



Meeting Minutes

SUBJECT: Ecology and Environmental Awareness Committee

DATE: June 25, 2009

LOCATION: City Hall, 1st Floor Main Conference Room

FROM: Michael W. Pratt, P.E., Director of Public Works

ATTENDEES: Diane Meyer (Chair), Richard Marx, Pamela Fournier, Catherine Werner, Stan Braude, M. Lee Gerdelman, Peter John Le Blanc Jr., Punit Jain, Mike Pratt (Staff Liaison), Daneen Schlereth (Recording Secretary)

ABSENT: Alex Bornstein, Martha Kohn, Andrea Maddox-Dallas (Aldermanic Representative)

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER: at 5:00pm.

APPROVAL OF PRIOR MEETING MINUTES: The May meeting minutes were approved with an amendment by Pamela Fournier. In the beginning of the minutes, Peter McMillan from Pedro's Planet was referred to as Peter, half way through the minutes Peter's name changed to Pat. Minutes were amended to reflect Peter throughout.

CITY VIEWS: Mike advised the committee the City provides environmental information in every issue of City Views. Mike suggested that anytime we have something we want to submit, we should.

CATHERINE'S REPORT - Catherine stated that she received an email from Tim Wonish of the Clayton School District, stating that the Captain School has a good recycling program ongoing and that they have also implemented a green cleaning program. She stated that he attached a list of items that they recycle. Tim said he did not know if their waste hauler would give a presentation to the EEAC. He stated that they currently have a contract for three years, but did not provide the waste haulers name. She said this response was consistent with the meeting she had with them. Their purchasing policy has nothing specific; he said they do ask their contractors to be responsible; to try to work green products into any of their projects, where applicable. Catherine said she thought the email was a little defensive; he was basically saying here's our information--were doing a good job. She felt their attitude was, "don't call me, I'll call you."

Tim said he was meeting with the City's Public Works Director in a few weeks to see what he could learn from him. Mike confirmed he did call but they haven't set up a meeting yet.

Pamela asked who she met with. Catherine said she originally sent her email to the Superintendent and the Chief Financial Officer; however her email was given to Tim Wonish, who is the Director of Facility Services.

Stan and Catherine both agreed that their program looked good on paper, and it's certainly a good place to start. Catherine said she doesn't have first hand experience with the school district; she hears everything from her sister; and apparently the information is not being translated to the parents.

Catherine wasn't sure what authority the committee has to make recommendations or to suggest they do development a purchasing policy, or provide them with examples of other purchasing policies.

Diane felt Catherine's efforts to make a connection with someone from the School District, is a good first step and a "call to action."

Catherine asked Mike if he would be the committee's "champion." Mike said he would be very happy to speak with someone from the school district; but when you are referring to "champion," the committee is a City committee and doesn't have authority over the school district. He advised the committee, that he doesn't even have children in the Clayton School District; and doesn't feel he has any authority over them. Mike said again he would be happy to speak with them and discuss what the city has done; and help them understand the importance of this; but reiterated he that he can't tell Tim to do anything.

Catherine was hoping Mike could convince Tim on how important recycling is and let him know that it is a priority for the City of Clayton. The Mayor supports environmental initiatives and we need the school district to be supportive. Mike told Catherine, "If you think Tim was defensive with you, I wonder how he is going to react to someone from the City telling him how to do business."

Mike was curious on how many times Catherine talked to Tim; and wondered how Tim knew to call him. Catherine said it took a little while for her to hear back from anyone, she emailed the Superintendent on Friday, May 29; and didn't get a response until June 18--almost 3 weeks later.

Pamela said that she doesn't believe anyone on the committee is trying to be punitive or looking over anyone's shoulder; we just want to encourage the school district to do what we are doing; because the children that go to Clayton's schools are the children that live here. With the City encouraging recycling, the committee wants to make sure our schools sending the same message; so the kids don't throw their cans in the trash at school.

Pamela said what she thinks the committee just wants to have a seamless recycling effort from everyone in the City. She feels the schools have our kids for majority of the day; and we want to make sure that our efforts at home are continued throughout the day.

Mike said that he thinks that the City has a very good relationship with the school district. The committee doesn't have any authority over the school district; and he feels that the residents

and parents would have more influence in that area than the City does; but he will be happy to talk with Tim.

Catherine thought it would be helpful if we had a greater level of transparency or information sharing; to know what is going on with the school district, and if there is something we can do to help. Perhaps some of the information we are gathering in the City could be helpful in the school district. Catherine said it took her three weeks to get a response from anyone. She felt if we just need more shared information; no one said it has to be done a certain way. The district should know that we are here to help; and we might have resources that could be beneficial to them.

Mike said if he doesn't hear back from Tim in a couple of weeks, he will give him a call. Catherine said she is very passionate about this and is willing to help wherever needed.

RESTAURANT RATING SYSTEM: Diane asked if anyone brought in any information on the restaurant rating system, or the decal system we talked about at the last meeting.

Diane said she found out there is some type of City restaurant association; which is a group of businesses or a group of owners of businesses; but wasn't sure of the name. She also found out there is also a group in the County that gets together. Diane thinks that at some point we might want to have a guest speaker from one of those groups to come to one of the meetings to speak to us.

Stan brought in some information that he found about the Santa Monica Restaurant Association. He said that it didn't give specifics on a recycling rating program; however this is some of the programs they use to certify their restaurants. Richard felt the information that Stan brought was very informative; it does talk about a certification that the restaurants can publicize, however it is much more than what we wanted to get into at this time. Richard stated that we don't want businesses to feel like we are making them do this, especially after the smoking ban. We want them to be able to advertise some type of certification that says "we are green." Pamela thinks we should continue to do what we have planned; however, with all the rules and regulations you hear about in Clayton, we definitely don't want them to think we are forcing them into this.

Diane asked the committee if they thought this would be something we would want to make into an ordinance; or would this be a certification that we awarded. Stan thought it should be just a voluntary program.

Catherine asked if any of the Clayton restaurants were already certified by the Green Restaurant Association. Stan said that he didn't see any of our restaurants listed.

Stan said he wasn't sure where the term "Green Wash" originated, but he thought it was an appropriate term that described some of these programs perfectly. Basically, you pay to use their logo; they collect a fee and the owners pledge to do certain things; and then they get to advertise they are a certified green business.

The Green Restaurant Association is national; and it provides four levels of certification. The criteria are water use, waste disposal to include recycle, type of supplies, food (how much

locally), and energy usage. There is a fee, but instead of enforcement they refer to it as consulting. They will consult with you to help you meet the standards; they don't just give the certification to just anybody.

Someone asked how much the fees were. Stan said he couldn't find it. The literature says there is fee, but doesn't specify the amount. Stan brought up the restaurant association because it's already in place. He thought we could encourage the restaurants to get "Green Restaurant" certified; they can then advertise that they are certified--and it's a done deal.

Diane asked about Chicago. She thought they had a longer history, than a lot of other places, with being environmentally friendly. She thought the whole City went green. Catherine said she would look into Chicago.

Stan discussed the information that he had, that contrasted Santa Monica & Monterey County. Stan said they were different on a lot of levels, but both had huge check lists.

Monterey County is bigger and more diverse. They have several different categories of businesses they certify. They have separate certifications for hotels, restaurants, medical, office retail and salons. Stan felt this was too much for what we wanted to get into at this time. Their process is to fill out an application, fill out a checklist, and make a pledge to comply. The County will come out and consult with the business on how to keep their pledge. They do not charge a fee.

Santa Monica's processing is filling out the application, going through a check list and then getting an inspection. He believes the fee covers the cost of the inspection. Santa Monica has three categories; one for office/retail, restaurant/grocer and hotel/motels. Stan said the committee had discussed on whether or not to restrict it to restaurants or to develop a business certification also. Santa Monica has a 2 year certification that can be reduced, depending on the type and size of the business; the fee ranges from \$225 to \$600. Santa Monica seems to be a better fit with what the committee wanted, in fewer categories. However, Stan believes the fee would steer people away. He thought that if we offered free consulting, it might get people interested.

Catherine was wondering who would be taking care of the applications and fees. Diane said she was thinking the same thing; because now we are getting into a staffing issue. Even though this isn't something we are jumping into right now; it's something we need to think about for the future.

Stan said that we may be able to apply for a grant; to pay someone to work on consulting and inspections. Diane said there are green initiative grants out there, but she is not sure about the criteria.

Catherine suggested that there may be a way of "testing the waters" at the Art Fair. Last year we judged which restaurants were the most environmentally friendly; and she believes the winners got a couple of hundred dollars. Catherine suggested that maybe we could offer to pay for their fees to join the Green Restaurant Association.

Stan thought that this might be an easy way to get started and help us figure out where our problems might lie. He suggested we have a modified check list for the vendors in the Art Fair; and go by a point system. The vendor could get a certification to can hang in their booth. Stan thought this idea would bring environmental awareness to people that are walking through; showing that restaurants can be green.

Diane said we need to decide what we want to do well before the Art Fair. Stan suggested that when a vendor applies, we can provide an invitation in their packets; inviting them to get “green certified.”

Catherine said she is not sure how affective this will be. Last year when we judged the booths at the Art Fair, the criteria judged how environmentally friendly they were. Catherine said the Art Fair is one weekend of the year; we need to encourage restaurants are green a daily basis; not just three days out of the year. Richard said that the two winners last year weren’t even Clayton businesses.

Diane thought it would be nice to have something visible and nicely designed; so it’s eye-catching; something restaurants would want to display.

Pamela said this could be the first step to test the program, and see what works and what doesn’t work. Diane suggested we check with the Art Fair Board; she felt they might want to have input on what is placed in their booths. Diane asked if we could find out when the Art Fair Committee meets, and who would they need to speak to. Daneen said she would have this information for the next meeting.

Stan asked what type of checklist they had last year. Pamela said it was a checklist that the judges used to rate vendors based on several categories. Based on the ratings awards were given.

Stan thought something more valuable for a restaurant would be a plaque that they could hang in the entrance of their restaurant. It could say something like “2009 Clayton Art Fair Green Vendor.”

Pamela thought that one of the issues we had last year, at least from her perspective, was the people working the booths weren’t the people that call the shots, they were just workers. For instance, when we asked them something, they sometimes responded with, “I don’t know.”

Catherine suggested we get a jump start on this. Pamela thought Stan’s idea of including it with the registration was a great idea. Stan said we could also have some type of plague they can display at their own restaurant. It was suggested we have two places, one winner and one runner up, or one for the best effort.

Diane suggested that next year we also do this with the Taste of Clayton; which would be a good one to get started with, since its all about restaurants. Stan thought we could condense the information he gathered to maybe 2 or 3 sheets for the application process; however, Stan thought the Art Fair might feel that adding another application might be too much. Richard said that it has to go out with the application. Stan said that once the Art Fair has their list of vendors, maybe we can send out the information ourselves to the vendors.

Stan added that the Art Fair might want to know what our certificate will look like it, how big it is, or what color it is. Diane said that it's too late to contract with an artist to make an annual Art Fair Award; although our goal should be to get an artist to design it, in the future.

Stan thought that the City of Clayton logo should be integrated into the award. Pamela responded when she was on the Landscape Committee, they made an award by modifying the City's logo and added words under it, like winner of..... Diane added that for a special event like the Art Fair, it should be special or unique.

Pamela said she would check with Cheryl Verde; she made the one for the Landscape Committee; and see if she will give her a copy of it. We would then have an example to start with; or at least an idea for the award.

Richard said that the Art Fair has a different logo every year, for the programs and the t-shirts; maybe we could use that. Diane thought this was a good idea; however they have an artist that does it every year.

Stan said that we could walk around, at the Art Fair, and verify that the vendors are doing the things they said they were doing on the application for certification.

Pamela brought up an idea that the committee had previously discussed, about having something at the main entrance, on what is and is not recyclable. She thought that we could display a poster showing where trash should go and where recyclables should go. Last year we had a hard time with people throwing trash in the recyclable containers. Maybe we can have a list of all the vendors and next to their name indicate the ones participating in the green certification program. If they see their names posted it might be another incentive for the restaurants that are not listed.

Catherine suggested that we have a cover sheet or in an introductory paragraph instead of it looking like an interrogation. We could provide a list of the things we encourage; for example, we encourage you to use these products or these practices. Let us know which of these things you do. Pamela said that some may only be able to do 5 out of 20, or something like that. Every place might not be able to do everything; but if they can do a significant number, from any of the categories, it's a start.

Stan said that we definitely need to have a cover letter that invites them to get credit for green practices, and discusses the certification that they will be able to display in their booths, if they participate. It should ask that they return the check list by a certain date.

Catherine asked if the invitation could come from the Mayor, saying these things are important to the City of Clayton.

Diane suggested that by next meeting we should have a list of questions; and try to pull them together. Richard said that might be too late, since we don't meet till the end of July.

Stan said that he would draft a rough letter and a rough checklist and send it through email. The members could look over it and provide comments. He would have it ready by the next meeting.

Diane asked Mike who the letter should be addressed to; or if we can send it directly to the Art Fair. Mike suggested we send it to the Mayor; he was pretty certain she would sign it.

Mike thought the committee was mixing a couple of issues. First they were talking about a program to be administered by the committee; on the other hand, asking that the letter be signed by the Mayor. Mike thought we should have two letters, one from the mayor stating that we embrace the principles of the environmental stewardship in the City of the Clayton. Then the other letter could be an invitation to participate in the program the EEAC committee intends to administer. Diane agrees there should be two letters; to separate the City from the EEAC Committee.

Catherine asked for clarification since the Committee is appointed by the Mayor. Mike said that the committee is not a City official. Catherine thought that the EEAC Committee is the Mayor's Committee. Mike said the EEAC is an advisory Committee; formed to advise the mayor on environmental issues.

Diane asked Stan if he put some drafts together. She said that she would talk to the Mayor and give her a "heads up" on what we want to do. Diane said she will get in touch with someone from the Art Fair. Richard said he feels we need to get with the Art Fair committee before our July meeting. Stan thought we needed to vote on it.

Mike asked Daneen if she can find out when the Art Fair meets and who the letter should be addressed to. Daneen said she will have the information for the July meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Diane said she had a coffee meeting with the mayor last week and the Mayor had some things that she was interested in:

From the Board of Alderman: The committee used to have a high school representative; she went away to college and was never replaced. The Mayor wants to keep the school represented. Before school starts the City is going to start looking for students from Clayton High School to be on all City committees.

Catherine thought the President of the School's Environmental Committee should be the representative. Stan felt that this was a great idea. Diane said that it's a way to connect with students and to get them involved and see how the city works.

Mike thought that the person Catherine suggested would fit very well with the Committee. Richard asked if we should ask that the representative be a resident of the City, because the Clayton school system encompasses more than just the City of Clayton. Diane felt that it would be great to have anybody that is involved in there green project.

The Mayor was also interested in any Committee projects that she should be aware of or involved with. She suggested that the committee think about it; and look at different green initiatives.

Diane thought that one project we might want to consider in the future, and that the mayor might want to sit in on, is contacting waste haulers to see if they would be interested in compost recycling. Diane didn't think it was being done in St. Louis. She said she heard that San Francisco was considering making it a law. Diane said that if anyone can come up with anything that wasn't related to recycling, we can relay it to the Mayor.

Richard asked if we have heard anything more about rain barrels; and if MSD is getting anymore. Catherine said they started out with 300 rain barrels and sold 1500; they were overwhelmed. Punit asked if we knew how many City residents ordered them.

Pamela brought in a letter she had printed in an Ecofont. It is a font to reduce the use of toner; it uses 25% less ink. It is a free down load. If you make the font really big you can see that it prints little circles to make the letters.

Catherine asked if there was any special funding to support future projects that the Mayor was asking about. Diane thinks that we will need to stay within our normal budget.

The City has been part of the American Mayors Association for Green Initiatives for awhile now; however, we never developed a starting carbon footprint. She felt the City has done a lot of great things.

Punit asked if the mayor talked about the Blueprint for Action. Diane said she did not.

NEXT MEETING: Thursday, July 23rd, 2009 at 5:00pm at Clayton City Hall.

MEETING AJOURNED: at 6:00pm

Cc: Lenore Toser-Aldaz, Deputy City Manager
Mike Pratt, Director of Public Works
June Waters, City Clerk
Judy Kekich, Economic Outreach Coordinator