



MINUTES
Environmental Sustainability Commission
Regular Meeting of September 3, 2020

Meeting was held as a virtual meeting over Zoom due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
The meeting was called to order at 3:05 p.m.

Present: Richard Godfrey, Nate Ivy, Carolyn Obata, Daniel O'Donnell, Paul Kelley, Shreya Ramachandran, John Rennels, Shiva Swaminathan

Absent: None

Oral Communications:

- Fremont high school student Akila Cuddalore provided a comment about Terracycle, an organization that collects waste and recycles it into other useable materials, such as park benches, and asked if the City of Fremont would partner with Terracycle to set up public collection receptacles. Environmental Services staffmember Lori Marra asked Akila to follow up with her on the topic of Terracycle, saying that she is very familiar with the organization.

Approval of Minutes:

- Regular meeting minutes of March 5, 2020. Motion to approve by Commissioner Rennels; second by Commissioner Ivy. Minutes approved unanimously.

Scheduled Items:

5.1 Staff Updates

- Economic Development Manager Donovan Lazaro reported that Economic Development continues to collaborate with the Sustainability Division on reach codes and the Climate Action Plan Update. He also reported that under COVID-19, the cleantech and biotech industry continues to do well, but the small business sector is struggling. California has the 3rd highest rate of small business closures in the nation under COVID (double the national rate) and as of July, 6% of businesses have permanently closed, and another 5-6% are temporarily closed. One of the programs to support small businesses includes the pop-up patio program that is allowing outdoor dining for restaurants. The City has also delayed collecting business taxes to help alleviate some of the current financial burden.

5.2 Commissioner Announcements

- Chair Godfrey
 - Announced that the Parks Master Plan effort is underway, being led by the Community Services Department with support from PROS Consulting. He has been active with community groups that have been encouraging more discussion on the topics of passive parks and biodiversity. This could be a space where the ESC can provide additional comments as well.
- Student Commissioner Ramachandran
 - Mentioned that there will be youth forum on the Climate Action Plan update on September 24th with participation from FIERCE students and other student clubs.

5.3 Commission Consideration of Recommendation to City Council for Amendments to the 2019 California Building Code related to electric preferred and electric required construction design, mandatory solar energy systems, cool roofs, electric vehicle readiness, and greywater readiness, and electric appliance readiness.

Sustainability Manager Rachel DiFranco prefaced the conversation that there are a list of recommended measures in the agenda that were intended for the ESC to vote on, but since the agenda was published a number of internal and external comments have come in. At this time, therefore, staff is recommending that the ESC provides feedback on the items presented today, but that a formal Commission recommendation be pushed out until a later date.

DiFranco then moved forward with a presentation reviewing reach code measures that were recommended by the ESC and adopted by the City Council in 2017 under the 2016 Building Code Cycle. This included EV readiness in all building types, efficient outdoor lighting for nonresidential applications, and mandatory solar in new residential construction. She then reviewed some of the new sustainability elements under the 2019 Building Code, which went into effect in the City of Fremont beginning January 1, 2020. These include substantial energy efficiency improvements in nonresidential applications, primarily achieved through more efficient lighting design, as well as a new “Energy Design Rating” in residential construction that requires a combination of increased efficiency as well as mandatory solar. The state also increased its EV readiness requirements to the levels that the City of Fremont already adopted in 2017, with the exception that EV charging equipment is still not required under the state code while the City’s reach code did require EV charging equipment.

Finally, DiFranco presented potential reach code measures that Fremont may want to consider under the 2019 Building Code. These include:

- Require all-electric new construction for low rise (≤ 3 story) and mid-rise (> 3 and ≤ 7 story) single and multifamily residential buildings.
- Require electric-preferred new construction for non-residential buildings.
- Require minimum solar photovoltaic system sizing for nonresidential buildings that pursue mixed-fuel design.
- Require cool roof design for all building types.

- Require graywater-ready new construction for low rise (≤ 3 story) single family residential buildings.
- Require electric vehicle readiness in all new construction.
- Require electric appliance readiness in existing buildings.

The Commission was then asked for feedback on these measures and approaches, as follows:

- Student Commissioner Ramachandran stated that she was supportive of an all electric building code, in favor of more stringent greywater requirements, and recommended dual plumbing for greywater and also greywater recycling
- Commissioner Kelly stated that he is supportive of all electric building design, sharing that even PG&E is encouraging cities to go all-electric, with the caveat that an electric-preferred approach should be offered to industrial customers. He also said that he would like to encourage builders to build rooftop gardens
- Commissioner Rennels stated that he would prefer to offer a level of flexibility to developers and avoid getting too prescriptive. He also said that offering options of EV load sharing has been useful in some of the development projects he has worked on and would encourage including that in the City's approach. He also suggested that Fremont indicate a preference for rooftop in terms of solar placement to allow for more open space.
- Chair Godfrey supported the statements of others, adding that large industrial units often need access to natural gas and so that sector should have electric preferred codes with the option to incorporate natural gas if needed rather than be required to design all electric.
- Commissioner Swaminathan stated that he believes electric-ready retrofits are an excellent idea. He also stated that he supports a full electrification approach in multifamily developments in particular, where the cost-effectiveness is high and the ease of retrofitting later is low.
- Commissioner Obata stated that the City should be putting stricter requirements on solar, but allow the solar to be flexibly deployed in terms of rooftop versus carport installations.
- Commissioner O'Donnell stated that he had no additional comments.
- Commissioner Ivy stated that he was agnostic about whether solar needs to be on roof or can also be in other places on property, but overall favors local solar generation, and is generally excited about all of the options being proposed.

Public Comment:

- Kelly Abreu of Mission Peak Conservancy expressed his concern regarding approaches he has seen in other parts of the state where solar has not been required on site but where developers have been allowed to "buy into" community solar options, which removes the local benefit of solar.

5.4 Updates on Climate Action Plan 2.0 Analyses and Outreach

Sustainability Assistant Robbie Barton Staff reviewed the current timeline for the CAP update with the ESC and discussed work to be completed by the City's selected CAP consultant and outreach activities currently scheduled and forthcoming. He also reviewed and discussed the agenda for the upcoming virtual CAP community engagement workshop scheduled for September 22, 2020 at 6pm. The ESC offered to support the workshop by helping as notetakers during the breakout group sessions. Staff will follow up with the Commissioners on specific workshop logistics.

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

APPROVED BY:



Rachel DiFranco
Sustainability Manager