

**MINUTES
ENVIRONMENTAL BOARD
June 20, 2022**

CALL TO ORDER

Pat Hunter called the in-person/virtual Environmental Board meeting to order at 6:02 pm on June 20, 2022.

ROLL CALL

The following members were present for roll call:

E-Board Members: Pat Hunter, Alternate/Acting Chair
Fred Malo, Member
Quinn Donnelly, Member
Genevieve Villamizar, Member
Nicole Rebeck-Stout, Member
Michael Port, Member
Tessa Schreiner, Member

Town Staff Present: Mark O'Meara, Staff Liaison
Kae McDonald, Boards and Commissions Clerk

Guests: Zuleika Pevec, CLEER Representative

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion Passed: Tessa ***moved*** to approve Environmental Board meeting minutes from the May 16, 2022, meeting. Michael ***seconded*** the motion, and the minutes were ***unanimously approved***.

PERSONS PRESENT NOT ON THE AGENDA

There was no one present, not on the agenda, to address the Environmental Board.

NEW MEMBER APPLICATIONS: RICHARD VOTTERO

Richard was not in attendance, so this agenda item was postponed for a later meeting.

MOUNTAIN FAIR BROCHURE ADVERTISEMENTS

Pat noted that he had requested ideas for an Environmental Board ad to be included in the Mountain Fair brochure. He anticipated it to be a ¼ page ad with the board's logo and room for two or three comments. He pointed out that he only got a response from Fred, so he wasn't planning on pursuing it.

Mark asked what the purpose of the ad was.

Pat replied that it was meant to increase the awareness of community members about the Environmental Board and other environmental messages. He noted that there was approximately \$2,500.00 left in the board's 2022 budget.

Michael thought it might be valuable to pursue.

Pat wasn't sure of the timeline to submit ads for the brochure, but if board members support it, he will see if there is still time to submit something.

Fred suggested highlighting battery-operated gardening tools or the Town's idling ordinance.

Michael suggested mentioning the beneficial electrification program being developed by CLEER.

Tessa pointed out that the most effective ads either educate the public about a concept or are a call to action.

Motion Passed: Fred *moved* to approve the advertising expense contingent upon the Mountain Fair submission deadline and with language to be determined. Michael *seconded* the motion, and it was *unanimously approved*.

GENEVIEVE'S RETIREMENT FROM THE ENVIRONMENTAL BOARD

Genevieve commented that the Environmental Board has effective members who can move the work forward and she needs to step away to work on his health, being a mother and re-growing her business after completing graduate school. She indicated that she would rather volunteer on a subcommittee – specifically one that is nature related. She noted that she had previously met with Hannah-Hunt to discuss her retirement.

Pat remarked that when he first joined the Environmental Board, there were dedicated subcommittees appointed to pursue different topics – he served on the building code subcommittee, for example, that updated the residential and commercial (green) building codes. He explained that the subcommittees met between meetings and noted that it requires additional time commitment. He added that he would like to officially designate a Landscape Subcommittee.

Nicole commented that she would like to see more updates on the Google Doc list and as it stands, most everyone would like to contribute to the effort and some new projects still need to be launched. She noted that she would like to see a work plan with goals and objectives and a timeline -- treat it like a real project but also recognize the volunteer nature of the Environmental Board with a reasonable timeline. She suggested a brief update of each subcommittee at the beginning of each board meeting.

Tessa agreed with Nicole's suggested structure and noted her preference to pursue a few projects with no more than two or three subcommittees to start.

Nicole added that the Landscape Subcommittee consists of two strategies: 1) Community building activities that include incentives and would be undertaken by Genevieve and 2) Proposed code amendments that would be undertaken by Nicole. She thought it would be helpful to add a committee column to the Google Doc that would list participants.

Motion Passed: Genevieve *moved* to form a Landscape Subcommittee with goals, outlined, timelines outlined and members' roles in the subcommittee outlined knowing that the three-year transition program will fall under the auspices of the subcommittee and

memorialize the first landscape code for Carbondale. Michael **seconded** the motion, and it was **unanimously approved**.

CLEER: VARIOUS TOPICS

Zuleika commented that she wanted to begin by returning to the Beneficial Electrification discussion and clarify aspects of the EcoBlock concept. She noted that at the last board meeting there was extensive discussion about microgrids and explained that while microgrids are part of the concept, it is primarily a way to facilitate bulk purchases of energy efficient items for a specific neighborhood, providing a way for more community members to participate. She pointed out that while the primary way to participate is through financing, equity issues also need to be considered. Zuleika outlined several programs that could be considered:

- Alaska HeatSmart/Thermalize Juneau is a program supporting the bulk purchase of heat pumps. Heat pumps are an energy efficient way to both heat and cool buildings and the CLEER programming would be set up similarly to the Solarize program with possible rebates and/or contractor-offered discounts. She noted that both Holy Cross and Excel currently offer rebates county-wide and for those property owners that can/are willing to do so, a “return the rebate” program could be implemented for lower income community members. CLEER staff supports this type of programming.
- The Fort Collins EPIC program provides rebates and/or loans to install the equipment and the balance is paid off on the utility bill. In the event the property is sold, the balance remains with the property. Zuleika wasn’t sure this program could work in Carbondale because the Town doesn’t own the utilities.
- The City of Ithaca, New York, decided to electrify all the buildings through long-term low interest loans. They also received a grant from the State of New York to hire a project manager. Zuleika pointed out that Ithaca does own the utilities, so that facilitated the programming. She noted that the Town of Carbondale municipal buildings are 100% renewable through a combination of solar rooftop arrays and solar subscriptions, but there are many commercial and residential buildings that need to be upgraded which would require a significant commitment by the Town of Carbondale.

Zuleika explained that the Thermalize and EcoBlock programs are the most achievable of the listed programs. She added that there are several federal grant programs that could facilitate this work if they were awarded to the Town.

Quinn noted that in the past using electricity was discouraged because it was more inefficient than using gas and asked if there was data that illustrated how much more efficient it is now.

Zuleika replied that there was now a lot of data that illustrated how efficient electricity was. She added that there is a large out-of-pocket cost to install a heat pump and reminded the board members that while the gas bill would go down, the electric bill would go up.

Michael commented that the big question for him is how much the Town of Carbondale would contribute and suggested it could be a topic for the Environmental Board/Board of Trustees work session.

Fred noted that in an ideal world there would be no “grid” and each building would be its own power source. He asked Zuleika if that was a feasible option.

Zuleika replied that that is an unlikely option in the foreseeable future.

Nicole thought it was good timing to promote the inclusion of matching funds in the 2023 Town of Carbondale budget.

Tessa thought the program options were interesting and wondered how they fit into Carbondale's Climate Action Plan. She suggested considering how best to move the needle forward most efficiently and asked Zuleika about next steps for the EcoBlock bulk purchase might be.

Zuleika clarified that the financial commitment for the EcoBlock would be undertaken by a neighborhood while the Thermalize program is a community wide campaign sponsored through CLEER.

Tessa asked Zuleika which program might have the highest potential for success.

Zuleika responded that the Thermalize campaign is much broader and might appeal to more community members. She pointed out that there could be a commercial aspect to the program as well.

Genevieve asked if CLEER had to focus on only one program.

Zuleika responded that the other programming would require participation from the Town of Carbondale.

Michael pointed out that the City of Denver has a climate tax and sponsors a rebate program. He noted that there is a lot of participation by community members.

Pat commented that the Town of Carbondale budgets \$25,000.00 for climate action. He noted that he brought this fact up at a Board of Trustees meeting along with the suggestion that that amount wasn't enough to fund a professional environmental staff person. He pointed out that the Town of Carbondale has yet to make a big financial commitment for environmental action. Pat mentioned that he emailed the Town Manager information on an electric vehicle charging station program along with a map denoting current charging stations and suggestions for new locations. He suggested adding that topic to the list to discuss during the Board of Trustee's work session. Pat went on to note that he also sent out an informational article on the Ithaca, New York, program, and the financing for that project is well over \$100 million dollars and uses outside financing and an experienced contractor from New York City. He commented that he received a response from the Mayor and Mayor Pro Tem and the Mayor recommended bringing actionable items to the Board of Trustees. He added that he is concerned because neighboring municipalities are seemingly well ahead of Carbondale in terms of climate action.

Mark commented that any actionable items would be budgeted from the General Fund.

Pat replied that while there is some expertise on the Environmental Board, the organization isn't set up to develop programming – the role of the Environmental Board is to consider whether programming makes sense and benefits the community. He reiterated his desire to have dedicated staff working on climate action. He suggested that in terms of the EcoBlock concept, the Catholic Diocese owns a building designed for low-income rentals

and because it is a single owner there would be the opportunity to manage the construction sequence and refine the program. Pat noted that the Carbondale South units might be another feasible location.

Michael agreed that those buildings might be viable and suggested focusing on completing CLEER's scope of work.

Pat commented that although many municipal programs start with government buildings as an example, the previous Town Manager completed a survey of Town-owned buildings, and the retrofits would be very costly. He pointed out that heat pumps can be added without retrofits.

Mark responded that if the equipment was replaced before the end of its lifecycle, the Town would have lost out on those pieces of equipment that had been purchased within the last 15 years.

Tessa added that the City of Aspen has undertaken an energy efficiency review of all the buildings in Aspen using an EPA tool and they are in Phase 1 which is benchmarking all the municipal buildings. She noted that Phase 2 will introduce energy efficiency standards required at the time of equipment replacement.

Mark pointed out that CLEER is in the process of replacing the Navigator program with EnergyCAP and part of that capability will update a building's energy usage benchmark.

Tessa asked Zuleika to outline what CLEER needed from the Environmental Board.

Zuleika listed options including 1) EcoBlock, 2) a community wide Thermalize program, 3) a hybrid of the Fort Collins EPIC and Ithaca, New York, programs which would be administered by the Town of Carbondale and requested direction as to where CLEER should put their efforts.

Tessa responded that given the limited resources, the Thermalize program would have the greatest impact with the lowest administrative requirements. She thought that program was an attractive next step.

Nicole agreed with Tessa that the Thermalize program is the most achievable right now. She suggested making sure all the program documentation and advertisements are bilingual and to include an option to contribute to an equity fund for lower-income residents.

Fred pointed out that financing is the challenge and is still considering which option he supports. He commented that he really liked the Ithaca program but realized it wasn't practicable.

Michael agreed with Nicole and Tessa and suggested coupling the Thermalize Program with the Weatherize program. He asked if it was possible for Zuleika to develop a program matrix to facilitate their consideration.

Pat suggested itemizing the cost and timeline.

Nicole replied identifying CLEER's initial investment in the program, the manpower and administration requirements, as well as the potential for excluding segments of the community's population.

Michael pointed out that the Thermalize program's main metric is heat pumps, while the other programs may have an array of equipment. He pointed out that the theoretical impact of the program would be the reduction of greenhouse gases.

Quinn supported Michael's request for a program matrix.

Zuleika agreed to develop a matrix that would include a comparison of the various programs, with a focus on greenhouse gas reduction, inclusivity, and up-front costs.

Tessa pointed out that EcoBlock seems indivisible and suggested adding level of complexity to the matrix, as well.

Quinn suggested including obstacles to each program.

Pat reminded the board members that the budget process is beginning soon and suggested considering a budget request of up to \$400,000.00 that would fund a full-time staff member and additional CLEER support among other things. He pointed out that since the Climate Action Plan was approved in 2017, the Town of Carbondale has only contributed \$50,000.00 to climate action.

Fred suggested going to the Board of Trustees with outlines of programming to reduce greenhouse gases and let the Board of Trustees decide how much they want to contribute. He suggested choosing the program that can provide the biggest bang for the buck.

Michael pointed out that the budget request will be informed by the matrix Zuleika provides.

Quinn agreed that there needs to be a plan for how the money will be spent.

Pat commented that there are only seven years until 2030 to reduce emissions to the goal level and the costs are going to go up the longer reductions are put off. He thought part of the budget could fund a grant writer.

Nicole agreed with the strategy to ask for more money than needed but pointed out it is important to tell the story of why the money is needed. She suggested painting a narrative about what can be achieved with each line item and agreed to work on the concept.

Tessa agreed with Nicole's suggestion and suggesting starting with the "what" not "how."

Zuleika pointed out that they are beginning to develop CLEER's 2023 scope of work and thought it would be beneficial to make sure it reflects those identified concepts. She noted that the ReEnergize program had a \$150,000.00 budget for rebates (no staff time was included) and where possible, participants were directed into other programs. She added that the program will fund rebates on 35 to 45 households, and they haven't yet had to turn anyone away.

Pat commented that that budget was specifically for program administration and reiterated the need to access grants. He didn't think the Board of Trustees was thinking in those terms yet.

DEVELOP ACTION PLAN FOR ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGERS

This agenda item was tabled for an upcoming meeting.

CONTINUE DISCUSSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL BOARD GOALS

This agenda item was touched on under Genevieve's retirement from the Environmental Board during the discussion about forming a Landscape Subcommittee.

OTHER BUSINESS

Tessa volunteered to take minutes at the August Environmental Board meeting while Kae is out of town.

Michael asked when the Environmental Board/Board of Trustees Work Session was scheduled.

Pat commented that in his experience, the sessions aren't productive because even when the Environmental Board presented a solid program for approval, it never went very far.

Tessa replied that the Environmental Board is supposed to inform and make proposals to the Board of Trustees. She wondered if they could go to the meeting with other ideas to work on, rather than get direction on projects the Board of Trustees would like the board to work on.

Mark thought the Google Doc was a good foundation to open a conversation with the Board of Trustees and to see if they have other suggestions. He pointed out that all relationships require communication, and the Climate Action Plan will be up front for the next ten years.

Pat didn't think a single meeting with the Board of Trustees was the direction to go. He suggested meeting with them on a topical basis – such as the electric vehicle charging stations – instead.

Tessa thought there was value in both strategies and indicated a willingness to help develop a PowerPoint for the work session.

Pat suggested the board members investigate comparable projects to solidify the costs for specific line-item requests.

ADJOURNMENT

The June 20, 2022, regular meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for July 18, 2022 at 6:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Kae McDonald