



MINUTES
Environmental Sustainability Commission
Regular Meeting of March 5, 2015

The meeting was called to order at 4:11 p.m.

Present: Chair Richard Godfrey, Vice-Chair Shiva Swaminathan, Carolyn Obata, Daniel O'Donnell, John Rennels, Nina Moore, Haroon Rasheed

Absent: None.

Oral Communications: None.

Approval of Minutes: Regular meeting minutes of December 4, 2014 – Approved unanimously.

5.1 Presentation from Community Climate Solutions:

Lisa Altieri of Palo-Alto based nonprofit Community Climate Solutions discussed her current development of an online platform called “Go CO2 Free” where residents can commit to saving energy and reducing greenhouse gas emissions through a variety of actions. Lisa explained how it is important that we act now to address greenhouse gas emissions and global warming, as we cannot exceed more than a 2°C global temperature increase without catastrophic consequences. While many state, federal, and international climate reduction goals reference a 50 or 100 year timeline for GHG emission reductions, Lisa stressed that the next 20 years will be the most important for preventing global climate crisis. The Go CO2 Free platform has been developed in response to that, with the goal of showing communities that “we need to do this, we can do this, your actions matter, and let’s do this together”.

The Go CO2 Free Platform will be developed as a community engagement tool with a series of actions related to energy, water, waste and transportation elements, and will also offer opportunities for volunteering at local events, and will refer residents to relevant rebate, incentive, and technical assistance programs. Community Climate Solutions is coordinating with City staff to pilot the “Go CO2 Free” platform in Fremont as a means of assisting with our community-wide GHG emissions reduction goals as well as to help our energy reduction efforts in relation to the Georgetown University Energy Prize competition.

Commissioners generally felt that the Go CO2 Free platform would be a good way to help educate residents about the City’s climate action efforts and gave the feedback that the tool should be easy to use, interesting, and not overly burdensome in order to be effective. They also wanted to know how reductions would be tracked – would

the tool integrate with utility energy and water usage data, or would it require users to self-report the information – expressing that the less the user is required to deal with getting data into the tool on the front end, the easier it will be to generate sign-ups. They finally suggested that the tool should have a way to regularly engage users through reminders, push notifications, or other mechanisms so that users do not lose interest or momentum.

5.2 Presentation from OhmConnect:

Curtis Tongue of the online residential energy usage reduction platform OhmConnect presented on how they incentive residents to decrease their energy consumption when environmentally damaging "peaker plants" are turned on by awarding them points that can later be converted into cash payments. OhmConnect operates by combining the reductions across its various users and works with the energy utilities and the electric grid to prevent the firing of additional power plants to meet peak demand. As a public benefit, the money paid to OhmConnect users can be made into an "energy fundraiser" platform so that users can collectively donate their earnings to their local schools or nonprofit organizations.

Commissioners thought that the OhmConnect platform offered a simple, easy, and effective way to engage residents in energy reductions, stressing that there is no down side to participating. Commissioner Moore in particular stressed how great the tool was because it allowed Fremont residents to easily reduce their energy usage, get paid for it, and benefit the community in the process. The Commission expressed interest in engaging various schools and community based organizations to use the tool as a fundraising platform, and the City staff expressed that they would look into the ways the City could use it for supporting the City's Human Services functions such as the Senior Center and the Family Resource Center.

5.3 Presentation from Haroon Rasheed on FIERCE:

Student Commissioner Haroon Rasheed discussed how a group of high school students representing all 5 of Fremont's high schools have joined together to form a district-wide eco club. These students are reviving a group previously created in 2011 called FIERCE (Fremont Is Engaging in Real Change in the Environment), which lost momentum when its founders graduated and its teacher advisor retired. The revived FIERCE group is now meeting regularly to plan and end of the year Green Summit event to engage students in conversations around sustainability. The City is supporting this effort through its coordination with the Silicon Valley Talent Partnership, a nonprofit focused on public-private partnerships that will help FIERCE to secure event sponsors and speakers for the event. This will provide students with the opportunity connect with local companies focused on developing sustainable and clean technological innovations.

5.4 Branding of GUEP and Outreach Events:

City Sustainability Coordinator Rachel DiFranco discussed how she is planning on pursuing the development of a logo for the "Fremont Green Challenge" to provide brand recognition for the City's Climate Action efforts and specifically for its participation in the Georgetown University Energy Prize. She plans on doing outreach at a number of

upcoming community events this spring and summer, and asked for assistance from the Commission at these events.

5.5 Staff Updates:

Community Development Deputy Director Dan Schoenholz updated the Commission on the following items:

- The municipal solar installations under the Regional Renewable Energy Procurement are going to break ground over the coming months. The installation at the Aqua Adventure Water Park will be first, with groundbreaking next month.
- The Carshare pilot project is now moving forward, with an agreement in place with ZipCar to place 3 vehicles at the Fremont BART Station and 2 vehicles at the Centerville Train Station.

5.6 Commissioner Announcements:

Chair Godfrey mentioned that there was an idea brought up by a community member to hold what is often referred to as an “open streets” event where they could shut down Niles Canyon for a day to make it accessible for walking and biking. Godfrey also mentioned that there need to be bike racks at the California Nursery Historic Park and also at the Irvington Farmers Market.

Also mentioned was the idea of bicycle valets for public events, such as the Fremont Concert Series at Central Park and the Fremont Festival of the Arts.

The meeting adjourned at 6:22 p.m.

APPROVED BY:



Rachel DiFranco
Sustainability Coordinator