically.
- Staff requests that the Commission discuss the GBO and give a specific recommendation to Council, considering whether to keep the GBO as is or suggest policy alterations.
- (Commissioner Ramanathan arrived at 5:07).
- Staff’s position is to keep the GBO as is, noting that it is currently strong and addresses multiple items by requiring third-party rating, i.e. LEED for commercial buildings and Green Point Rated for multifamily. Duurvoort noted one option could be to require single family and small commercial to meet a higher CALGreen standard or third-party certification, as these two sectors are currently only required to meet CALGreen minimum code.
- Reviewed neighboring cities’s green building policies, i.e. Palo Alto, Sunnyvale, Oakland.
- Staff will bring the item back to the Commission at a later date for discussion and request a formal recommendation at this time. Duurvoort recommended the Commission establish a subcommittee to address the topic in the meantime.

Commissioners asked clarifying questions on the subcommittee formation, permitting process / LEED certification process, cost implications and GHG impact of increasing LEED requirement to higher levels, how embedded carbon is addressed.

Chair Weber opened public comment and the following individual spoke:

Eric (Cupertino resident) talked about his concern of increasing stringency of the code vs benefit and his desire for an incentive-based approach rather than new requirements for new buildings.

Chair Weber closed public comment.

Commissioner Ramanathan moved to form a subcommittee to study the Green Building Ordinance topic. The Commissioners briefly discussed the motion. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Latshaw and carried unanimously with Commissioner Swaminathan absent.

A brief discussion followed on selecting the members of the subcommittee, with general agreement on Commissioners Ramanathan and Swaminathan, pending Swaminathan's consent.

Vice Chair Latshaw moved and Commissioner Chen seconded to nominate Commissioners Ramanathan and Swaminathan for the Green Building Ordinance Subcommittee. The motion carried unanimously with Commissioner Swaminathan absent.

Staff will connect with the Green Building Ordinance Subcommittee to begin discussion on the topic and plan to bring a consultant to review it with the Commission at a future meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

4. Subject: Letter in support of efforts to restore the Arctic

Vice Chair Latshaw gave an overview of the topic and context for the discussion; themes from his presentation included:

- Scientists are discussing geoengineering and other options to restore the Arctic ice.
- In about thirty years, nearly all of the Arctic ice will be lost. Warming increases when ice disappears.
- Melting in tundra locations is producing unexpected bursts of methane release.
- The draft resolution / letter would urge the U.S. government to aggressively implement an international program of research to restore the Arctic sea ice.

Gilee Corral advised Commissioners to consider the purview and scope of the Commission, alignment with the Commission Work Program, and how the issue affects Cupertino when deciding whether or not to take this issue on as a Commission. The Commission discussed these and other related items, including:

- Could re-draft the resolution to draw a clear line between the Commission's recommendation and the County of Santa Clara's work on this issue (Ramanathan).
- Vice Chair Latshaw asked if he could approach Council directly on this issue; Corral answered this is always an option available as a private citizen.

Vice Chair Latshaw moved and Commissioner Ramanathan seconded to continue the discussion on the Arctic sea ice issue to the next meeting. The motion carried unanimously with Commissioner Swaminathan absent.

STAFF AND COMMISSION REPORTS

Staff updates:

- Duurvoort will be on paternity leave from the end of February through most of March.
- Earth & Arbor Day Festival is April 18; staff will email partner registration invite to Commissioners for distributing to their networks. The Festival was added to the next meeting's agenda by consensus.
- State of the City address on Wednesday, January 29, 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Quinlan Community Center.
- CREST Awards nominations are being accepted through Feb. 21; Commissioners may not nominate candidates but are encouraged to share the announcement with their networks.
- Building reach codes 2nd Reading going to Council on Jan. 21; Commissioners encouraged to attend.

Commission updates:

- Chair Weber will be absent at the next meeting. She requested the Commission to consider rotating Commissioners to attend the Mayor's Monthly Meeting instead of only sending the Chair.
- Staff noted that Chair and Vice Chair elections would be held at the next meeting (pending completion of the appointment process).
- Chair Weber and Commissioners Ramanathan and Swaminathan have applied for reappointment. Commissioner Chen has applied for the Audit Committee.

ADJOURNMENT- 6:26 p.m.