



ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES COMMITTEE

Approved Meeting Minutes

Date: February 4, 2021

- Attendees: Vrinda, Pat, Anand, Sasha, Aileen, Srini, Peter, April (joined late)
 - Council liaison: Councilman Stan Mok
 - Guests: Councilman George Tyson (GT),
 - Kjell (silent attendee)
- Minutes approved: unanimous approval of February meeting minutes (Steve made motion, Srini seconded)
- Pat asked if;
 - She could invite her friend (from League of Women Voters LWV) who is an expert on single use plastics to present at the next EIC meeting. Srini expressed interest. Steve --April had interest in making the town picnic without using disposable plastics. Vrinda will add to the next month's agenda
 - LWV could help with seminars on any of the topics. EIC has not decided on the topics yet. When the topics are finalized EIC can seek sponsorship from LWV if appropriate.
- Presentation on undergrounding from George T:
 - Shared the same slides that he shared with City Council
 - "Everyone's in favor of it!" Concern about wildfires now the most important issues, in addition to aesthetics and reliability. Especially to open up escape routes from wildfires which can be blocked by downed power lines. This new round of work started around 2018 when the wild fires became apparent.
 - City Council created a subcommittee of one--GT--working with town staff especially Nichol Bowersox. Steve and Peter are also key resources to get to a "dig once" strategy, get all the telecom infrastructure and everything that needs trenching in the ground at the same time and as efficiently as possible. .
 - The approach is two steps: Icebreaker (like a demo project) and Ocean Liner (town-wide, dig once)
 - Ice Breaker project: A small section radiating out from El Monte Fire Station. Last year \$300K budgeted to design the project and estimate the cost. Present estimates are ~\$5M over 3 year time frame. We don't know how much we can spend on this. Some of it will be paid for from existing reserves, and existing budget. No fire district money funding.
 - For Ocean Liner: Overall assessment of undergrounding design town wide.(budget of \$250K).RFP drafted, one proposal received--Same engineering firm as the Icebreaker project. Not as intense in engineering

design as the Ice breaker project design. City Council has approved this RFP in Jan, and the work is underway. This design project will tell us the total cost of the project. We can then decide how to pay for it. It will require new sources of revenue--it will be a combination of funding sources: Thinking of UUT(Utility User Tax)--short term, dedicated to undergrounding-- plus town funds.. Does not expect funds from the fire district to be available.

- For the Ice Breaker project Moody road is the highest priority because it is densely wooded and power lines cross the road several times.

- Srini: What about the drops to individual homes?

GT: They may have to pay a little, but hopefully not.

Stan: Once we're finished with the ice breaker, do we get a credit back from PG&E?How much would it be?

GT: Looking at 20 A funds Each municipality based on utility spending in that area gets credit from PG&E which allows them to do the undergrounding project. In LAH our current credit is \$250K. we could buy other counties' credit at roughly \$0.50 to \$1. Don't know the future of 20A and whether they will allow the transfers. We have to look for ways to cover the spending If we are going with Telecom infrastructure we can get credit from AT&T and Comcast.

Steve: No "betterment fee" for 20A projects.

GT: PG&E may match up to \$2M per year on undergrounding projects.

Peter: This is a CPUC staff proposal, not yet approved.They are looking for ways to pay for undergrounding projects.

GT: 20A too slow, looking for other ways to fund

Anand: What about the increased demand from EV charging and electrification?

George: Thinking of ways to redesign for resilience and efficiency so that we can avoid PSPS. Consultant should include this work.

Peter: Is 100 hours of design enough to design?

George: We can add hours to their initial proposal. Will take this to Nichol and GT will share the operational information regarding this later.

- Topic: GHG inventory

- Steve: Zach sent replies to our comments a couple of days ago; not much time yet to review. Several key items where Zach disagrees with the EIC.
- Sasha: Why every 3 years? We should do both inventories every year.
- Anand: There are basic accuracy issues that should be fixed: EV rates, Foothill college electricity, 3 year skip. And the air travel debate (to include or not).
- Steve: Should we review/discuss in our subcommittee, discuss conclusions with Zach, then escalate to council if needed?
- Srini: No time to go around the full circle again... takes too long.
- Stan: Offered to help communicate with staff; if it comes to the council he'll support our recommendations, then he just needs two more votes.

Encouraged us to talk to different council members in person, not necessarily as a group.

- Peter: Didn't think there's any need to bring the discussed changes back to the full EIC again; the subcommittee has been very transparent and he's comfortable with their conclusions. Noted that our committee had done all the prior GHG inventories so we have some expertise.
- Srini: Described for Stan our committee's history of working with staff on this issue over the past year.... frustrating. A bit like pushing a rope. Staff should not be making policy.
- Issue will be taken back to the subcommittee, then to Stan for advice.
- Steve: Mentioned Stanford interview of Amazon's head of sustainability, and how they have "operationalized" carbon in all their activities. Presentation will eventually be posted [here](#). Srini saw it too, and agreed it was excellent.
- Anand re new town extension, and the need to operationalize carbon on town policies
 - How to take GHG's into account for town actions. Some decisions matter more than others. In some we may have no choice but we may have leverage regarding some.
 - Random topic: Foothill College wireless tower: could we encourage them to use cleaner electricity while working on this issue?
 - There are not too many decisions taken up by the City Council in the past that concern GHG emissions, but a fair bunch--how can we consider low carbon options and not high carbon options
 - Many models --Some towns consider a fiscal cost (\$/ton), best practices in Menlo Park, Davis, Austin: GHG implications of any policy not just \$ but CO2 and how does it measure against our goals.
 - Need to operationalize carbon, so staff takes it into account.
 - About the town hall construction Zach does not have anything about it at this time --may be in March. As EIC we should be setting high level objectives , the details can be set up by Architects.
 - Steve: Supports a simple message from council to assess carbon for all decisions OR include this request in an updated CAP. Example: Foothill makes big mistakes because they have NOT operationalized carbon, and their carbon footprint keeps expanding as a result.
 - Peter: We need to stay focused (pick our battles). He suggested focusing on the town hall project. We don't know the energy use of the existing town hall, and the part which is served by PV. If the extension is all electrified we don't know the energy profile. The net energy profile should be carbon minimizing.
 - Stan: Totally agrees we should "Leave the smallest footprint" -- it's the right thing to do! We should approach the council members.
 - Steve: We need to update our CAP -- last one was in 2015 and lots has changed since then. Drafting an updated Climate Action Plan should be our focus after the GHG inventory is done.

- Stan: You need a mission statement that we need everybody to buy into. We've hired architects (\$250k contract) for the town hall extension. Would like it to be carbon neutral.
 - Steve : Suggestion SVCE has put aside \$100K for LAH pilot project. Instead of spending that money on Tesla Power Wall, maybe they could pilot vehicle to grid.
 - Srini suggested forming a subcommittee.
 - Conclusion: We will add this action to the existing subcommittee on GHG inventory, to formulate recommendations to council regarding the town hall extension.
- YellowTin followup
 - Srini: Point him to the city manager. YT can offer information options for residents to use for greening their systems. Seems to be aligned with our educational focus.
 - Steve: Or include as an optional component of our new CAP?
 - Peter: Seems to fit very well with SVCE; not so much with LAH.
 - Anand: Include YellowTin as a possible educational webinar in our series?
 - Adjourned about 8:05pm
 - Next meeting: March 4th at 6:30pm