



CITY OF LAKE OSWEGO

Sustainability Advisory Board Minutes

May 16, 2011

CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Co-chair Bruce Brown called the Sustainability Advisory Board (SAB) meeting of May 16, 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-chair Grant Watkinson, Co-chair Bruce Brown, Sarah Asby, Matt Briggs, Daniel Gottlieb, Vidya Kale and Gregory Monahan
Members excused/absent: Gary Bachofner and Dorothy Atwood
Council Liaison: Sally Moncrieff (Not present)
Staff present: Susan Millhauser, Sustainability Coordinator; Sidaro Sin, Senior Planner; Laura Weigel; Associate Planner; and Alex Deley, AmeriCorps worker
Guests: Katie Spataro, and Kelly Beemer, Cascadia Green Building Council; Lisa Adatto; and Tom O'Connor

MINUTES

The Minutes of January 20, February 23 and March 21, 2011 were **accepted** by unanimous vote with the exception that Monahan abstained from voting on the January 20 minutes as he was not in attendance at that meeting.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The first Energy IQ and Solar Ready workshops had been held, with the second Solar Ready workshop held at Briggs' house. His Net Zero open house had been well attended. The Heritage Bike Ride had been a big success. Deley thanked those who had staffed the Farmers' Market booth. Upcoming events included an Energy IQ work shop; a public meeting regarding Highway 43 bike safety improvements; a Foothills project advisory group work session was scheduled; and Metro was to present the results of an opinion poll regarding climate change. The Council had accepted the streetcar as the preferred local alternative for further study. Gottlieb would be the featured author at "Author Talk." The next City Budget Committee meeting would be held on May 19.

PUBLIC COMMENT (None)

Research update: Toward Net Zero Water

Katie Spataro, Cascadia Green Building Council, explained Cascadia advocated moving from the paradigm of piping in and piping out all water to sourcing and dealing with water on site. Those kinds of smaller systems would be more resilient and less risky than the nation's aging infrastructure. Cascadia offered a best practices manual. The organization had documented the challenges to development approval of a office building in Seattle that was working to meet the Living Building Challenge. The building was a self-sustaining, six-story, building that featured composting toilets; used gray water to water the vegetated roof and then discharged it in the public right-of-way; and harvested and treated drinking water on site. Cascadia was in the process of finalizing a life-cycle assessment for waste water treatment systems that would help justify net zero water systems. Spataro reported that researchers had used actual data from an existing mid-sized city's system as the baseline scenario. They compared it with four alternative systems. The results showed that the alternatives, which used composting toilets, gray and black water wetlands and biofilter treatment systems, achieved a 40% to 45% reduction in global warming impacts compared to the conventional facility. Researches saw a need to need to look at lower energy, passive treatment systems in the future. For example, instead of using the conventional method of lifting and conveying waste over grades, the alternative could be to use smaller, distributed, wetland treatment systems.

During the discussion, Spataro clarified that the constructed wetland and biofilter alternatives used a small amount of energy to convey water and did not get to net zero. But they were a few of many other alternatives to consider. She clarified that the baseline system depended about 95% on gravity to take water to the treatment facility. If the researchers had known that in the beginning, they might have chosen some other city that was more dependent on pumping to serve as the baseline. She was asked if the researchers had compared the alternative systems with a conventional septic system. She explained they had not because that would be comparing "apples to oranges." Constructed wetlands and biofilter alternatives each used conventional settling tanks - like a septic system – but they provided the higher levels of waste water treatment that was necessary for environmental protection and to be able to reclaim and reuse water. She clarified that the Living Building project focused on attaining net zero energy as well as net zero water. When asked if composting made sense for a multi-story building, she related that it had been done on an institutional scale at the University of British Columbia. Composting toilets had been used there for years. 600 occupants of the Seattle project building were using composting toilets. Millhauser advised that about half of the electricity for City operations was for pumping and treating drinking water, with more required for waste water treatment (which the City contracts out). Spataro related that one of the researchers' main conclusions was that regardless of the method of treatment the energy to pump the waste water had huge environmental impacts. She agreed that besides the design of the system it would also be very important to apply strict criteria to what kinds of cleaning chemicals were used in a living building to control what went down the drain. Co-chair Brown related that net zero water was one of the SAB's goals. The Cascadia representative offered to serve as a resource for the Board. Spataro noted that the studies could be found on Cascadia's website: www.cascadiagbc.org/resources/research.

Sustainability Evaluation of Comprehensive Plan Scenarios

Planners Sidaro Sin and Laura Weigel asked for SAB input regarding applying the Sustainability Filter (see the May 13, 2011 Memorandum, "Comprehensive Plan Update – Applying the Sustainability Filter to the Scenarios Assessment"). There were three potential future scenarios to evaluate against the vision statement using the filter, which was a set of strategic questions. The filter had initially been tested on the Lake Oswego to Portland transit project. Monahan explained that he had learned from that test that options needed to be compared side by side, not evaluated independently. He recalled the most challenging aspect of applying the filter to the Lake Oswego to Portland transit project options had been working with the Comp Plan action areas. But he believed it could be done. It would take time. The challenge was that Natural Step was a pretty rigorous process, but the vision was a broad, politically arrived at, statement and arriving at answers to the filter's strategic questions for each action area was a subjective process. The filter had to be applied at a high level of abstraction. The group brainstormed what they would want to ask at a slightly lower level of abstraction. The questions included: which scenario(s) required the least amount of additional infrastructure; which would result in fewer single occupancy vehicle miles traveled; which would result in diversity of age, income, housing, travel modes and economic opportunities for residents; which would be the most resilient? The staff advised the Council had a long debate regarding whether the goal to eliminate the City's dependence on fossil fuels should even be in the filter. The Board agreed to meet again the following week to develop a lower level of abstraction filter. Brown asked the members to send him their suggestions. The group saw a need to translate the filter into information that would help people understand the connection between abstract sustainability concepts and concrete results. Sin asked them to send representatives to meet with the CAC the following Monday. Brown and Monahan volunteered to go.

Update: Water Conservation Funding Proposal

The Board discussed whether to present its water conservation proposal at the City Budget Committee meeting on May 19. Co-chair Brown related that he had already forwarded a copy to Councilor Moncrieff and the rest of the Council. Monahan volunteered to work on a spreadsheet. Asby volunteered to attend the Budget Committee meeting. The Board generally agreed to Watkinson's suggestion to "stick with what we know" and not comment as a board on a proposed cut to Planning positions.

ADJOURNMENT

The next regular meeting was scheduled on June 20, 2011. There being no further business Co-chair Brown adjourned the meeting at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Millhauser
Sustainability Coordinator