

**MINUTES
ENVIRONMENTAL BOARD
February 15, 2023**

CALL TO ORDER

Hannah-Hunt Moeller called the in-person/virtual Environmental Board meeting to order at 6:03 pm on February 15, 2023.

ROLL CALL

The following members were present for roll call:

E-Board Members: Hannah-Hunt Moeller, Chair
Fred Malo, Member
Jane Hendricks, Member
Quinn Donnelly, Member
Michael Port, Member
Carly O’Connell, Member
Pat Hunter, Alternate

Town Staff Present: Mark O’ Meara, Town of Carbondale Staff Liaison
Kae McDonald Boards and Commissions Clerk

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion Passed: Fred Malo ***moved*** to approve Environmental Board meeting minutes from the January 18, 2023, meeting. Michael Port ***seconded*** the motion, and the minutes were ***unanimously approved***.

PERSONS PRESENT NOT ON THE AGENDA

There were no persons present, not on the agenda, to address the Environmental Board.

GO EV CITY ORDINANCE UPDATE: FEEDBACK FROM TOWN STAFF AND NEXT STEPS

Quinn Donnelly explained that he and Hannah-Hunt met with the Town Manager, the Public Works Director and the Fleet Manager and worked through the draft ordinance line-by-line. He added that the Town staff comments centered on developing policy versus another set of plans with the key policy being the consideration of electric versions before other technologies. Quinn committed to update the draft ordinance with their suggestions by Friday, February 17th with a planned discussion for approval at the March Environmental Board meeting.

Quinn noted that they also met with the Parks & Recreation Director for an update on current department practices and were pleased to learn that they are only purchasing electric versions of their smaller pieces of equipment and are seeking grants to purchase electric versions of their large pieces of equipment.

Fred asked if the ordinance would detail the locations of additional EV chargers.

Quinn replied that the ordinance would not because it is geared towards getting the Town eligible for the Go EV City program and setting policy and timelines rather than detailing infrastructure.

Hannah-Hunt commented that they did have a conversation about EV charging locations and clarified that the Go EV ordinance isn't addressing the actual infrastructure needs but is a policy statement putting targets in place. She added that there was a conversation about next steps and the process for identifying where the chargers can be placed. Hannah-Hunt explained that once Quinn has completed the edits, the document will be circulated amongst the Environmental Board members for feedback after which it will be submitted to Town staff for a final review. She noted that the meeting was very positive and there was a lot of support from Town staff.

Michael asked if the draft ordinance required substantial changes.

Quinn replied that the edits revolved around timelines, numbers, and format. He noted that the Town maintains detailed records of their equipment and when it needs to be replaced, so they will utilize the Go EV City as a guideline for choosing electric wherever possible. He pointed out that it was his observation that as he talks with Town staff, he is finding that a lot of the initiatives the Board members are promoting, the Town is doing.

BOARD OF TRUSTEE/TOWN STAFF UPDATE

Hannah-Hunt noted that Chris was not able to attend the meeting, so there won't be an update from him.

Mark commented that he didn't attend either the Board of Trustees meeting or the following staff meeting, so he couldn't update the group on those items. He explained that his department is gearing up for the upcoming seasons and will be cleaning ditches as soon as the weather settles out. He noted that he is waiting on one more valve for the hydro plant and once they have that in-hand, the project can go out to bid. He reported that the pre-bid meeting for the Crystal River Restoration project was well attended, and that CLEER is looking to re-enact the online energy usage website with Energy Star – it is a different program than before but has extensive capabilities. He pointed out that in reviewing the solar panel efficiencies on Town buildings, the output was lower than expected so he is troubleshooting the problem.

Jane asked about the automated headgate that will be installed for the Weaver Ditch.

Mark explained that while the headgate was installed last week, the automation will need to be engineered and that process won't happen for some time. He noted that the regulation of the headgate will be demand driven, adding that they will maintain the "push water" as the low set point and the headgate will automatically open if that recedes.

Fred commented that he heard the KDNK interview when the mayor was discussing WeCycle. He related that there will be bike racks in several locations and a mix of regular and electric bikes available for use.

Hannah-Hunt added that she would like to touch base with Mark on a possible ditch tour.

Mark noted that the Town has hired a previous water commissioner to be the ditch rider this summer and thought that it will greatly benefit the Town to have someone with his

experience on board. Mark added that even though they haven't sponsored one in the last few years, the water conservancy district typically had a ditch tour in the fall.

CLEER CLIMATE ACTION PLAN UPDATE

Hannah-Hunt explained that although Zuleika was not in attendance, Zuleika had circulated an email that detailed that information, asking for feedback from the board members, but rather than read the email into the record she wanted to focus on one topic covered by CLEER's 2023 work plan, specifically "Energy Saving."

Michael shared his screen and showed that under Energy Savings were five Action Items:

1. Code Development
 - a. Adopt the IECC 2021 code
 - b. Update the Residential Efficient Building Program and required documentation
 - c. Implement 2022 goals for Path to Net Zero
 - i. Implement code changes for new construction per 2022
 - ii. Begin work on Code Changes for Existing Buildings
 - d. Support Unified Development Code modifications

Michael thought item "d" might be referring to a natural gas ban. He noted that Zuleika had shared the action items with the Climate Action Plan subcommittee with the opportunity to comment, so he thought the group had been included in the process.

Pat commented that he had circulated Bethlehem, Pennsylvania's, action plan and thought it was a well-designed road map. He noted that such action plans should be added to the Comprehensive Plan, pointing out, however, that it has to be included in the Unified Development Code in order to codify such actions.

Hannah-Hunt asked for clarification whether Pat wanted the Board of Trustees to approve such changes. She noted that a natural gas ban has been discussed a lot and thought that the Environmental Board could undertake moving code amendments along, but also pointed out that it may be more involved than that.

Fred commented that although the immediate impact might not be noticeable, these changes will add up.

Hannah-Hunt suggested the commission members familiarize themselves with Garfield Clean Energy's goals because it provides a good framework through which to see Carbondale's initiatives. Hannah-Hunt identified CLEER's Action Item #2:

2. Home Energy Score Pilot Project
 - a. Perform 100 FREE Home Energy Scores on Carbondale homes
 - b. Provide intensive energy coaching to homeowners with a focus on looking ahead to Inflation Reduction Act program to tap upcoming DOE funding opportunities
 - c. Use experience with HES to inform trigger points

Hannah-Hunt commented that in terms of triggering a home energy score, new construction will be easier to implement while existing buildings will require more a broader array of trigger points.

Michael thought the prospect was exciting and as the Environmental Board communicate about this program with the hope that eventually all the homeowners in Carbondale will have a baseline regarding their energy usage, which might then prompt CLEER's Action Item #5.

Hannah-Hunt replied that the question is then how to determine who participates in the free home energy scores. She thought having a broad cross-section of housing stock would be most useful.

Pat pointed out that he has a complete list of Carbondale's buildings with pertinent information from the Garfield County Assessor's office. He noted that he shared a copy with CLEER as part of their benchmarking process and suggested that that list could be used to identify potential buildings for the energy scores.

Michael suggested obtaining a current copy of that list.

Hannah-Hunt identified CLEER's Action Item #3:

3. Implement electrification plan for town-owned buildings using REG report as guide
 - a. 2023 – Town Hall
 - b. Assess PV on Public Works building

Mark commented that while he wasn't familiar with the REG report, he thought they would be reviewing the solar equipment. He added that the Town is re-initiating past efforts, and this was a part of it.

Michael replied that the report is complete, but not yet fully implemented.

Mark noted that the HVAC lifecycle was examined but the cost/benefit analysis didn't justify immediate replacement.

Hannah-Hunt identified CLEER's Action Item #4, noting that it is grant-dependent, but the goal is to form a net zero district, and Action Item #5:

4. Follow up on the DOE grant that was submitted to utilize ground source heat for the Net Zero District concept that includes the Third Street Center, 2nd Street Townhomes, RFSD properties and the library. If the current grant that was submitted gets awarded, use the proposal to apply for other funding opportunities.
5. Plan Thermalize-style heat pump program to launch in 2024 (with IRA rebates)

Hannah-Hunt committed to communicating with Zuleika regarding the feedback. She asked if there are any additional comments to please communicate that to her and she will include it.

LANDSCAPE/ECOLOGY DISCUSSION

Hannah-Hunt explained that the landscape/ecology subgroup has chosen to brand themselves as "Bee Friendly Carbondale." She noted that the intent of subcommittee is to focus on ecology and initially came out of reviewing landscape codes with the goal of reducing water usage and promoting habitat. She reported that she has had a productive conversation with Mark last summer regarding Carbondale's water portfolio and while there aren't drastic shortages compared to other places, the focus of effort is to promote pollinator health and low-water and native/natural plants. She referred to the packet attachment and read through the coalition's vision:

“Our vision is to increase Carbondale’s biodiversity, drought tolerance, and beauty through native and regionally adaptive plants. Inspired by both water and wildlife conservation, we aim to identify, replace, and manage the transformation of nonessential irrigated turf into resilient, pollinator-friendly landscapes.”

Hannah-Hunt explained that the goals of the coalition are:

1. Smartly use our municipal water resources by reducing public irrigation by 20% by 2025.
2. Reduce energy consumption related to turf maintenance.
3. Cultivate native plants in our home gardens and public landscapes.
4. Increase bee, bird, and butterfly habitat.
5. Create pollinator corridors throughout Carbondale.

She added that they plan to accomplish those goals through three actions, beginning with Action Item #3 – residential resources: providing an informational resource, and possibly pair CSU Extension Service Master Gardeners with homeowners in a mentoring situation.

Hannah-Hunt noted that action item #2 is related to municipal landscape standards and to that end she spoke with Glenwood Springs staff regarding their low water and xeric standards, how those were implemented via their code and how that is working with an eye towards what strategies Carbondale might adopt.

Mark commented that he has been reviewing large development plans that have previously been approved and compiling a list of plants identified on those plans.

Hannah-Hunt replied that Glenwood Springs has a plant list in place, and they would like to consider something similar for Carbondale. She added that the coalition is also exploring a native pollinator landscape, and this is their most pointed action item. She explained that she has spoken with the Town of Carbondale Parks & Recreation Director and Sue Gray regarding the landscape surrounding the Thompson House with the intent to explore the costs and feasibility of installing a demonstration pollinator garden in that space.

Pat asked how the 20 residential lawns would be selected and what costs were involved.

Hannah-Hunt replied that many would be the lawns of community members already engaged in the topic and also relates to Action Item #3. She explained that there are a myriad of existing programs, and their plan is to connect with what is already in place. She added that the concept of turf replacement is gaining momentum and the coalition would like to sponsor ongoing workshops and walking tours, with Dandelion Days learning tent a launch pad for that programming.

Michael noted that one of the Climate Action Plan Focus Areas is food and wondered if this would be the appropriate venue for promoting the planting of fruit trees and other food products.

Hannah-Hunt replied that the coalition’s focus is mostly on reducing water use but thought that it made sense to promote a transition from turf to either low-water or edible plantings. She added that while she supports an edible landscape, the coalition must limit what they take on.

Hannah-Hunt added that the coalition's next steps will be a group meeting focused on grant funding for demonstration gardens and education, meet with the Tree Board and meet with Mark O'Meara.

DANDELION DAY UPDATES

Hannah-Hunt explained that the Environmental Board will choose the Dandelion Days t-shirt design at the March meeting and that Quinn Port is currently advertising for designs. She noted that current topics for the learning tent is Pat's proposed induction hot plate – with details to resolve including power and obtaining appropriate health and safety permissions for food service – and Bee Friendly Carbondale. She asked if anyone would be interested in working with her on the logistics of the learning tent, to which Michael Port answered in the affirmative.

Pat asked what the theme was for Dandelion Days.

Hannah-Hunt replied that it was "Bonedale Bees."

Pat noted that there won't be sufficient space for both the Environmental Board items and the Learning Tent in the one tent the Environmental Board has, so a second tent will need to be purchased. He added that there are two tables available and thought a new sign was warranted.

GREEN IS THE NEW BLACK FASHION SHOW NEWSPAPER INSERT AD

Pat explained that he had put together the ad included in the meeting packet and it will be part of the "Green is the New Black" fashion show Sopris Sun insert.

Hannah-Hunt asked that the dates for the Waste Diversion Day and Dandelion Day be confirmed. She also suggested that "We support" be substituted for "Upcoming Events," and that reference to the recycling guide be removed.

Discussion ensued regarding "Pesticide-Free Parks," but the board members chose to leave that item on the advertisement.

Hannah-Hunt asked for confirmation that the ad would be run one time in the insert and that Pat would obtain a purchase order number confirming the Sopris Sun's cost estimate and submit it to the Finance Department.

Motion Passed: Fred ***moved*** to approve the cost of a one-time ad to be included in the "Green is the New Black" fashion show insert. Jane ***seconded*** the motion, and it was ***unanimously approved***.

CLIMATE ACTION FUNDING: ASPEN FOUNDATION GRANT AND 8TH STREET PROJECT

Pat informed the commission members that the Aspen Foundation accepts applications twice per year and thought this might be a possible avenue for additional climate action funding.

Hannah-Hunt replied that the Bee Friendly Carbondale coalition has considered the grant for possible funding.

Michael suggested another project to consider for funding through an Aspen Foundation grant would be the Free Energy Audits sponsored by CLEER.

Pat commented that the second half of the 8th Street project is planned for this year and noted that, in his opinion, the proposed improvements are unnecessary. He added that he met with the mayor and proposed that project be suspended in order to use that money for climate action funding.

Carly responded that it is a dangerous precedent to pit the Environmental Board's goals against capital improvement projects that have already gone through the public process.

Fred noted that he was happy to see the 8th Street project because it would make it safer for bike riders but pointed out that in his experience, the improvements haven't made it much safer.

Hannah-Hunt replied that it is important to get ahead of projects while they are going through the public process and regardless of her opinion about the project as a community member, she isn't comfortable supporting Pat's proposal as a member of the Environmental Board.

ADJOURNMENT

The February 15, 2023, regular meeting adjourned at 8:02 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 20, 2023 at 6:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Kae McDonald