

# CITY OF CUPERTINO SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION

Teleconference meeting without a physical location.

Thursday, March 18, 2021 4:00 p.m.

## SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

At 4:02 p.m. Vice Chair Mohan called the meeting to order.

### ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Chair Vignesh Swaminathan (arrived @ 4:34 p.m.), Vice Chair Ram Mohan, and Commissioners Gary Latshaw, Meera Ramanathan, and Anna Weber.

Staff: Kirsten Squarcia, City Clerk; Ursula Syrova, Environmental Programs Manager; Nicole Lee, Environmental Programs Assistant; Manpreet Chandok, Intern; Gilee Corral, Climate and Utilities Analyst.

Guests: Members of the public.

Vice Chair Mohan read a statement regarding provisions of the Brown Act and an Executive Order issued by the Governor to facilitate teleconferencing to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission at public meetings.

Staff requested to reorder the agenda to move Item #4 after Item #2. Commissioner Latshaw moved and Commissioner Weber seconded to reorder the agenda items as requested. The motion carried unanimously with Chair Swaminathan absent.

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

#### 1. Subject: Minutes from January 21, 2021 meeting

Draft minutes of January 21, 2021 meeting were reviewed. Vice Chair Mohan moved and Commissioner Latshaw seconded to approve the minutes. The motion carried unanimously with Chair Swaminathan absent.

### POSTPONEMENTS

None.

### ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

None.

### WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

None.

### OLD BUSINESS

None.

### STAFF AND COMMISSION REPORTS

**Staff updates:** Gilee Corral, Staff Liaison, briefly reviewed the 2021 Earth and Arbor Day website and events featured, including community activities, challenges, and a speaker series. The speaker series will be 17 pre-recorded videos, including a welcome from Commissioner Ramanathan. An Eventbrite link will be added April 1 for residents to register for the event and be entered to win a raffle prize. Sponsorships of \$450 are

available. CivicSpark AmeriCorps Fellow Brendan Norton presented his volunteer opportunity in the community, Clean City Green City. There will be a webinar to on April 1 to kick off the event.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **2. Subject: Training on Commissioner Handbook approved by City Council on January 19, 2021**

City Clerk Kirsten Squarcia presented a training on the newly adopted Commissioner's Handbook. Subjects covered included:

- Roles of the Commission, staff, and Council
- Key highlights of the Brown Act related to conducting meetings, agendas, and public participation
- Overview of the Political Reform Act and reminder to submit Form 700 disclosure (due April 1)
- Rosenberg's Rules of Order
- City Work Program
- Cupertino Ethics Policy and reminder for Commissioners to attend online ethics training
- City Email policy

The Commission asked clarifying questions and gave comments, including:

- Clarify what constitutes "city business" (Weber). City Clerk Squarcia: anything that might come before the Commission for deliberation. Ok to talk about scheduling.
- Expression of thanks to the City Clerk for her clear and useful presentation (Mohan, Ramanathan).

Chair Swaminathan arrived at 4:34 p.m. and resumed Chair duties.

### **4. Subject: Update from Public Works Environmental Division staff on FY 2020-21 City Work Program item on development of single-use plastics ordinance**

Ursula Syrova, Environmental Programs Manager, presented an update on the ordinance development. The Santa Clara County Technical Advisory Committee completed a model ordinance in 2020. She acknowledged Eva Holman from Upstream, a partner in the work of the ordinance development, in the attendee list. Syrova reviewed elements of the model ordinance, including an opt in requirement for disposable accessories. Her presentation included purpose of pursuing an ordinance, overview of single-use food ware products, the regional model ordinance process, and policy options for consideration. Nicole Lee, Environmental Programs Assistant, reviewed outreach plans. Manpreet Chandok, Intern, presented her fieldwork surveying local businesses.

Topics from the presentation included:

- Increase in use of single-use items during COVID shutdown
- Specific language in the model ordinance by material type, i.e. fiber-based food ware, bioplastics
- Reusable to-go ware, dishwashing services vs requiring dishwasher installation
- Staff are tracking how different jurisdictions are landing on their local ordinances
- Overview of outreach plan for engaging various groups using an inclusive approach
- Survey of ten local stores on compliance with single-use plastic grocery bag ordinance and materials used for food ware

Syrova plans to bring a recommendation to the Commission for discussion in the summer, a request for a recommendation to Council in the fall, with the aim for Council adoption of the new ordinance in January 2022.

The Commission asked clarifying questions and gave comments:

- General expression of appreciation for the quality of presentation.
- State considering multiple actions on plastics, how this coordinates with our local efforts, if Recology is working on policy (Latshaw). Syrova: her team is tracking the state legislation. She is checking in with Greenwaste on the #3 – 7 plastics and market for long term recyclability. #1 and #2 are still marketable. Confirmed Recology was working on a bill. Latshaw will provide specific policy references for her tracking list.
- Dishwashing temperature for illness prevention and communicating this (Ramanathan). Syrova: food safety regulations that cover commercial dishwashers also cover COVID safety.
- If company cafeterias are covered in the model ordinance, if exemption for homeless services (Ramanathan). Syrova: Company cafeterias will be part of the policy discussion. Noted the issue of food banks and houseless services would be part of the discussion as well.
- Noting the opportunity for innovation through this project, if there are best practices, pilots, or contests to emulate (Mohan). Syrova: noted that Berkeley, San Francisco, Alameda, Palo Alto have done some work.
- If masks or other single use items being considered, items given out for free (Swaminathan). Syrova: noted City is collecting disposable employee masks and gloves for recycling via Terracycle. Currently the scope of the model ordinance is limited to food ware.

Chair Swaminathan opened public comment and the following individual spoke:

- Eva Holman with Upstream spoke about restaurants reopening as an opportunity to shift to reusables for onsite dining. She noted examples of work in the reusables space by Santa Rosa and Genentech. Mentioned Styrofoam tray ban in San Francisco. Supports Cupertino implementing food ware and reuse policy.

Chair Swaminathan expressed concern about single use masks and gloves ending up in inlets and gutters would be interested to hear about best practices to address this. Commissioner Latshaw noted the high level of attention on the issue at the state level and potential for Cupertino to arrive at more aggressive policy.

### **3. Subject: Review submitted nomination for 2021 CREST Awards Sustainability Champion of the Year**

Corral briefly reviewed the nomination for the 2021 Sustainability Champion of the Year. Commissioner Latshaw abstained from the discussion and vote.

The Commission made comments, including:

- Cupertino Youth Climate Action Team (CYCAT) helps youth to find their voices and learn about policy, giving high schoolers a change to make a difference (Weber).
- CYCAT as an organization has grown, learned about decision-making process, have used their direction and feedback as a Commission, great to support the next generation (Swaminathan).

Commissioner Weber moved and Vice Chair Mohan seconded to select the Cupertino Youth Climate Action Team as the 2021 CREST Awards Sustainability Champion of the Year. Commissioner Ramanathan noted her “yes” vote was because there are no other nominees, and expressed her appreciation for CYCAT. The motion passed unanimously with Commissioner Latshaw abstaining.

## **FUTURE AGENDA SETTING**

Chair Swaminathan noted that there are five openings in the VTA citizens advisory commission.

The Commission discussed changes and additions to the Future Agenda Setting List:

- Add education and marketing for Zero Emissions Vehicles (ZEV) (Mohan). Potential to create a subcommittee to address (Swaminathan).
- Regarding the carbon fee and dividend subject, Commissioner Latshaw noted that he submitted written communications to City Council when this subject was raised by Citizens Climate Lobby. Does not support Cupertino getting involved on this federal legislation.
- Add discussion on barriers to home electrification, guidelines on cost and streamlining the process (Latshaw).

The Commission discussed these ideas, removed items, and added new items. Staff answered clarifying questions. Commissioner Ramanathan suggested announcing the Sustainability Champion of the Year Award during the Earth and Arbor Day Speaker Series.

The Commission agreed to amend the future agenda setting list to read as follows:

- Sustainability Grants for Students / essay contest
- Discuss hosting a public workshop on carbon reduction ideas
- Discuss 2021 Earth & Arbor Day event ideas
- Zero Emission Vehicles discussion
- Building electrification discussion

A motion was made by Vice Chair Mohan and seconded by Commissioner Latshaw to approve the Future Agenda Setting list as reflected above. The motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Latshaw announced an upcoming presentation from the Sierra Club on building electrification on Wednesday at 7 p.m.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Latshaw and seconded by Vice Chair Mohan. The motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 6:01 p.m.