

**MINUTES
ENVIRONMENTAL BOARD
October 17, 2022**

CALL TO ORDER

Pat Hunter called the in-person/virtual Environmental Board meeting to order at 6:06 pm on October 17, 2022.

ROLL CALL

The following members were present for roll call:

E-Board Members: Pat Hunter, Alternate/Acting Chair
Fred Malo, Member
Jane Hendricks, Member
Quinn Donnelly, Member
Tessa Schreiner, Member

Town Staff Present: Mark O'Meara, Staff Liaison
Jared Barnes, Planning Director
Chris Hassig, Board of Trustees Liaison
Kae McDonald, Boards and Commissions Clerk

Guests: Zuleika Pevec, CLEER Representative

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion Passed: Quinn ***moved*** to approve Environmental Board meeting minutes from the September 19, 2022, meeting. Tessa ***seconded*** the motion, and the minutes were ***unanimously approved***.

PERSONS PRESENT NOT ON THE AGENDA

Jared Barnes, the new Planning Director for the Town of Carbondale, introduced himself. He noted that he has been impressed with the level of community participation and volunteerism in Carbondale which was expressed through the Comprehensive Plan Update. He explained that prior to this position he lived in the Eagle River Valley for the last fifteen years, working for the Town of Avon in their Land Use Planning Department and then for Eagle County in the Transportation Department (ECO Transit). He added that in that position he did transportation planning, grant writing and mobility related projects including long-range planning and implementation projects.

Pat asked how the Comprehensive Plan and Update are being blended and pointed out that in his opinion the Town of Carbondale doesn't have a game plan for climate action. He suggested that the optimal way to make the Comprehensive Plan actionable is to make it part of the zoning regulations. Pat noted that in his opinion, his experience at the Board of Trustees check-ins is that it isn't very productive, and he quoted a passage from the David Suzuki website:

"Targets and objectives are meaningless if they aren't accompanied by detailed strategies for action and implementation. Crucially, the strategies your local government

chooses to reduce emissions must add up to the local target. A climate plan must also demonstrate accountability, detailing who is responsible for implementing the plan and keeping it on track as well as a clear budget for implementation. Your local government must report regularly on its progress and revise the plan if it isn't proving effective. Progress reports should be public so the residents can hold the government accountable for achieving its goals."

Pat also noted that he would like to see an Executive Summary as part of the Comprehensive Plan Update.

Quinn related that, at Hannah-Hunt's request, he had added the goals from the Comprehensive Plan Update Implementation Matrix to the Environmental Board's GoogleDoc. He noted that the Implementation Matrix does assign the Environmental Board responsibility for many of those action items.

Jared replied that there is an Executive Summary included in the Update and noted that the next steps in the implementation strategy will be to work with the various boards and commissions and Town Staff to prioritize specific action items as code-related or planning-related. He went on to note that once the Board of Trustees has approved the Update, the timeline for this next phase of work can be assigned.

Fred noted that one of the action items is to expand the circulator and he asked Jared if that is like what he did at Eagle County.

Jared replied that he worked on a few projects in Eagle and Gypsum and how to encourage and increase transit access; one of the projects was to create a circulator that went through those two communities in a more expansive way that provided greater opportunities to accessing transit. He acknowledged that a fixed-route transit system is expensive to operate and exploring other transit solutions might provide better cost/benefit outcomes; those solutions might range from something like Aspen's "Downtown" or first/last mile mobility including bikeshare programs to increase mobility ranges. He anticipated working with RFTA to improve/increase transit.

Fred pointed out that there are rumors that RFTA is willing to spend \$1,000,000.00 on the circulator, but even if that is approved there isn't enough staff to operate such a system. He added that for older adults with balance problems, electric bikes to expand the range of travel isn't an option, nor are older adults always willing to utilize ride-shares because they might be riding with strangers.

Jared agreed that staffing transit operations is a common problem and added that solutions aren't always easy.

MEMBER ANNOUNCEMENTS: COLIN QUINN RECOGNITION OF SERVICE, MEMBERSHIP TERMS

Pat noted that a Recognition of Service memo for Colin Quinn's service as the Environmental Board Chair was included in the packet. He volunteered to check with Colin to see if he would like an Environmental Board coffee mug.

Motion Passed: Tessa ***moved*** to recognize Colin Quinn for his service on the Environmental Board. Quinn ***seconded*** the motion, and it was ***unanimously approved***.

The Boards and Commissions Clerk noted that Frosty has been experiencing health issues that have prevented his attendance at Environmental Board meetings since April. Frosty recently reached out to the Environmental Board and asked for a leave of absence. The Boards and Commissions Clerk related that after a review of Resolution No. 7, Series of 1998 that established the Environmental Board, both the Town Clerk and Town Manager pointed out that the resolution does not provide relief in the form of an extended leave of absence. They expressed sympathy for his health challenges, but suggested that since his term ends in December, the most appropriate action would be for Frosty to reapply to the Environmental Board when his health improves, and he can play an active role as a board member.

Fred was willing to let his term expire and approve his application should he choose to apply later.

Quinn noted that with his term expiring in December, to allow him to get healthy and apply for a position when he wants to come back. He suggested keeping him on the email list so he can stay informed. He added that he has not yet met or spoken with Frosty because of his extended absence and because of the lack of participation, his term should be allowed to expire.

Tessa agreed that if Frosty isn't participating, there isn't much point to his retaining membership on the Board.

Motion Passed: Fred **moved** to allow Frosty's membership on the Environmental Board to expire in December 2022 and to encourage him to reapply when his health improves. Tessa **seconded** the motion, and it was **unanimously approved**.

CLEER UPDATES

Zuleika related that at last Friday's meeting, Garfield Clean Energy Board of Directors unanimously approved their draft goals. She noted that the document will be prepared into a formal document by the end of the year. She added that CLEER is on the October 25th Board of Trustees meeting for two adoptions:

- 2018 Green Energy Code
- Path to Netzero (lays out plan to implement regulations for new construction to achieve netzero by 2030)

Zuleika explained that they will be introducing some ideas for existing buildings to also achieve netzero. She added that they will have a contract in place with Resource Engineering Group (REG) by the end of 2022 to develop an electrification plan for the three highest energy consuming Town buildings – Town Hall, the Recreation Center and the Public Works building; if the plans provide a good path forward, REG may be retained to develop options for the remaining Town buildings.

Chris asked whether there was an update on the status of heat pumps.

Zuleika replied that that program wasn't discussed at the Garfield Clean Energy meeting, and she wasn't sure of its status.

Chris asked if CLEER was participating in the Colorado Mountain College/CoVenture worker training program.

Zuleika wasn't sure but indicated that CLEER may hire an intern at some point.

Pat commented that a Colorado Mountain College instructor had emailed a list of certifications related to industrial work. He noted that there is a company in Salida – Fading West – that is manufacturing pre-built homes while training its workers.

Fred noted that he had done some research and heat pumps cost between \$4,000 and \$8,000 or as much as \$10,000 with installation and that can be paired with rebates through the Inflation Reduction Act can be as much as \$9,750.00. He thought the program might be as simple as encouraging contractors to install heat pumps in new construction.

Zuleika replied that those rebates are specifically for low-to-moderate income and the program isn't entirely rolled out yet.

Chris asked if the solarization program was on-going and wondered if there was sufficient demand for a bulk purchase.

Zuleika replied that the solarization program was a one-time opportunity for the time being. She added that while there is more demand, there isn't currently any money available for the program. She also noted that CLEER's mission is more focused on energy conservation

STAFF UPDATES

Mark related that they are still waiting on parts and materials for the hydroplant on Nettle Creek. He commented that if they can begin construction this winter, they will, but it may be next spring before it gets underway. Mark explained that there is enough flow and fall of water on Nettle Creek to generate hydroelectricity and the use of this system will put the Nettle Creek plant close to netzero. He pointed out that unfortunately supply chain challenges have stalled the project but as soon as they have everything on hand, they will issue an RFP for the installation. Mark added that they are also working on reducing air flow at the wastewater plant, which will reduce energy consumption at that facility. Mark also noted that the ditches have been turned off for the year.

Pat asked about the status of the Crystal River Restoration project.

Quinn explained that they are currently raising additional funds to offset the unexpected higher costs of the project and that the project's RFP will be re-issued in December.

Chris commented that the Board of Trustees is considering if there is sufficient money in the budget for a \$200,000.00 match for the project.

BOARD OF TRUSTEE UPDATE

Chris related that he met with the Mayor, Town Manager and Finance Director to discuss climate-related spending. He noted that the Town Manager and Finance Director are instituting a new system that examines the budget details outside of the Board of Trustees meetings and they are in the process of accounting for all expenditures in the budget that are related to climate action. Chris was hopeful that that information will be ready by the Environmental Board's October 25th check-in with the Board of Trustees.

Chris explained that the Town is considering the installation of additional EV chargers to support the potential purchase of a new electric streetsweeper. He noted that there are no readily available all-electric police cruisers on the market at this time.

Chris reported that he participated in a walk along Highway 133 with Colorado Department of Transportation officials to discuss safer crossings of Highway 133. He noted that there is money in the 2023 budget to develop a design for the roundabout at Highway 133 and Industry Place and CDOT counseled using their consultant because they review the project for the Special Use Permit anyway. Chris added that there is also money in the 2023 budget for a preliminary mobility concept.

NEW BUSINESS

Pat explained that in past years the Environmental Board has run two ads – one regarding mulching leaves in place and the other regarding woodburning stoves. He noted that the Public Information Officer has updated the copy and he would like approval to submit them to the Sopris Sun as ¼-page ads at a cost of \$170.00 each.

Tessa asked how many people the newspaper ads reached.

Quinn also wondered if the Sopris Sun is the most effective way to advertise considering the variety of social media accounts available.

Tessa suggested running the ads for one or two weeks but suggested adding the topic to a later agenda to consider other strategies for outreach and education to maximize the Environmental Board's budget.

Pat replied that there are two goals for the ad: 1) put out a relevant message to the public and, 2) provide notice that the Environmental Board is doing something.

Motion Passed: Tessa ***moved*** to approve the expenditure of four ¼-page ads (two publications of each ad) in the Sopris Sun, contingent upon sufficient money in the Environmental Board's budget and a subsequent evaluation of the effectiveness of the ads. Quinn ***seconded*** the motion, and it was ***unanimously approved***.

UPCOMING BOARD OF TRUSTEES CHECK-IN MEETING

Pat commented that the October 25th meeting is the annual check-in between the Environmental Board and the Board of Trustees.

Quinn appreciated the opportunity to communicate with the Trustees and liked the ideas presented in Hannah-Hunt's draft included in the packet.

Chris suggested adding a section explaining the xeriscaping concepts for Town property. He noted that because a recent RFP published by the Parks Department didn't garner any respondents it will give them a chance to consider other approaches.

Tessa also liked the draft and preferred supporting a focus on a shorter list of actionable items.

Pat asked if board members could each express one issue of primary importance.

Quinn noted that the Town of Carbondale is leading by example as identified in items number 3, 5, 6, and 7 under Policy Priorities and Recommendations for BOT.

Pat commented that some of the items are under CLEER's purview. He asked how board members felt about item 9: Add a Sustainability Manager to Town Staff to implement the Climate Action Plan, write grants and lead Carbondale's climate action.

Quinn thought there was some overlap between CLEER and the Environmental Board in addressing items 1 through 9. He thought it might be helpful to have a dedicated person working to move goals forward.

Tessa thought that advocating for another full-time employee might be a hard sell, but the Environmental Board can try to make the case that the Town can't reach its climate action goals. In her opinion, the Board hasn't yet made a solid case and it might not be the first step she would recommend.

Pat related the Environmental Board's past successes and reiterated that it comes down to action items.

Fred wondered if a full-time employee would merely be another layer and a possible impediment to progress.

Jane expressed frustration at the amount of growth the Town is currently experiencing and stated that they need someone to help make things happen.

Quinn thought it was a cop-out to say nothing is happening because there are a lot of good things that the Town is undertaking. He agreed that they need to put in more work to justify a full-time employee.

Chris pointed out that item 9 was added to introduce the topic to the Board of Trustees.

Pat commented that many of the items take money, but the BOT doesn't have a line item for such projects. He thought that by having a full-time employee it would demonstrate a willingness to put money toward climate action but also would increase funding through the procurement of grants.

SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES

Preparedness

Quinn related that he met with the Planning Director a few weeks ago to discuss various aspects of preparedness. He has also become aware that the Public Works Director and Police Chief are working on a few ideas, and he will be meeting with them along with Hannah-Hunt in mid-November. Quinn noted that several communities in the valley have good preparedness plans that they can review, as well.

Climate Action Plan

Tessa explained that their subcommittee has narrowed down the priority areas and are discussing these with CLEER. She noted that the entire subcommittee is interested in working with Town staff before making any formal recommendations.

Fred added that he will be meeting with Michael later in the week and he has been working on procuring cost estimates for some of their initiatives. He wasn't sure when they would have a final product to present.

Ecology (Landscape)

Jane met with a neighbor to discuss her xeriscaping efforts; the neighbor was interested in possibly joining the committee. She explained that they are trying to encourage water-wise landscaping and noted that there are quite a few examples throughout town.

Quinn commented that he is very interested in the topic because they are working towards a xeriscaped front yard. He also wondered if the various mulching materials produce a difference in the heat island effect.

OTHER TOPICS

Pat queried the board members regarding their opinions of what the Environmental Board should be doing.

Tessa replied that she has been on the Environmental Board for a few months, and it could be an organized body that makes analyzed, thoughtful and strategic recommendations to the Board of Trustees in a way that funnels up into the overarching goals expressed through the document that Hannah-Hunt is compiling. She pointed out that it is important to track accomplishments so the Board can make bigger and better recommendations and to portray a structured force to share their message. She related that in other groups she is involved in, they choose their priority areas to focus on and set aside any distractions so they can hone their focus to make big changes.

Fred stated that it is an advisory board that makes recommendations to the Board of Trustees.

Pat asked whether the board members thought the focus should be solely on greenhouse gas emissions.

Tessa replied that that is somewhat of a misnomer because water doesn't have emissions, but it is important to the well-being of the community. She pointed out that if greenhouse gas emissions were the only concern, they would spend all their time on buildings and transportation.

Quinn agreed and pointed out that if the Town of Carbondale got to netzero tomorrow but because Carbondale is such a small community there wouldn't be a huge impact on the climate. He noted that while climate and emissions are important, there are other topics that could be focused on to make a real change such as water usage, and the board members would be remiss in ignoring those topics.

Fred pointed out that there is no silver bullet in achieving netzero, but it is rather like a shotgun blast toward one goal.

Pat replied that in his opinion the Board of Trustees isn't interested in the reduction of greenhouse gases by 2030.

Quinn countered that eight of the nine items under Policy Priorities and Recommendations for BOT are directly related to climate.

Jane wondered why there is continued construction in town and noted that while they can't make it stop, they still need to catch up with what has been created.

Pat pointed that they are still building with natural gas components and until that stops there will still be greenhouse gas emissions.

ADJOURNMENT

The October 17, 2022, regular meeting adjourned at 8:03 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for November 21, 2022 at 6:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Kae McDonald