



SF Environment

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EDWIN M. LEE
Mayor

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Acting Director

**CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO
COMMISSION ON THE ENVIRONMENT
*POLICY COMMITTEE RESCHEDULED MEETING
COMMISSION ON THE ENVIRONMENT SPECIAL MEETING**

**DRAFT MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 9, 2014, 5:00 P.M.**

**CITY HALL, ROOM 421
ONE DR. CARLTON B. GOODLETT JR. PLACE
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102**

***The Monday, April 14, 2014 Policy Committee Meeting was RESCHEDULED to Wednesday, April 9, 2014 at 5:00 p.m.**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Commissioners Johanna Wald (Chair), Ruth Gravanis, and Nicholas Josefowitz

ORDER OF BUSINESS

- 1. Call to Order and Roll Call.** Due to a quorum of the Commission on the Environment present, a Special Meeting of the Commission on the Environment was held. Present were Commissioners Arce, Gravanis, Josefowitz and Wald. The meeting convened at 5:05 p.m.
- 2. Approval of Minutes of the March 10, 2014 Commission on the Environment Policy Committee Meeting.** (Explanatory Documents: March 10, 2014 Draft and Approved Minutes) (Discussion and Action)

Upon Motion by Commissioner Josefowitz, second by Commissioner Gravanis, the March 10, 2014 Meeting Minutes were approved without objection (AYES: Commissioners, Arce, Gravanis, Josefowitz and Wald).

- 3. Public Comments:** Members of the public may address the Committee on matters that are within the Committee's jurisdiction and are not on today's agenda.

Mr. Frank Mason reported that the website link providing information about the Saturday Recology compost drop-off broken. He inquired about the process for scheduling a compost

drop-off. Acting Director Assmann reported that the link would be fixed and that formally scheduling a drop-off is not required.

Ms. Anastasia Glikshtern reported that UCSF has cancelled plans to cut down 30,000 trees at Mt. Sutro and suggested that the Recreation and Park Department's Natural Areas Program (NAP) should cancel their plans to cut down 18,500 trees, 1,600 of which are on Mt. Davidson. She reported on a communication the Miraloma Improvement Club submitted to the Mayor requesting that certain forested areas in Mt. Davidson be removed from the Significant Natural Areas Resource Management Plan (SNRAMP) and a communication from the West of Twin Peaks Central Council to the Recreation and Park Commission in opposition to the Recreation and Park Department's SNRAMP and Natural Areas Program. (Reference Explanatory Documents)

Mr. Eric Brooks, San Francisco Green Party, San Francisco Clean Energy Alliance, Our City, commented that managing habitat with measures described in the NAP to protect endangered species that may go extinct is one thing, but concurred with Ms. Glikshtern's comments opposing the use of herbicides and other aggressive measures for removing vast vegetation and trees. He stated that the planet is at an emergency tipping point for the climate crisis, and that cutting a large amount of trees and disturbing the soil they are in will release huge amounts of carbon. Mr. Brooks discussed the large amount of communication that the Commission received requesting that CleanPowerSF be added back in the Climate Action Strategy and urged the Commission to do so to meet San Francisco's climate goals.

Ms. Denise Louie, San Francisco and Mt. Davidson resident, spoke in favor of the Natural Areas Program and plans to manage the Eucalyptus plantation/forest. She stated that it is part of the mission of the Miraloma Park Improvement Club to work with the City to manage parklets.

Ms. Lurilla Harris inquired if there is anything that has been done about starting a local campaign on less use of plastics, in contacting the Board of Education to create an environmental curriculum for all twelve grades, and for Recology to offer a split bin for those that use less than others.

- 4. San Francisco's Urban Forest Plan as it relates to the City's Biodiversity Goals.** (Explanatory Documents: Urban Forest Plan: <http://urbanforest.sfplanning.org>; http://issuu.com/sfplanningdept/docs/urban_forest_plan_draft-01-15-14v2, Urban Forest Plan Public Comments Summary 032714, and Biodiversity Policy History, Habitat and Biodiversity and What is Biodiversity) Sponsor: Commissioner Ruth Gravanis; Speakers: Jon Swae, City Planning Department and Peter Brastow, Biodiversity Coordinator (Informational Presentation and Discussion)

Urban Forest Plan Program Manager Jon Swae provided an overview of the Draft of Phase 1 of the Urban Forest Plan as it relates to goals, strategies, and plans to support habitat and biodiversity. He stated that the Draft Plan was released in January with an opportunity for public comment through the end of February. Public comment that was received showed an 86% approval rating with 14% opposed. Mr. Swae is working with Department of the Environment Biodiversity Coordinator Peter Brastow to review habitat and biodiversity elements before release of the Plan. Public comments and recommendations are to be incorporated into the next draft of Phase 1 of the Plan in the middle of May. The Plan will then be reviewed

by the Urban Forestry Council on May 23, then by the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors for approval and future inclusion in the General Plan. (Reference Public Comment Summary and Urban Forest Plan Explanatory Documents) Mr. Swae explained that there are three phases of the Urban Forest Plan: Phase 1 is on street trees; Phase 2 is on trees, parks and open spaces; and Phase 3 is on private properties and other innovative building greening measures. Funding would need to be identified to start work on Phase 2, and work on Phase 3 has started.

Mr. Peter Brastow, Biodiversity Coordinator, reported on the history of natural resources and biodiversity policies that have been pursued and codified since 1981 in San Francisco, the most recent of which is the Urban Forest Plan. He stated that the Urban Forest Plan does address the City's biodiversity goals, including acknowledging the importance of the preservation of natural areas. Mr. Brastow summarized the City's biodiversity goals and discussed how the Plan achieves these goals and future opportunities. (Reference Biodiversity Explanatory Documents)

Commissioner Gravanis stated that there is a need for consistency in the definition of the urban forest in all of the relevant documents such as the legislation creating the Urban Forestry Council and the Urban Forest Plan. If the Urban Forest Plan is to include green roofs and green building initiatives, then the legislation creating the Urban Forestry Council and its membership should be updated to include that type of expertise. Commissioner Gravanis stated that she is looking for acknowledgement that trees do not always enhance biodiversity before Phase 1 of the Plan is incorporated in the General Plan.

Department of Public Works Urban Forester Carla Short reported that the City maintains jurisdiction for street trees in the public right of way, but that there is insufficient funding for maintenance, and as a result, street tree maintenance had been transferred to individual property owners who don't always follow proper guidelines. Commissioner Josefowitz inquired about enforcement mechanisms. Ms. Short reported that there is a shortage in resources and staff to implement adequate enforcement measures, but that there are fines that are imposed and collected for damaging trees. Commissioner Josefowitz suggested planting low maintenance trees and discussed consistency in planting as an aesthetic measure. Ms. Short reported that there is a Recommended Street Tree List for San Francisco that includes lower maintenance trees and other considerations.

Commissioner Wald inquired as to who could be encouraged to address this problem to save trees, promote biodiversity and make investments in trees and the urban forest cost-effectively. Mr. Swae reported that the Urban Forest Plan includes work on conducting a financial study for funding maintenance and planting of street trees in San Francisco. Ms. Short reported that the recommendation in the Plan includes the need for secured funding for maintenance and for planning for growth of the urban forest.

Urban Forestry Council Chair Dan Flanagan reported that the property owner has the right to select trees from the Recommended Street Tree List. He discussed the negative aspects of planting the same trees in one area that can be affected by a disease targeted toward a particular species. Ms. Short reported that the City is required to approve species that are proposed for planting in San Francisco.

Public Comment:

Ms. Lurilla Harris asked who would be responsible in the selection of street trees planted in medians. Ms. Short reported there is not one person that chooses the trees in the median and would depend on the process by which the median or planting is created. Ms. Harris recommended planting fuchsia flowers.

Mr. Frank Mason discussed the Urban Forest Plan five-week review period that was extended a week and questioned the approval/disapproval rate and low percentage of public comments received. He stated that the Urban Forest Plan was not available for review at the Public Library Government Documents Section in a timely manner. Mr. Mason expressed his concerns with (1) the amount of capital and maintenance costs contained in the finance document; (2) that there is no opt-out provision for disabled, seniors and home-bound that are unable to do the required maintenance; (3) that property owners may have to assume the responsibility and costs for broken sewer lines, and (4) that there is no mention of the environmental impact of concrete as a polluting industry.

Ms. Anastasia Glikshtern stated that she would like to see more street trees in San Francisco, but stressed the importance of the City having the ability and financing available to maintain the trees. She discussed the large amount of money that would be required to enact the measures contained in the Urban Forest Plan and expressed her concern that it would involve cutting down trees and the use of herbicides in the name of biodiversity and maintaining indigenous native species. Ms. Glikshtern questioned the current use of the term native and what could be considered native and provided a document written by Professor Shapiro on the definition of biodiversity.

Commissioner Wald suggested that the Urban Forest Plan should include a comprehensive definition of urban forestry and biodiversity.

Mr. Eric Brooks, Sustainability Chair, Green Party, stated that it is preferable to plant better quality and correct trees that require less maintenance measures and to secure funding for a real urban forestry program instead of pursuing home owners to do the maintenance. He stated that trees help with carbon sequestration and should be maintained instead of replaced in order to help with the climate crisis that would have the biggest impact on biodiversity. Mr. Brooks discussed recent studies that indicate that maintaining older trees would absorb less carbon than thought before and should be maintained unless they are unsafe or endangering a specific endangered species. He stated that people have exaggerated the idea of restoring to a pristine and earlier habitat when habitats change every 20,000 years.

Ms. Denise Louie suggested including "toyon", a native shrub, in the definition of what can be planted in an urban forest. She stated that the shrub grows to 15 feet tall, won't grow into the overhead wires, is beautiful all year long and produces red berries that wildlife depends on as a source of food.

5. Interrelationship between the San Francisco Urban Forestry Council and the Commission on the Environment. Sponsor: Commissioner Ruth Gravanis; Speakers: Dan Flanagan, Urban Forestry Council Chair and David Assmann, Acting Director (Informational Report and Discussion)

Commissioner Gravanis reported that Urban Forestry Council was created by a City Ordinance mandating that the Department of the Environment provide staffing for the Council. She reported that it is an unfunded mandate and requested a report on how the Council and Department staffing for the Council is funded, the Council's interrelationship with the Department and the Commission, and how the Council's positions line up with policies adopted by the Department and the Commission in its Strategic Plan.

Urban Forestry Council Coordinator Mei Ling Hui reported on how the Urban Forestry Council was formed, its history, vision, mission to improve urban forestry management across the City, and how goals align with the Department of the Environment's urban forestry goals. She reported on Council accomplishments, future plans, and goals. Ms. Hui stated that current resources are not adequate to fully staff the Council and discussed allocation of her staff time between Council work and other Department projects. Acting Director Assmann reported that the Department of the Environment proposed the urban forest program and creation of a Council to the Mayor's Office and Board of Supervisors. In the original conceptual structure, agencies with the most urban-forest related responsibility were required to contribute funding for the program, and there was initial support from five City departments. After the City's budget shortage, there was a reduction in City-department support, which led to less ability by the Department to provide the same level of staffing. Funding now is gradually increasing and has resulted in more staff time allocated to the program.

Urban Forestry Council Chair Flanagan discussed his role as the Council Chair in securing a competent Council membership, advocating and increasing Council funding, and engaging in a two-year strategic planning process. He reported on future goals to provide education and hold hearings on urban forestry projects, increase Council funding, creating a sound policy for the urban forest through the Urban Forest Plan, and many other forestry related goals.

Commissioner Gravanis suggested that the Council be involved in making recommendations and offering its expertise to the Commission on City projects that involve the urban forest and are brought before the Commission. Commissioner Wald suggested that both the Commission and the Council could endorse each other's efforts when there is agreement. She suggested that Council members receive Commission agendas and that Commissioners receive Council agendas so representatives can be sent to meetings on items of interest. Acting Director Assmann reported that a mechanism could be established through Department staff to facilitate two-way communication as a conduit on issues. Commissioner Gravanis suggested that the Department's website include information that the Council is not under the purview of the Commission. She suggested that the Department request a General Fund allocation to fund the Council.

Public Comment:

Ms. Dee Seligman discussed her interest in the history of the Urban Forestry Council and its interrelationship with the Department of the Environment relative to budget and structure. She inquired whether there had been prior disagreement between the Council and the Department in its history and whether goals are now more aligned. Acting Director Assmann reported that the Commission on the Environment and Urban Forestry Council are two separate entities. The Commission was established through Charter reform and the Urban Forestry Council through Board of Supervisors action. The Department of the Environment works with both entities, reports through the Commission, and supports the work of the Council and is its budgetary agent. There has never been a fundamental disagreement between the two entities. Commissioner Gravanis reported that no action has been taken by the Commission in disagreement with the Council.

Mr. Eric Brooks stated that places such as Mt. Sutro and Mt. Davidson are forests with habitat and wildlife living with them and should not be labeled as plantations. He stated that UCSF's arguments for cutting down thousands of trees at Mt. Sutro and other areas are the same arguments that timber companies use to clear-cut forests. Mr. Brooks stated that it is important to manage forests mechanically and not through the use of chemicals. He suggested that the Commission and Department not only work with the Department of Public Works, but also with the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission on work they are doing in landscaping for water and wetlands preservation restoration.

Mr. Frank Mason reported that in his review of the Climate Action Strategy Action Plan, urban forestry only helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions by a small percentage. He stated that over half a billion dollars will be spent in twenty years for a small percentage of benefits and asked what the cost benefit would be for such a marginal return. Mr. Mason reported on discrepancy of numbers that were shown in the Climate Action Strategy Plan Draft and the need for interaction to resolve discrepancies.

6. Review and Approval of Draft Resolution 2014-05-COE of Commission Support for Assembly Bill (AB) 2188 (Muratsuchi) "Solar energy: permits" for recommendation to the Commission on the Environment. (Explanatory Documents: AB2188 and Commission Draft and Approved Resolution of Support) Sponsor: Commissioner Nicholas Josefowitz; Speakers: Commissioner Nicholas Josefowitz; Sarah Wolf, Government Affairs, SunRun; Alison Healy, Renewable Energy Program Manager, Department of the Environment (Discussion and Action)

Commissioner Josefowitz reported that it now costs more to acquire a permit to install a solar system in California than to buy solar modules to install on your house. He discussed the varying fire codes and document requirements for solar installations between different jurisdictions, and the need to establish a common web portal for online applications. Commissioner Josefowitz stated that there is no reason why certain jurisdictions in California should be allowed to delay people from installing solar and discussed the need to establish a statewide standard for issuance of permits for rooftop solar energy installations. He explained that this bill would not have significant impact on San Francisco's permitting process but would require that San Francisco establish an expedited permit process for solar hot water systems.

Energy Program Manager Cal Broomhead introduced Renewable Energy Program Manager Alison Healy. He stated that he began working on solar permitting in 2001. Most of the costs for installations were for Planning Department and building permit costs rather than electrical permits. He spoke in support of the Resolution and AB2188 stating that it sets a high bar for local governments and would solve problems associated with expediting permits for solar water heating.

Renewable Energy Program Manager Alison Healy stated that AB2188 would remove barriers by removing soft costs that could be sixty percent of the installation and would focus on the wait and turnaround time. She stated that the Building Department would be working with the Department of the Environment to address any concerns. Ms. Healy discussed the importance of San Francisco being a leader in this effort and the costs savings that would result for each permit.

Ms. Sarah Wolf, SunRun, provided background information on SunRun and its impact on the solar industry, which she stated has built about 20,000 systems in California, generating 200 MW of solar energy annually, creating jobs, and had invented the third party solar funding model. She stated that the current permitting process increases costs, time, and labor, and results in a 30-day versus one day turnaround time that could result from creating permitting standards. Ms. Wolf stated that the growing solar industry increases jobs, energy savings, and lessens the need for fossil fuels. She spoke in support of AB2188 and appreciates the support of the Commission's Resolution in getting the bill approved in Sacramento.

Commissioner Arce spoke in support of AB2188 and suggested that a discussion be held on this topic at the joint SFPUC meeting on CleanPowerSF and the Climate Action Strategy. He stated that the bill would be before the Assembly Local Government Committee on April 23rd. Commissioner Arce reported that "Petroleum Coke" is making its way to the Bay Area.

Public Comment: Mr. Eric Brooks spoke in strong support of the Resolution and amendments made to the Resolution that were proposed by Commissioner Wald to remove the term "streamlining".

Upon Motion by Commissioner Josefowitz, second by Commissioner Arce, Resolution 005-14-COE was approved as amended (AYES: Commissioners Arce, Josefowitz, Gravanis and Wald; Absent: Commissioners King, Stephenson and Wan).

Commissioner Arce left the meeting at this time at which time the meeting reverted to a Policy Committee meeting.

7. Quarterly Review and Selection of Commission on the Environment and its Committees Accomplishments for 2014 for Inclusion in the 2014 Annual Report. (Explanatory Document: List of 2014 Commission and Committee Agenda Topics) (Discussion and Action)

This agenda item was continued to the Call of the Chair.

8. Director's Report and Updates. Speaker: David Assmann, Acting Director (Informational Report and Discussion)

Acting Director Assmann reported that the final candidate for Department Director will be interviewed Friday, and an announcement may be made next week. He reported on funding that had been raised and event sponsors for the Earth Day Breakfast. Commissioners were asked for additional names to invite to the event. The Deputy Director selection will be made when the Director is in place.

9. Communications. (Explanatory Document: Correspondence Log) (Information and Discussion)

Correspondence Log was provided for Committee review. Commissioner Gravanis discussed the usefulness of the correspondence log. No further discussion was held

10. Announcements. (Discussion) Acting Director Assmann reported that the website link on the Saturday Recology compost giveaway that Mr. Mason had stated was broken has now been repaired.

11. New Business/Future Agenda Items. (Discussion)

The quarterly review for selection of items to include in the 2014 Annual Report would be scheduled for the May Committee meeting. Commissioner Gravanis suggested an agenda item to discuss smart consumerism including establishing guidelines for consumption with emphasis on the carbon footprint of car/electric car purchases. Acting Director Assmann reported that Public Outreach Program Manager Donald Oliveira is participating in a smart consumption group and would be invited to discuss the topic at the May Policy Committee meeting. He suggested including Clean Transportation Program staff with knowledge in this area. Acting Director Assmann reported that he forwarded an article about an analysis of short-term climate pollutants and suggested this topic as a future agenda item.

Commissioner Wald inquired whether Department staff could work with environmental organizations to create product labeling that would include carbon footprint data.

Commissioner Josefowitz suggested discussing how the City could use its land and influence to generate renewable clean energy and manure. Commissioner Gravanis suggested a discussion on adding photovoltaics to walls. Commissioner Wald and Acting Director Assmann reported that they would not be present for the May 12 Committee meeting. A suggestion was made to reschedule the meeting to May 19, 20 or 21.

Public Comment:

Mr. Eric Brooks spoke in support of a discussion on establishing life cycle carbon footprint data of automobiles. He stated that the climate crisis is at a tipping point, and that an analysis should be made of the carbon footprint of a new electric vehicle car not only over its lifetime but its impacts in the next five to twenty years. He asked that the Committee consider adding a discussion on CleanPowerSF to its next agenda or at the next full Commission meeting. He

commented on Commissioner-protocols for following Sunshine Ordinance requirements relative to engaging with the public.

12. Public Comments: Members of the public may address the Committee on matters that are within the Committee's jurisdiction and are not on today's agenda. There was no public comment at this time.

13. Adjournment. The Policy Committee Meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

** Copies of explanatory documents are available at (1) the Commission's office, 1455 Market Street, Suite 1200, San Francisco, California, 94103 between the hours of 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Photo identification is required for access to the building; (2) on the Policy Committee's website <http://www.sfenvironment.org/commission/agendas>, or (3) upon request to the Commission Secretary at telephone number 415-355-3709, or via e-mail at Monica.Fish@sfgov.org. The meeting audio can be reviewed at the website link by meeting date <http://www.sfenvironment.org/commission/audio>.