



APPROVED

City of Lake Oswego Natural Resources Advisory Board Minutes

December 19, 2007

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Sarah Asby called the Natural Resources Advisory Board meeting of December 19, 2007 to order at 6:39 p.m. in the West End Building, 4010 Kruse Way, Lake Oswego, Oregon.

Members present besides Chair Asby were Craig Diamond, William Gaar, Nancy Gronowski, Douglas Rich, Stephanie Wagner and Rishi Rajani (student member). Vice Chair Morgan Holen was excused.

Staff present were Jonna Papaefthimiou, Natural Resources Planner; David Gilbey, Water Quality Coordinator; Kevin McCaleb, Water Conservation Specialist, and Natalie Strom, Parks Natural Resources Coordinator.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Minutes of September 19, 2007 were approved by unanimous agreement. The Minutes of October 17, 2007 were modified to identify a speaker and then approved by unanimous agreement.

IV. ANNOUNCEMENTS/UPDATES FROM BOARD MEMBERS

Ms. Papaefthimiou reported the City Council had postponed their consideration of a community forestry plan until January 2008. She reported the Council had considered creating a new sustainability advisory board; a number of consultants had described similar boards in other jurisdictions; and staff was preparing a report of related options – including the Natural Resources Advisory Board (NRAB) proposal - for the City Council to consider at a January 2008 work session.

Mr. Rich related that the Palisades Neighborhood Association had formed a Sustainability Team to identify neighborhood priorities and projects that could move the area in a “greener” direction. He announced that the neighborhood also planned to hold a Styrofoam recycling event in early January. He anticipated that Palisades would challenge other neighborhoods to address sustainability. He confirmed they would welcome participation by high school students. *Craig Diamond joined the meeting.

V. REGULAR BUSINESS

Presentation and Q&A Regarding the City's Water Quality Efforts

David Gilbey, Water Quality Coordinator, explained his responsibilities related to the City's Municipal Separate Stormwater/Sewer System (MS-4) Permit and total maximum daily load (TMDL) related activities. He discussed ways the NRAB could help. He said the fine for disposing of hazardous materials in the City system was not sufficient and the Board could support a Code change that would increase the fine. He advised that the current Code prohibited disposal of hazardous materials into City storm drains, but the base fine was only \$100. Mr. Gilbey reported that he had recently spent 20 to 30 hours and paid \$3,500 to an on-call clean up contractor to arrange for clean up and disposal of paint that had been illegally poured into a catch basin. He recalled that the City had cited seven or eight violators during the previous year.

Mr. Gilbey anticipated that the City's Stormwater Management Plan update would be drafted by June 2008 and he said he would forward the draft plan to the NRAB for their comments. He explained that the City followed state TMDL implementation models, which showed the maximum amount of pollutants (such as phosphorus) that could be discharged into a water body before that body exceeded state water quality standards. He advised that the 2003 Tualatin Basin TMDL plan (which addressed what came through pipes) needed to be updated based on better studies about phosphorus sources. He said a Willamette River TMDL implementation plan (which addressed both piped and non-piped pollutants) was to be done by March 2008. He suggested the NRAB could comment on those plans. He explained that the Willamette River TMDL addressed temperature and bacteria and would soon also address mercury levels. He said the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) had found that the bacteria level in Springbrook Creek had to be reduced by 80%, so the City needed to determine best practices to address that. He clarified that a Clean Water Services study determined that 50% of the bacteria was coming from birds and 15% from canines. He advised that much of the mercury came from the soil, and natural cinnabar formations in the Willamette River, but it was not toxic until bacteria metholated it. He said the DEQ planned to develop a model mercury TMDL implementation plan by 2011, after they studied how mercury accumulated and moved and its major sources.

Mr. Gilbey invited Board members to volunteer to help educate the public during "naturescaping" workshops, "green lawn" presentations, and Canines for Clean Water campaign events, such as one he anticipated during the opening of the new dog park. He reported studies of aquatic insects showed water quality in City streams had gotten worse in recent years because there was an increase in bugs that were very tolerant to erosion. He said the City had to find out why. He said NRAB support for an erosion control program would be important. He said the Board could help promote a program that recognized developers who incorporated stormwater control facilities into art. Mr. Gilbey recalled the NRAB members were interested in how different city programs integrated. He observed that the urban forest helped control stormwater, and water conservation reduced nitrogen entry into a watershed. He said the NRAB could help the public understand that a low-impact runoff control facility like a rain garden was better than a stormwater vault.

During the questioning period, Mr. Gilbey confirmed that Planning Department and Parks and Recreation Department staff consulted each other regarding natural resources issues. He suggested NRAB members could volunteer to conduct tours of the City's Green Streets project after it was completed.

Kevin McCaleb, Water Conservation Specialist, reported the City had recently submitted a water conservation plan to the state. He anticipated that he would seek NRAB support for future related Code revisions intended to implement the plan after the City Council adopted it. He said he had been surprised to find that the City was not listed as one of the top ten city water users; he planned to find a more accurate way to track City water use; and he planned to recommend that the City install waterless urinals, low flush toilets and faucets with timers on them. He reported that water levels of some local streams were highest during the driest months of the year.

The Board asked staff to let the NRAB participate in the process of fashioning plans and proposals. Mr. McCaleb confirmed that was his intention. He also thought they could help design educational articles and publicize water conservation efforts, including the City service of auditing irrigation and plumbing systems and its effort to make the public aware of ways to avoid unnecessary irrigation. Chair Asby related that she served on the Water Conservation Committee and they had recommended that the plan address graywater use, but it did not. Mr. McCaleb cautioned that his experience was that water users sometimes could not manage their irrigation system, and those people would also be challenged to properly manage gray water to prevent it from getting into the stormwater system. Chair Asby clarified the Committee recommended allowing gray water to be used in flush toilets and not for irrigation of lawns. She offered to send Mr. Caleb a copy of the letter the Committee had submitted to the City. He said he could support such a closed system if the state allowed it.

Mr. McCaleb said he wanted to find incentives for people who used a "rain garden" and "naturescaping" to distribute water around a properly contoured yard. He said he wanted to ensure that staff would be able to offer developers assistance and expedited help making such plans. He stressed the relationship between water management and community forestry was that a full size tree could absorb thousands of gallons of water a week and would have deeper roots (thus be at less risk of blow down) if it were not over-watered. The Board anticipated it would become easier to "sell" water conservation efforts after the new water billing system raised rates. Chair Asby and Mr. Gaar offered to continue to serve as NRAB liaisons to the water conservation and clean streams advisory groups and to submit comments to staff. Rishi Rajani suggested students could get involved in the educational effort. Mr. McCaleb offered to speak to any neighborhood association that invited him and to the Tryon Watershed Council.

Discussion of a Water Related Goal

This discussion was postponed.

Presentation and Q&A on City Natural Area Parks Efforts

Natalie Strom, Parks Natural Resources Coordinator, presented a plan for managing Cooks Butte Park. She explained it made sense to start with that park because it was a

good place for doing habitat restoration, as it was square shaped, with few “edge” affects. She said it was also a relatively large park in good enough condition that restoration activity would produce obvious, short-term results. She reported that she had just come from the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board (PRAB) meeting and that body seemed to be leaning toward making a Cooks Butte management plan a PRAB goal and asking the City Council for funding for contracted help.

During the questioning period, Ms. Strom explained she had not recommended Iron Mountain Park because it would be easier to achieve short term success at Cooks Butte Park. NRAB members recalled theirs was a broader goal to fashion an overall management plan and budget for City-owned natural areas. That would include a comprehensive, “informing,” vision statement that described how the City benefited from maintaining and enhancing natural spaces; the appropriate approach to accomplish that; and related implementation policies. Ms. Gronowski advised that a Douglas fir forest had to be treated differently than an “Oak bottom” forest. Ms. Wagner gave an example of “approach,” which was “to protect the ‘best’ first.” Mr. Diamond said he liked the idea of starting with a project that would be very successful.

Ms. Strom clarified that PRAB was talking about setting a goal to adopt a management scheme and apply it to a “test” park. NRAB members suggested that Springbrook Park, which already had an adopted management plan, might be an appropriate place to start. The members saw a need for NRAB and PRAB goals to be better coordinated. They did not favor a “piecemeal” approach to natural area maintenance. They wanted to establish an overarching, long-range strategy first. Chair Asby suggested forming a subcommittee to begin working on that, which might also include some PRAB members. She agreed to discuss that with the PRAB chair. Ms. Gronowski and Ms. Wagner volunteered to serve on the subcommittee. Board members explained to Ms. Strom that they were not rejecting her effort, but they wanted it to be part of a broader strategy, and they generally agreed it had been a good decision to start with a park with the best chance of success. They anticipated they would ask for related funding and compare what they requested with the cost of the City’s Green Streets project. They planned to formally set NRAB goals at their January meeting.

Community Forestry Goal

Vice Chair Holen was not present to present her draft of the Community Forestry goal. The Board anticipated they would hear it at their next meeting. Mr. Gaar offered to draft language for a “water-related” goal. Chair Asby observed the goal of a management plan for natural areas should also call for funding. Ms. Wagner suggested it should call for funding the Cooks Butte Park project. Mr. Gaar suggested keeping the goal to establish a sustainability advisory board until the NRAB was sure the City Council had decided to do that and he offered to draft such a goal. The Board members anticipated their goals statement would stress the connection between water conservation and tree conservation programs and the need for public education and awareness of natural resource issues.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

The next meeting was scheduled for January 16, 2008. There being no further business Chair Asby adjourned the meeting at 8:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jonna Papaefthimiou /s/
Jonna Papaefthimiou
Natural Resources Planner