



POLICY AND SERVICES COMMITTEE FINAL MINUTES

Special Meeting
April 3, 2019

The Policy and Services Committee of the City of Palo Alto met on this date in the Community Meeting Room at 6:06 P.M.

Present: Kniss (Chair), Kou, Tanaka

Absent:

Oral Communications

None.

Agenda Items

1. Recommendation That the Policy and Services Committee Recommends the City Council Accept the 2019-2020 Sustainability Work Plan.

Chair Kniss relayed that she had heard that Shell Oil had backed out of their agreement with their lobbying group in the United States in response to global warming.

Michelle Flaherty, Deputy City Manager introduced Staff members Phil Bobel and Christine Luong who presented the item to the Policy and Services Committee (Committee).

Phil Bobel, Public Works Assistant Director explained that Staff was recommending that the Committee recommend to the City Council (Council) to accept the 2019-2020 Sustainability Work Plan. Since Council had made climate change a priority for 2019, the City Manager had asked Staff to put together a Sustainability Work Plan. There were seven categories within the Sustainability and Climate Action Plan. Staff was presenting a Work Plan for all seven categories of interest; Energy, Mobility, Electric Vehicles, Water, Climate Adaptation, Natural Environment, and Zero Waste. He gave a brief introduction to the members of the Sustainability Leadership Team.

Christine Luong, Management Analyst articulated that in terms of the energy projects, those projects focused on two areas; energy efficiency and electrification. In terms of the Induction Cook Top Campaign, the City would

MINUTES

be launching an Induction Cook Top Loaner Program. Staff was expanding the Heat Pump/Water Heater Campaign.

Chair Kniss request for metrics on how many electric cooktops existed in Palo Alto (City) and how many more the City would like to receive.

Ms. Flaherty disclosed that those metrics were still being compiled.

Council Member Tanaka inquired what Staff meant by heat pumps.

Ms. Luong explained that a heat pump used air conditioning to heat water.

Mr. Bobel interjected to say that it was more of a hot water heater replacement.

Shiva Swaminathan, Senior Resources Planner clarified that it was an electrically powered water heater and it absorbed the heat from inside the home and used that to heat water.

Council Member Kou inquired what the heat pump did during winter months.

Mr. Swaminathan articulated that in the winter months the heat pump absorbed heat from the air outside in order to heat the home.

Council Member Kou requested that Staff present a picture of a heat pump when the plan went to Council.

Council Member Tanaka asked if a resident had an air conditioner and wanted to use that unit to heat their water, if that would qualify under the rebate program.

Mr. Swaminathan concurred that would qualify under the program.

Ms. Luong continued onto the category Mobility. She highlighted that Staff had launched the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funded Mobility on Demand Pilot Project in March of 2019. The goal of the project was to increase City Staff participation in commute benefits to reduce traffic. Staff had just received approval from Council to renew for one more year the Bikeshare and E-Scooter Pilot Program. That extension would extend the program to March 31st, 2020.

Chair Kniss questioned if the Mobility programs coordinated with the City's Transportation Management Association (TMA) Program as well.

Ms. Flaherty affirmed that they did. The Mobility on Demand Program was just for City employees but it was similar to the TMA Program that catered to

MINUTES

only downtown employees. TMA was not being used to provide the service to City employees.

Council Member Tanaka requested how much funding the City received from FTA.

Ms. Luong responded that it was a little over \$1 million.

Ms. Flaherty noted that the FTA grant was not only being used in the City and in other neighboring Cities as well.

Council Member Tanaka articulated that the City should include protected bike lanes into the Mobility category.

Ms. Flaherty disclosed that the City did have the Bike Ways Master Plan. Some of the projects under that master plan had been slowed down based on community feedback.

Council Member Tanaka restated that he was not talking about the Bike Ways Master Plan but just protected bike lanes themselves. He wanted to know if it was possible to have more protected bike lanes so that residents felt more comfortable biking.

Ms. Luong added that examining the City's bicycle infrastructure was part of the 2018 to 2020 Sustainability Implantation Plan (SIP). In terms of Electric Vehicles (EV), she announced that Staff was in the process of adding electric vehicles to the City's fleet of cars. Currently there were two electric Ford Focuses but two electric Bolts were to be added soon. The plan also included adding three F-150 plug-in hybrid conversion trucks and there was already an all-electric garage truck being used within the City. The City planned to install 26 more EV charging stations with ten being located within the City Hall parking garage.

Council Member Tanaka wanted to know what rebate program Staff was planning to expand.

Ms. Luong disclosed that there were rebate programs for EV charging infrastructure, some for multi-family homes, and some for the actual purchase of EV cars themselves. Staff was proposing to expand all those rebate programs.

Council Member Tanaka asked for clarification on the rebate program for buying an EV car.

Ms. Luong explained there was the Sun Share Group Buy Program and that program was utilized by four purchasers in 2018.

MINUTES

Council Member Tanaka restated if the program was a discount on EV cars.

Ms. Luong concurred that was correct.

Council Member Tanaka suggested expanding the program to include E-scooters, lift bikes or E-skate boards. Also expanding EV charges that could accommodate EV bikes, scooters, and skateboards. He requested of Staff what the City's transportation carbon footprint was.

Ms. Luong answered 94 percent. She clarified that the City's Transportation Department was exploring bikes and E-Scooters for the First and Last Mile issue.

Mr. Bobel added that Staff would explore the idea of adding in small electric portable vehicles.

Council Member Kou questioned how E-Scooters and E-Skateboard were charged.

Council Member Tanaka explained that they plugged in just like an electric car does. He reiterated that he wanted to see more electric charging stations for small electric portable vehicles.

Ms. Luong announced that the charging stations did have a place to plug a plug into it.

Council Member Tanaka declared that the problem was that a person could not lock up a bike or skateboard if it was charging at a station.

Chair Kniss inquired if the City made any money on charging stations or if the City broke even.

Mr. Swaminathan affirmed the City was breaking even. He stated that the City did charge \$.23 a kilowatt hour of electricity dispensed. The Public Works Department maintained the fees for electric charging stations.

Chair Kniss disclosed that to use the charging station someone had to have an account.

Mr. Swaminathan confirmed that was correct or residents could use a credit card if they had an optically-enabled credit card.

David Carnahan, Deputy City Clerk clarified that optically enabled credit cards worked like Apple Pay.

MINUTES

Ms. Luong continued to highlight that for the Water category the City had a Northwest County Recycled Water Strategic Plan that would be coming to Council for adoption. There was going to be a public meeting on the Recycled Water Strategic Plan on April 30, 2019.

Ms. Luong articulated that for Sea Level Rise Adaptation Policy had just been adopted by Council in March of 2019. Staff's next steps for that policy was to conduct a Vulnerability Assessment and then explore the development of a task force. In terms of Natural Environment Staff was launching the Carbon Sequestration Tree Planting project from May through December. The project would help build the existing canopy in the City. On May 20th, 2019 Staff was bringing to City Council two draft ordinances to address Zero Waste. The ordinances were the Construction/Deconstruction Ordinance and the Complete Food Ware Ordinance.

Chair Kniss requested that Staff explain more on Zero Waste and recycling products.

Mr. Bobel expressed that due to China's new Standards, the City was not taking recyclable mixed paper to China. The City has since started to take mixed plastic to companies that were located within the United States. In terms of mixed paper, the City was transporting those to Asia.

Chair Kniss asked what the community could do to make it easier for the City and the country to recycle better.

Mr. Bobel did not suggest to use water to rise out recyclables but because of the new restrictions in China recyclables needed to be cleaner to help stop contamination. The City was using a program called pour, scrape, wipe which meant for liquids to pour out the liquids, if it had food stuck on it then scrape out the food, then wipe anything with a paper towel and then compost the paper towel. Another thing that residents could do was separate recyclables from each other better.

Elise Sbarbori, Manager Environmental Control Program added that as part of the City's proposed Food Ware Ordinance it included a multi-phased approach looking at reducing plastics. It also included encouraging reusable containers.

Mr. Bobel confirmed that the City's more successful campaign was the ban of certain types of plastic bags at grocery stores and people were using their own grocery bags more. In terms of produce bags, Staff was looking to move the City to either a compostable bag or a mesh bag.

Mr. Bobel reminded the Committee that Staff's goal was to update the Sustainability and Climate Action Plan by 2020.

MINUTES

Chair Kniss asked Staff in the audience to introduce themselves.

Karla Daily, Senior Resources Planner announced that Karin North and herself were a Co-Chairs of the Water component of the Sustainability and Climate Action Plan.

Karin North, Manager Watershed Protection added that Staff was going to Council on May 13th, 2019 to present the Green Stormwater Infrastructure Plan. Also, on May 20th, 2019 Staff was going to bring multiple updates to Council pertaining to the Municipal Code section on water.

Walter Passmore, Manager Urban Forestry reported that he was the Natural Environment Chair. In terms of the Carbon Sequestration Project, he noted that the program was a way that the City could have local mitigation over some of the carbon pollutants that were being released.

Council Member Kou wanted to know if dead vegetation gave off carbon.

Mr. Passmore confirmed that dead plants did give off carbon during the decay process. He articulated that though the City was trying to reduce its carbon footprint, there was no discussion on how to help the natural environment disperse the buildup of carbon that it was holding in the soils and water.

Council Member Kou asked if there was a plan to help mitigate carbon that was released from dead vegetation.

Mr. Passmore commented that Staff was exploring a recycling program for woody vegetation that used the process of pyrolysis to create charcoal-like substance that was put into the soil to help absorb more carbon.

Mr. Bobel added that Staff was also exploring the use of the pyrolysis process for sewage sludge.

Council Member Kou acknowledged that building a facility that used the pyrolysis process would be very expensive and wanted to know if the City would receive any revenue from renovating a facility to do that.

Mr. Bobel explained that Staff could not do the pyrolysis process if the only goal was to produce biochar. If there were multiple benefits of using the pyrolysis process then Staff could justify converting a plant to use the pyrolysis process.

Council Member Kou requested if Staff was planning to expand the urban forest beyond South Palo Alto.

MINUTES

Mr. Passmore articulated that South Palo Alto had 20 percent less tree canopy than the north section of Palo Alto. The program was to expand elsewhere when the South Palo Alto component was completed. In 2020 Staff was planning to launch a tool on the Geographic Information System (GIS) program that could evaluate parcel to parcel tree canopy in any sections of the City.

Chair Kniss noted that the problem in South Palo Alto was the rolled curbs.

Council Member Kou inquired if batteries for EV cars were recyclable.

Mr. Swaminathan was not sure if those batteries were recyclable but he explained that once the batteries were no longer suitable to be used in a car the battery could be used for other things like utilities.

Council Member Kou suggested bringing a diagram of the life cycle of an EV battery to Council.

Evon Ballash, Assistant Building Official declared that she was a Co-Chair for the Energy Team. She explained that her team worked on energy efficiency in building construction. Staff was working on a study that showed that it was more beneficial for the public to have an all-electric building versus having a building that used gas.

Chair Kniss inquired if the City had any houses that were zero energy homes.

Ms. Ballash responded that there were a handful of houses but the goal now was to move toward buildings being zero carbon which was a higher standard than zero energy.

Ms. Flaherty explained that in terms of the City's Reach Codes, California has some of the strongest codes in the nation and the City went well beyond the California standards.

Mr. Bobel acknowledged Bruce who was also helping with the Sustainability Work Plan.

Council Member Kou wanted to know about dewatering on commercial properties.

Mr. Bobel reported that the City's Dewatering Ordinance did apply to commercial buildings but the ordinance was too broad. Staff was working on a case by cases basis for commercial buildings. Staff was planning to bring to the Council an ordinance revision on dewatering in the fall of 2019.

MINUTES

Council Member Kou inquired who was the third international recognized leader at the Green Building Summit.

Ms. Flaherty stated that it was another Staff person from the state.

Council Member Kou noted that in terms of deconstruction, commercial buildings were not doing what residential building were doing with trying to salvage materials after deconstruction.

Mr. Bobel emphasized that both commercial and residential were required to try and salvage materials.

Council Member Kou restated that she was concerned about concrete at commercial sites.

Ms. Sbarbori disclosed that concrete could be recycled.

Mr. Bobel added that concrete was ground up and was used for base rock.

Council Member Kou inquired if that was considered carbon-free.

Mr. Bobel reported that process did take energy so it was not carbon free.

Council Member Kou questioned if there was a fee to ground up concrete.

Ms. Sbarbori articulated that someone disposing their concrete to the plant was not receiving money but there was an economic value of making base rock.

Mr. Bobel added that the plant makes a small amount of money when base rock was made.

Council Member Kou asked if there were metrics on how much carbon was being released by digging up the concrete and transporting it.

Mr. Bobel claimed that there was no good data on those metrics at the time.

Ms. Flaherty requested if the City knew at a higher-level estimate around construction and deconstruction objectives in general.

Mr. Bobel explained that the Deconstruction Ordinance's goal was to try to reduce the amount of material that went into landfills. Deconstructed materials were half of the garbage that filled landfills.

MINUTES

MOTION: Council Member Kou moved, seconded by Council Member Tanaka to recommend the City Council accept the Work Plan for the 2018-2020 Sustainability Implementation Plan.

Council Member Kou commented that she was happy with Staff's proposed plan and she was happy to hear that the tree canopy was being replenished.

Council Member Tanaka wanted to see the City do more around reducing the carbon emissions from transportation.

Ms. Luong explained that 94 percent of the carbon emitted from transportation assumed that the City was considering the natural gas offsets. If the natural gas offsets were not counted then it was 61 percent and natural gas was 31 percent.

INCORPORATED INTO THE MOTION WITH THE CONSENT OF THE MAKER AND SECONDER to add to the Motion, "direct Staff to explore the Cambridge, MA model of requiring protected bike lanes when significant roadwork is undertaken" (New Part B)

Direct Staff to explore the Cambridge model of requiring any road modification requiring protected bike paths

Ms. Flaherty articulated that Staff would be happy to look at the Cambridge model.

Council Member Tanaka wanted to see more of a balance in the terms of electric vehicles and that all personal transportation vehicles be included, not just cars.

Ms. Flaherty suggested that the Committee direct Staff to focus more on the bike share and E-Scooter Pilot Program.

INCORPORATED INTO THE MOTION WITH THE CONSENT OF THE MAKER AND SECONDER to add to the Motion, "direct Staff to explore including all vehicle types in "Electric Vehicle" programs, striking a better balance between cars and other vehicle types." (New Part C)

Council Member Tanaka emphasized that the Mobility component was strong but just to include all personal electric vehicles.

Chair Kniss suggested that the Committee pass the motion and then add a list of additional items that Staff should explore.

Council Member Tanaka wanted to see the language included in the motion.

MINUTES

Ms. Flaherty announced that as long there were words like explore and include, Staff could go integrate those into the program and then report back to the Committee on the progress that Staff had made.

MOTION AS AMENDED RESTATED: Council Member Kou moved, seconded by Council Member Tanaka to recommend the City Council:

- A. Accept the Work Plan for the 2018-2020 Sustainability Implementation Plan;
- B. Direct Staff to explore the Cambridge, MA model of requiring protected bike lanes when significant roadwork is undertaken; and
- C. Direct Staff to explore including all vehicle types in "Electric Vehicle" programs, striking a better balance between cars and other vehicle types.

MOTION AS AMENDED PASSED: 3-0

Future Meetings and Agendas

Michelle Flaherty, Deputy City Clerk announced future topics for future Policy and Services Committee (Committee) meetings and reviewed the upcoming meeting schedule.

Chair Kniss requested how many audits the Committee needed to review.

Ms. Flaherty explained there were eight to twelve audits. She suggested doing the audits at the June meetings.

Council Member Tanaka wanted to agendize for a future meeting the Valet Parking Program that the City was exploring.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 P.M.