



City of Lake Oswego Natural Resources Advisory Board Minutes

APPROVED

January 21, 2009

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Morgan Holen called the Natural Resources Advisory Board meeting of Wednesday, January 21, 2009 to order at approximately 6:30 p.m. at the West End Building, 4010 Kruse Way, Lake Oswego, Oregon.

Members present were Chair Morgan Holen, Vice Chair William Gaar*, Denise Dailey, Nancy Gronowski, Shawn Howard, Douglas Rich, Stephanie Wagner and Rishi Rajani (student member).

Staff present were Jonna Papaefthimiou, Staff Liaison/Natural Resources Planner; Nathalie Strom, Parks Natural Resources Coordinator and Aulani Johnson, AmeriCorps.

II. MINUTES

The Minutes of October 15, 2008, were **approved** by unanimous agreement.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

IV. ANNOUNCEMENTS/UPDATES

A contact information sheet was circulated so members could notate any changes.

*Vice Chair Gaar joined the meeting.

V. REGULAR BUSINESS

Native Plant Propagation Program – Information and Opportunities to Participate

Aulani Johnson, AmeriCorps worker, presented the Native Plant Propagation Program. He said the program propagated diverse native species collected in the Willamette Valley. Propagated plants would be offered to neighborhood associations and other groups to plant in restoration projects. He said the Parks and Recreation Department had provided an area at Luscher Farm for raised beds, a hoop house, and pallet space. The hoop house needed to be rebuilt because winter weather had damaged it. He said the program would rely on volunteer labor and “cultivator sponsorships” for materials and funding. The first event was to be the following Saturday when the Youth Action

Coalition potted cuttings he had collected. Mr. Johnson said his experience included propagating plants at the National Botanical Gardens in Hawaii and other nurseries. He said a typical project would require about 100 plants. He advised that bare root material had the best “payoff” because it had a better survival rate and required less labor because it did not need as much watering. His timeline anticipated the program would propagate about 10,000 plants this year. He said the program needed \$800 startup funding for a new hoop house. A local nursery had donated used pots.

When asked, Mr. Johnson confirmed that he planned to fashion a two-year operating budget. The board considered how they might use the program to accomplish their educational goal. They noted the City only had two more years of help from AmeriCorps workers. Ms. Strom hoped she could recruit volunteers from local nurseries or the City would hire a full time employee to run the program after that. Mr. Johnson said he believed that even if the program ended after two years it would have accomplished something. He said the program would benefit the City because the City would no longer have to buy restoration project plants and it would have the right plants with a strong root structure for erosion control. It was suggested the program could sell some plants at the Farmers Market and conduct workshops. Board members suggested asking a few local businesses to donate the startup money to get their company names in the news, and they suggested the schools might get involved because each elementary school had money budgeted for environmental education programs.

Some members worried that the effort spent on this program might interfere with the AmeriCorps worker’s other work and the Natural Resources Advisory Board’s (NRAB) other goal related to natural areas management. However, Mr. Johnson explained that he was working on this program during winter down time, and he planned to continue inventorying natural areas, which would take about 25%-30% of his time in the spring. He said he wanted to keep the project small scale so it did not compete with a nursery or Metro activities, and he would incorporate an educational component. He would hold potting and seed collecting events, which would not cost much. So far, the Parks and Recreation Department had invested \$40 in the program and provided the site.

Members observed the program would be very visible to citizens, help them learn what they could do in their own backyards, provide plant stock for their yards, kids could see how propagation worked, and it fit the NRAB mission. They asked Ms. Strom to find out where donations should be sent. Mr. Johnson offered to update the board at the next NRAB meeting.

Clean Streams Update – Process and Comment Opportunities

Ms. Papaefthimiou reported that staff had considered the feedback they got at a December Council discussion of the Clean Streams Plan and made minor changes in the document and edited it for clarity. The City Council planned to discuss it again in study sessions before they scheduled a hearing. She suggested the NRAB might offer their comments at the study sessions. Vice Chair Gaar noted that Jonathan Snell had circulated an email expressing some concerns about the plan. Vice Chair Gaar’s initial observation had been that it was more of a list of specific capital projects than a

management plan with regulatory teeth, but he offered to examine the document more closely and report back to the board at their next meeting.

Report on Presentation of Goals to City Council

Chair Holen reported that she had presented the NRAB's accomplishments and goals to the City Council. She reported that Councilor Olson had seemed very supportive of funding natural area management and Councilor Jordan had suggested the NRAB could have a presence at the Farmers Market to educate residents about tree maintenance, what to do with hazardous trees, and when to call an arborist. Councilor Hennagin had advised her that the Tree Code was a top issue in the community. Ms. Papaefthimiou related that a consultant had advised the City Manager that the tree permitting process took up a large percentage of staff time and resources. He planned to discuss the issue with staff. The members observed that no one had come to NRAB meetings to discuss concerns about the Tree Code. Chair Holen related that she had been serving as the on-call arborist for the City. Members indicated they wanted Chair Holen to help them understand the Tree Code and the issues it raised, and thereafter they wanted to discuss the relationship between the Urban and Community Forestry Plan and the Tree Code.

Members observed that the data gathered for the State of the Forest Report would help everyone understand its status and help the City make informed decisions. Ms. Papaefthimiou related that AmeriCorps worker, Lori Summers, would present her draft State of the Forest report to the board. Ms. Summers had also inventoried 5% of the public street trees and created a database showing their age, size and species. She had used aerial photographs and radar equipment to estimate the City's canopy cover and the height and volume of trees, too. She was to present the final report to the City Council in April, which was Arbor Month.

Chair Holen reported the Councilors had asked why the City had to lose the AmeriCorps positions and she had explained AmeriCorps offered limited term assistance and the City would have to create an urban forestry staff position to carry on the work in the future. Ms. Papaefthimiou had just received an email from that organization alerting her that their funding had been cut, but the members noted the Obama Administration proposed to double AmeriCorps funding. However, they wondered if the City might recruit a college intern to continue the work for educational credit. It was suggested that it was best to have a full time volunteer coordinator. Members observed that the City employed two full time neighborhood planners.

Chair Holen reported that the City Council planned to finish goal setting at their next meeting. At the previous evening's meeting the Council had voted to accept a bid to replace toilets in all City buildings with low flush toilets.

Updates on Meetings with Council Members

None of the members had yet met with a City Councilor, but Ms. Wagner related that Councilor Tierney had met with Jonathan Snell to talk about Clean Streams issues. Chair Holen offered to meet with members who wanted to better understand and be prepared to discuss Tree Code issues that might come up in a meeting with a Councilor.

2009 Farmer's Market Update – Planning

This discussion was postponed until the next meeting.

Water Conservation Programs – Opportunities to Advise Staff

Kevin McCaleb, Water Conservation Specialist, related that he planned to create a “25 Percenters” club to recognize persons who reduced their outdoor water use. He reported that the first two weather stations were to be installed this spring to provide neighborhood weather information. He said the audit program to help residents assess their water usage, fixtures and irrigation systems was available now. He said that he would refine the water conservation program so the City could report to the state that it was employing good conservation practices and reducing water use. He asked for NRAB support for funding for a toilet rebate program to encourage residents to get rid of high flow toilets. He asked for volunteers to serve as informal advisors and offer him ideas and input about how to fashion programs to promote water conservation in the City. Vice Chair Gaar and Ms. Wagner volunteered to do that and the board invited Mr. McCaleb to come to NRAB meetings whenever he wanted to test an idea or solicit board support for one. They stressed that water conservation was one of their goals. They discussed how to encourage the school district to work with the City water conservation program and include it in the curriculum. Perhaps the NRAB could lobby the City to offer the district an incentive to save money by saving water. Mr. McCaleb explained that the City’s “payback” for water conservation was not immediate, and it was hard to quantify, so it was not a “business decision.” Mr. Johnson advised that a portion of every utility bill was earmarked to fund Energy Trust of Oregon projects, such as replacement faucets, aerators, and solar equipment. He suggested Mr. McCaleb contact them to find out if they would offer funds for a City program. Mr. McCaleb reported that he had started auditing offices along Kruse Way and passed out water saving devices. He indicated that the School District had never invited him to audit their facilities. He and David Gilbey had talked to a school official about renewing the agreement with the City to have a District water conservation program in return for reductions in stormwater fees, but they had not yet received a response.

Mr. McCaleb explained single-family residential water rates were to go up 15% per year for the next six to eight years. In addition, when a household’s volume crossed the second tier rate threshold the cost rose 30%, and it doubled when their usage passed the third tier rate threshold. He explained that the City would put a third tier user in the second tier if they demonstrated they had a certified audit and had made all the improvements the auditor recommended, but could not reduce water use any further unless they shut it off entirely. He said the NRAB could suggest ways to help people meet water reduction goals. He thanked the advisory volunteers and said he would email them informational material to become familiar with. He said interested persons could track the City’s progress on the City conservation website. The board suggested they could distribute informational material, aerators and other devices he provided at the Farmers Market. They suggested he contact neighborhood associations too. When they asked who were the biggest impact water users in the City, he said those were the heavy irrigators.

Changes to Sensitive Lands Program – Background and Opportunities to Advice

Ms. Papaefthimiou related that the Planning Commission was in the process of updating the Community Development Code, including the Sensitive Lands chapter. During this process the Sensitive Lands map would also be updated to add about 450 more properties that a consultant had found had natural resources on them that qualified for protection. Protective districts would not apply to some lots until the City annexed them.

Ms. Papaefthimiou said the proposed Sensitive Lands amendments would also simplify the process used for small projects, like repair of existing buildings, and they would remove some loopholes in the code. Major issues to be resolved were what kinds of uses the City would allow along the rivers; what development was to be allowed on a site that was entirely constrained by protected resources; and if the City should require developers to remove invasive plants as part of the landscape plan approval. Lot owners had a legal right to a reasonable size, single-family house, but the City still had to define what that was. The major issues were to be the topics of a January 24th public open house. She noted the Planning Commission record contained many documents, including six supplemental staff reports. She said she would email members the link to the material on the City website.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

The next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, March 18, 2009. There being no further business Chair Holen adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jonna Papaefthimiou
Natural Resources Planner