



CITY OF LAKE OSWEGO Sustainability Advisory Board Minutes

April 18, 2011

CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Co-chair Bruce Brown called the Sustainability Advisory Board (SAB) meeting of April 18, 2011, to order at 6:30 p.m. in the Conference Room of the Main Fire Station, 300 B Avenue, Lake Oswego, Oregon.

Members present:	Co-chairs Grant Watkinson and Bruce Brown, Sarah Asby, Gary Bachofner, Daniel Gottlieb, Vidya Kale and Gregory Monahan
Members excused/absent:	Dorothy Atwood and Matt Briggs
Council Liaison:	Sally Moncrieff
Staff present:	Susan Millhauser, Sustainability Coordinator; Alex Deley, AmeriCorps worker; Kevin McCaleb, Water Conservation; and David Donaldson, Assistant City Manager

ANNOUNCEMENTS

A Luscher Farm master planning open house was scheduled on April 21. The City was recruiting to fill the three open positions on the SAB. Dorothy Atwood would continue to be the SAB representative on the Comprehensive Plan CAC. Several Board members had attended the Council hearing on transit alternatives. Brown had attended the Mayor's transportation roundtable.

PUBLIC COMMENT (None)

REGULAR BUSINESS

Water Conservation Update

Kevin McCaleb distributed a handout that reported how each component of the conservation program was progressing. He related that he was administering rebates, speaking to groups and conducting individual water use audits. In the summertime he did three or four audits per day. During the audits he discussed how the residents could save water, looked for leaks and advised them how to use their irrigation systems. The fact that water rates were going up made conservation more popular than in the past. From inception in May 2008 to January 2010, 778 people had participated in the program. He calculated their overall savings was about 8%. He would not have statistics for 2010 until August 2011. The program had offered rebates for 1.1 to 1.2 gallon flush toilets. It was not pushing waterless urinals because people were anxious about them and there was a long learning curve how to use and maintain them. The program had just given out its first rebate for a washing machine. He thanked the SAB for

its support for funding of the rebate program. Brown hoped the City would budget more for that so in ten years almost every older toilet in the City was replaced.

The Board discussed the quandary that as people used less water, City revenue from water declined and it might have to raise rates even further to pay back water bonds. Moncrieff reported the shortfall was \$200,000. Brown suggested inviting nearby cities, such as West Linn, to purchase Lake Oswego's excess water. Another member saw it as a funding mechanism problem. A better mechanism needed to be found that did not penalize conservation. McCaleb offered to provide some rate studies that had been done. One approach might be to treat water like a commodity such as oil. Santa Fe allocated the amount of water people could use. Lake Oswego's current approach was to only charge for treating and pumping it. Brown suggested viewing conservation as a capital investment. It would extend the lifespan of the pumps and plant. Moncrieff confirmed the Council had discussed investing in conservation rather than in increasing the water supply. The models showed the most heavily funded conservation efforts only resulted in about 3% savings. They concluded the City could not conserve its way out of the need for future water capacity. McCaleb advised at times he had calculated there was up to 19% water loss. It might be due to leaks in the piping system but the City had a fairly aggressive leak detection system. It could be due to meters that did not work, did not work accurately, or were overlooked by meter readers. He had found many of them. The City was looking into using automatic meter readers. He found that one in four houses he audited had a water leak. Pipe size, friction loss and velocity of water were also factors. He thought the message about irrigation systems and the wet year meant people waited longer in the year to turn their irrigation systems on. Outside watering accounted for 60% of total water use. Excess outside watering became runoff that contributed to the pollution problem and affected the ability to get clean water from the river. He estimated people could cut that kind of water use by about 20% to prevent runoff. He noticed that people tended to water plants like rhododendrons more than the plants actually required. Millhauser recalled Dorothy Atwood had suggested the City could help owners put in rain water catchment and onsite waste and stormwater treatment facilities. That kind of service could bring in additional revenue. McCaleb was a cautious proponent of using gray water. Arizona allowed it if the applicant took classes, got a permit and submitted an annual report. When asked he confirmed that he would support a pilot program. Moncrieff wanted to be able to better quantify how much money was saved through conservation. Brown had estimated that it would take 12 years for the City to get back the \$125 it paid for a low flow toilet rebate. McCaleb guessed there might be 25,000 to 30,000 older model toilets still in use in the City. Kale observed the rebate program had to be significantly expanded. McCaleb advised the City had been wise to establish water rights that superseded Tigard's if the river aquifer ever got too low. This year was a wet year, though, so it was not a problem. Brown thanked McCaleb for the update.

Sustainability Action Month Update / Volunteer Recruitment

Alex Deley distributed the final draft of the Sustainability Action Month (SAM) calendar of events. He asked for volunteers to help with events. He planned to send out a weekly e-blast announcing the events for the week. He asked SAB members to forward them to their contacts. Matt Briggs was going to host a Solar Ready workshop at his home followed by an open house featuring his net zero efforts. Daniel Gottlieb was to participate in the author talk

series at the Library. Kevin McCaleb was doing an irrigation workshop. One more SAM advisory group meeting would be scheduled to finalize things.

Sustainability Tool - Next Steps & Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee & City Council/Planning Commission Study Session Update

Millhauser reported that several board members had met in March and used the tool to work through the Lake Oswego to Portland Transit project options. They found some of the functionality was awkward and some components of it felt too subjective, especially where elements of the three options were not clearly defined and compared across the board. The section based on the Natural Step seemed to be more easily defined so worked a bit better.

Last week the Council and the Planning Commission held a joint study session to talk about the sustainability filter. Duke Castle presented an overview of the Natural Step framework. The Council voted 4:3 to endorse use of the tool in the Comprehensive Plan update process. The next step was to work internally to figure out how to use it in the process. There might be a “middle ground” tweak version to use that would stimulate conversations about tradeoffs and mitigation opportunities. The detailed tool seemed to provide the kind of quantitative analysis that was useful for capital projects. Millhauser and Monahan planned to continue to work on it as the path forward was made clear. They wanted to be really clear how to use it in order to ensure it would be used by the City. Brown encouraged them to keep working on it and customizing it and making it clear how to use it. Moncrieff saw it as a huge step forward from when there was no way to answer the question about how sustainability was considered in a decision. Monahan clarified for Brown that a cost analysis framework (such as a modified life cycle analysis), needed to be added in order to apply the tool to a decision to build a building, for example. Millhauser reported the proponents had stressed at the study session that the tool was a set of questions that would help develop recommendations, but the Council would always have a broader scope of considerations, including political considerations. Moncrieff agreed the questions would help staff and the Council make decisions. Monahan suggested it would be helpful to give more Councilors sustainability training. Some had asked what the connection was between sustainability and planning, and some comments seemed to suggest there was a lack of understanding why a systems perspective was useful. Brown thanked Millhauser and Monahan for their huge investment of time.

Liaison Updates (This discussion was postponed.)

ADJOURNMENT

The next meeting was scheduled on May 16, 2011. There being no further business Co-chair Brown adjourned the meeting at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Millhauser
Sustainability Coordinator

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