

CITY OF CUPERTINO SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION

Environmental Education Center, 22221 McClellan Road

Thursday, February 20, 2020 4:00 p.m.

**SPECIAL MEETING**

**MINUTES**

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

At 4:06 p.m. Vice Chair Latshaw called the meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ROLL CALL**

Commissioners Present: Gary Latshaw, Vignesh Swaminathan, Ram Mohan, Meera Ramanathan (arrived @ 4:07 p.m.). Absent: Anna Weber.

Staff: Ursula Syrova, Environmental Programs Manager; Gilee Corral, Climate and Utilities Analyst.

Guests: John Zirelli, General Manager, Recology; members of the public.

**1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The approval of the January 16, 2020 minutes was postponed, as Commissioners Swaminathan and Mohan were not present at the January meeting and indicated an intention to abstain from approving the minutes.

**POSTPONEMENTS** - None.

**ORAL COMMUNICATIONS**

Samikshaa Natarajan, representing the Cupertino Teen Commission, introduced herself; Teen Commissioners are visiting other Cupertino commission meetings.

**WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS**

Staff noted written communications submitted by Councilmember Liang Chao.

Vice Chair Latshaw requested moving the Recology discussion to the top of the agenda. Commissioner Swaminathan moved and Commissioner Ramanathan seconded to move item #5 before Old Business, resuming in order thereafter. The motion carried unanimously with Chair Weber absent.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**5. Subject: Update from Public Works Environmental Programs Division staff on plans for a new franchise agreement with Recology**

Ursula Syrova gave a brief update on the Recology agreement. Council approved the removal of the Household Hazardous Waste program from the current agreement and a rate increase to accommodate increase in costs. Syrova indicated staff's plan to request from Council formal authorization to negotiate a renewal of the Recology agreement, which expires in January 2021. She requested the Commission's feedback

on this plan. The alternative would be to look for a new hauler. The Commission asked clarifying questions on multiple topics, including:

- Split cart as an option for organics, how addressed in the contract (Swaminathan): staff noted this could be up for discussion, although the current set up for organics is working well at this time. John Zirelli with Recology noted pros and cons to the options for split vs single compartment organics carts.
- How Cupertino's set up compares to other cities (Mohan): Zirelli answered that 90% have a three-cart system; Sunnyvale and Mountain View use split carts for organics because they use the SMaRT Station.
- Concerns of recycling going to landfill (Ramanathan): Staff have plans to increase outreach on recycling to avoid contamination; acknowledged that this could be an argument for split cart for recyclables.
- SB 1383 (Latshaw): Staff clarified facts about this bill, noting its purpose to reduce methane and keep organics out of the landfill.
- Other topics: ability to handle increased load, compostable bags, SMaRT Station consideration, maximum truck length, etc.

The Commission briefly discussed how single use plastics are being addressed; staff are part of a Bay Area working group to draft a model single use foodware ordinance; this effort unrelated to the Recology agreement.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **2. Subject: Letter in support of efforts to restore the Arctic**

Vice Chair Latshaw gave a brief update: he informed the Commission about a talk he will be giving on this subject on Monday evening; distributed written communications. He spoke with Councilmembers on this issue. One option is for the Council to issue a proclamation requesting the federal government to address restoration of the Arctic. Mayor Scharf will discuss the issue with the City Manager. Commissioners asked clarifying questions and briefly discussed the options. Topics raised included:

- More interest among politicians on the topic, i.e. County Supervisor Cortese.
- VTA the first transit agency to declare a climate emergency (Swaminathan).
- Santa Clara County's work on the topic.
- Include in the proclamation or statement how Arctic melting affects the community, i.e. infrastructure, economics (Ramanathan).
- Address possible response to the issue (Mohan).

The Commission added this item to Future Agenda Setting list for consideration.

### **3. Subject: Sustainability Speaker Series planning**

Commissioner Mohan volunteered to take the place of former Commissioner Chen and join Vice Chair Latshaw on the Sustainability Speaker Series Subcommittee. Vice Chair Latshaw moved and Commissioner Swaminathan seconded to approve Commissioner Mohan as a member of the Sustainability Speaker Series Subcommittee. The motion carried unanimously with Chair Weber absent.

Vice Chair Latshaw acknowledged the written communications on this item and noted that the Subcommittee could take it in consideration. Commissioner Swaminathan suggested considering Rod Diridon as a speaker on climate change. Gilee Corral offered to attend the Subcommittee's first meeting.

## **NEW BUSINESS (continued)**

### **4. Subject: Welcome new Commissioner Ram Mohan, Thank you outgoing Commissioner Angela Chen**

The Commission welcomed its newest member, Ram Mohan, who gave a brief overview of his background and interests, highlighting his 30+ years as a Cupertino resident and leadership in the hydrogen and fuel cells industry. Staff passed around a card for Angela Chen acknowledging her service to the Commission.

### **6. Subject: Chair and Vice Chair Elections**

Commissioner Ramanathan nominated Vice Chair Latshaw for the position of Chair and the Commission discussed this briefly. Commissioner Ramanathan moved and Commissioner Swaminathan seconded to elect Vice Chair Latshaw as Chair of the Commission for a term ending January 30, 2021. The motion carried unanimously with Commissioner Chen absent.

Commissioner Swaminathan nominated himself for the position of Vice Chair. Commissioner Ramanathan moved and Chair Latshaw seconded to elect Commissioner Swaminathan as Vice Chair of the Commission for a term ending January 30, 2021. The motion carried unanimously with Commissioner Chen absent.

### **7. Subject: Earth & Arbor Day tabling and planning**

Corral requested the Commission to consider tabling activities and giveaways for the upcoming Earth & Arbor Day Festival on April 18<sup>th</sup>. The Commission briefly discussed giveaways ideas, including continuing with LED nightlights but adding colored lights, reusable cutlery or straws, aerators, solar batter chargers, etc. The Commission asked the public if they had any thoughts on the subject. A member of the public suggested staying with LED nightlights if they were successful in the past.

Commissioners discussed possible tabling activities, including water-based games, waste sorting, etc. Commissioner Ramanathan asked if the green grant winners would be acknowledged and Corral affirmed plans to have the Commissioners acknowledge the students from the stage at the festival.

## **STAFF AND COMMISSION REPORTS**

### **Commission updates:**

- Vice Chair Swaminathan reported on the VTA climate emergency declaration; answered clarifying questions.
- Commissioner Ramanathan reported that Councilmember Chao reached out to her about how the Commission could assist with outreach on the City's SB 54 letter of support.
- The Green Building Ordinance Subcommittee will schedule its first meeting with the Sustainability Manager.

### **Staff updates:**

- Noted invitation Commissioners received to a symposium.
- Reminded Commissioners of protocol related to the Brown Act, answered clarifying questions.
- Noted Councilmember Chao's email to the Commission re City support letter associated with SB 54.
- Reminder to email staff photos / bio for the website.
- Deadline for CREST awards nominations is Feb. 21.

- Sustainability Division newsletter went to email listserv Feb. 12.

## **FUTURE AGENDA SETTING**

The Commission briefly discussed items for the next Commission meeting and Corral projected notes on the screen. The Commission agreed to the items on the screen, wording reflected below:

- Proclamation or resolution on restoration of the Arctic
- Earth Day (continued)
- April Special meeting – cancel or keep
- Single use plastics – inquiry on outreach

A motion was made by Vice Chair Swaminathan and seconded by Chair Latshaw to include the items as listed above to the agenda for the March 19 regular Commission meeting. After a brief unrelated discussion, the motion carried unanimously with Commissioner Weber absent.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

A motion to adjourn was made by Vice Chair Swaminathan and seconded by Chair Latshaw. The motion carried unanimously with Commissioner Weber absent. Meeting adjourned at 5:56 p.m.