

# ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes

**Date:** April 1, 2021

Attendees: Vrinda, Srini, Peter, Jolie, Pat, Anand, Sasha, April, Steve

Absent: Aileen, Stan.

Guest: Kjell Karlsson

Topics:

- Past minutes: Srini moved to approve, Sasha seconded, unanimous approval of minutes.
- Additional topics:
  - Microgrid in the town of Matthews -- postponed until next meeting.
    - Sasha re Concentric: Has a schedule to meet with them, will try to get it done before next meeting.
    - Peter also has contact at PG&E regarding their microgrid plans for resilience and fire protection. Sasha is interested to hear more.
    - The topic of Microgrids and the lessons for LAH will be discussed in the next meeting--to be added to the agenda.
- GHG inventory
  - The CSG report has not incorporated any of the feedback offered by EIC
  - Anand: Should we tell the Council we don't approve the CSG report?
  - Peter: Might not have any effect; how will their report affect the plan?
  - Steve: If we do a CAP will it be based on a completely different set of charts?
  - Anand : The CAP will not be completely different but regarding adoption of electric vehicles, Foothill college using dirty electricity and not giving enough credit to Greenwaste will be different from the report.
  - Srini: The CAP should consider the effect of Townhall expansion on GHG inventory.
  - Steve: After pushback from Anand and Steve CSG did compile the data for the community but the Govt data was provided only until 2018. That will not make a huge difference for CAP
  - Peter: Maybe we should start working on the plan and then we can decide whether to use the report or use other data for the plan. This would be more practical. Town should not accept the report as the plan.
  - Srini: Key issue is that this has happened many times: EIC recommendations are being ignored.
  - Steve: Maybe communicate to the council that we were ignored, and this is NOT acceptable as CAP, and we will work on it. Bring up this issue in our annual update to the council?

- **Vrinda** to check with Deborah on schedule for EIC annual update to City Council.
- Srinu: State that EIC believes there are holes, we want to propose a draft CAP, in the meantime, Council should not accept this as a CAP.
- Subcommittee to start work on draft CAP (Vrinda, Anand, Steve, Srinu? Peter?)
- Steve: CAP will take at least 3 months between subcommittee meetings and EIC meetings
- Peter: We want the plan to be adopted-- does not stay on the shelf as a report.
- Peter: question about GHG savings estimates for REACH codes
- Steve: This should be included in the CAP projections. The GHG inventory is backwards-looking, and the CAP is a set of strategies with forecast reductions to meet an agreed-upon goal. Figure out a couple of key areas we want to reduce our emissions, find some strategies that are appropriate for the town, and estimate the impact of those strategies.
- Peter: the Council has shown interest in educational, voluntary strategies
- Some discussion of possible strategies:
  - Natural gas use is growing --GHGI confirmed that. Electrification will be big in the coming years--Educate LAH residents on electrification-- possible alternatives like heat pump water heaters, heat pump replacing NG furnaces --technologies that can be possible alternatives on burnout. Incentives and education relating to electrification--Federal govt. is going to supplement that plan. (Some of the Biden Plan is summarized by Saul Griffith, author of Rewiring America).
  - Srinu: Grid update will be a priority of the new administration--not just expanding--it will have implications for undergrounding--more money in the plan.
  - Steve: California Energy commission has always supported energy efficiency but right now fuel switching is the priority
  - Peter: time of use will be at the center of this plan, since the carbon content varies depending on the time of the day.
  - Steve: Cost effectiveness just turned a corner for many of the electrical appliances.
  - Peter: If we are going to recommend retrofits, there will be questions about cost effectiveness
  - Pat: Switching to a HPWH was going to cost \$3000 more!
  - Vrinda: One HVAC contractor proposed to only do a "hybrid" heat pump that still had a gas furnace
  - Anand: Create an incentive structure that will promote electrification
  - Srinu: Not found an offer from SVCE that has made him change
  - Peter:: it is a matter of feasibility. They offered incentives which were adopted by just 100 people in the county--that is not a successful program.
  - Vrinda: Create a pool of contractors who are experts at electrification and can provide better pricing, will that do?
  - Steve: Complex issue...First cost and installation. Sacramento has a queue of contractors for installation. SMUD is giving about \$12K per house for electrification. We in LAH cannot generate enough demand for

contractor training or the big upfront cost.. BayRen is trying to do just that in the 7-8 counties of the Bay Area.

- Peter: What we cannot do at LAH can be done at the county level with SVCE (we have a seat on that Board)
- Anand: Palo Alto is making money on Cap & Trade because they are using clean electricity but SVCE is not making money on C&T
- Steve: \$6-8 from C&T in entire CA--who else is making money?
- Peter: The cost of reducing carbon in many of the SMUD programs was very high
- Srin: Maybe SVCE has money for electrification and we can negotiate a city wide rate for contractors.
- Steve: "Systems approach to electrifying existing buildings" PCE from San Mateo county --deals with issues surrounding retrofitting existing homes for electrification--deals with lack of education, contractors, awareness about NG appliances are to the environment, how to find a contractor
- Steve: Nate, the House Whisperer talks about this --been doing that for 5-6 years in Ohio :). They have winners there. Contractors are familiar with NG appliances HP are new to them
- Peter: I would like to hear from actual person who has done this conversion in the Bay area. The articles are not believable
- Pat: What about my experience, the contractor recommended by Steve put the cost at \$2K more for HPWH than the NG WH
- Steve: There is a huge variation--needs electrical outlet in the closet, the extra height, drainage for the condenser, that can be a problem. Each case has to be qualified by experts--don't have enough experts..
- Peter: We can have a checklist for people who can retrofit
- Sasha; Only 3000 houses, sign up forms on the website and a couple of volunteers to qualify
- Discussion on seminar for electrification retrofit; best practices, why do it, how to get started.
- Vrinda: Include SVCE?
- Steve: They could help, but we need a very clear topic defined and a marketing/outreach plan.
- Peter: SVCE is often too generic; we need concrete examples.
- Jolie: Do we have enough electricity to handle the increased load if we electrify our appliances.
- Steve: EV loads are more significant. PA feels their infrastructure can handle the load until late 20s and then may be they will have to increase wire sizes etc, They are also thinking about Watt diets. Load shifting with splitters
- Peter: Maybe we should include that in our undergrounding plan.
- Undergrounding: No specific updates from George; two contracts have been signed, projects are underway.
  - Peter: seems quiet for the biggest project the town has ever done!
  - Steve: the timeline from what he remembers was for it to be on ballot in 2022
  - Sasha: the federal plans are for fiber for poor and rural areas on 8-10 year horizon--longtime to go without the internet.

- Steve: Then we could send specific questions to George prior to our next meeting.
- Peter: We should request EIC access to signed contracts so we can review. Also review past comments/requests from Peter, Steve and others regarding undergrounding project (like banning underground connections), and ask George to respond.
- Next meeting: May 6th