



## La Mesa Environmental Sustainability Commission

### Minutes of a Regular Meeting

Date: March 18, 2024, 6:00 p.m.  
Location: City Manager's Conference Room, 8130 Allison Avenue  
La Mesa, California

Present: Vice Chair Mary Nooristani  
Commissioner Michael Bourton  
Commissioner Stephen Grooms  
Commissioner Jean-Guillaume Lonjaret  
Commissioner Dasmine McFarlin  
Commissioner Barbara Shustek

Absent: Chair Richard Williams

Staff: Commissioner Brianna Coston  
Commissioner Barbara Dagman  
Commissioner Xiomalys Crespo  
Commissioner Christina Potter  
Environmental Analyst Serena Lee

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#### 1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Vice Chair Mary Nooristani called the meeting to order at 6:01 PM.

##### 1.1 **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

#### 2. **ADDITIONS AND/OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA**

#### 3. **PRESENTATION**

##### 3.1 **San Diego Regional Green Business Network Presentation**

San Diego Green Building Council to present the San Diego Regional Green Business Network and Green Business Certification, and their work with the City of La Mesa as a program partner.

After the presentation, questions were asked from the Commissioners.

Mary Nooristani asked how many of the certified Green Businesses were already doing green business practices, and Robert Carr answered that approximately 60-70% of them were doing something green, such as saving water, but there were other things they were not doing. Mary Nooristani asked if there is a recertification requirement, and Robert responded that there is one and it must be done every 3 years.

Stephen Grooms asked how many businesses are certified in the San Diego region, and Robert Carr responded there are 60-70; Stephen asked how many are currently getting certified, and Robert said there are around 25 in the process of being certified.

Jean-Guillaume Lonjaret asked whether there is an emphasis on plastic product reductions, to which Robert Carr said yes.

Barbara Dagman asked what the biggest reason that businesses don't become certified, and Robert answered that usually it is the aspect of needing time, and sometimes businesses have other reasons, such as preferring specific cleaning products that are not allowable for use for Green Business Certified businesses.

Stephen Grooms asked about the cost to businesses and for the network to operate, and Robert Carr responded that the program is currently funded, and they're working on getting more future funding.

#### **4. PUBLIC COMMENTS – (TOTAL TIME – 15 MINUTES)**

NOTE: In accordance with state law, an item not scheduled on the agenda may be brought forward by the general public for comment; however, the Environmental Sustainability Commission will not be able to discuss or take any action on the item at this meeting. If appropriate, the item will be referred to Staff or placed on a future agenda.

Public Comment from Wendy Mihalic: Wendy wanted to know when the public could review the updated CAP, and stated that there is no visibility on the update process. Wendy asked whether the comments from the community will be considered if the CAP Update is in June. Wendy pointed out in the existing CAP that La Mesa housing stock was already built, and that she wants to see retrofits and federal funding to electrify homes.

Public comment from Mairs Ryan: Mairs stated that she is here to support the sustainability work being done, and wanted to see the attachments of Minutes be attached to the agenda for public viewing.

5. **CONFLICT DISCLOSURES**

6. **CURRENT BUSINESS**

6.1 **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE DECEMBER 18, 2023  
REGULAR MEETING**

No edits or comments on the minutes from the December 18, 2023  
Regular Meeting.

**Recommended Motion:** Approve the minutes from the December 18,  
2023 Regular Meeting

**Moved by** Vice Chair Nooristani

**Seconded by** Commissioner Lonjaret

**Vote:** 6-0-1

**Ayes:** Bourton, Grooms, Lonjaret, McFarlin, Nooristani, Shustek

**Noes:** None

**Abstain:** None

**Absent:** Williams

**Motion Approved**

6.2 **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE FEBRUARY 19, 2024  
REGULAR MEETING**

**Recommended Motion:** Approve the minutes from the February 19, 2024  
Regular Meeting

**Moved by** Commissioner Lonjaret

**Seconded by** Commissioner Bourton

**Vote:** 6-0-1

**Ayes:** Bourton, Grooms, Lonjaret, McFarlin, Nooristani, Shustek

**Noes:** None

**Abstain:** None

**Absent:** Williams

**Motion Approved**

6.3 **DISCUSSION OF THE 2024 ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY  
COMMISSION WORK PLAN**

No public comment.

Vice Chair Mary Nooristani read a comment from Chair Ricky Williams,  
who was not present at the meeting, that Councilmember Shu made a  
statement that the Environmental Sustainability Commission can play

more of an advocacy role. Chair Ricky Williams included in his comment that he thinks this is counter to previous direction from City staff and City Attorney, and the Commission should continue to explore how items can be moved forward within the scope of the Commission.

Commissioner Grooms commented that the Environmental Sustainability Commission should push back and find out what Councilmember Shu meant when the original comment was made about the Commission's scope and work. Commissioner Bourton stated that he agreed with this and that he believes City staff sit in between the Commission and Council, and wanted to know if the Commission report to City staff or City Council.

City staff Serena Lee, Commissioner Grooms, and Commissioner Bourton had an ensuing discussion regarding the Commission's scope of work as being included in the 2024 Commission Work Plan and that the Commission is intended to be an advisory position for Council.

Commissioners Grooms and Bourton stated they wanted to have a meeting with appropriate City staff, such as City Clerk or City Attorney, to find out what mechanisms and avenues are available for the Commission to advise Council, such as meeting attendance by Councilmembers and letters written by the Commission. Serena Lee said she would look into inviting the City Clerk or other appropriate City staff to a subcommittee meeting, such as the 2024 Work Plan Subcommittee, or for a presentation to clarify these questions. Commissioner Grooms asked if this can happen before the next Environmental Sustainability Commission, to which Serena Lee replied that she'd direct the request to City staff.

Commissioner Bourton requested figuring out a way to streamline the work that the Commission can do in order to work on more items.

#### **6.4 DISCUSSION OF THE CLIMATE ACTION PLAN UPDATE AND EQUITY AD HOC SUBCOMMITTEE**

Climate Action Plan Update and Equity Ad Hoc Subcommittee expires May 2024

Public comment from Mairs Ryan: Mairs commented about the contract with EPIC ending soon. Mairs said she teaches 8th graders and gets asked questions about what climate action is being taken in La Mesa, and Mairs does not know how to respond to the student except to say that trees are being planted in the City.

Public comment from Wendy Mihalic: Adding icons to the CAP Update is clerical, and is not the meat of the CAP. Wendy stated she wants City staff

to release the text of the CAP Update for public comment and updated GHG emissions data.

Vice Chair Nooristani shared the Climate Action Plan Update and Equity Ad Hoc Subcommittee has been considering icons to denote actions that have to do with equity.

City staff Serena Lee shared that the City staff have been investigating different ways to incorporate equity and incorporating co-benefit information into the CAP Update. She stated that staff the subcommittee have been conducting research to define which communities, should be called out and focused on to ensure climate equity. Serena Lee mentioned that staff and EPIC have been meeting regularly to make progress on this item and the CAP Update in general.

Commissioner Grooms asked when the CAP Update is due, and Serena Lee responded that an exact date could not be given as of the current moment, but that staff are diligently working to make progress to ensure that the CAP Update is comprehensive, and that staff have been also looking at other San Diego jurisdiction's CAPs to take inspiration and to align some items and language so that the region is more cohesive in terms of their CAPs.

## **6.5 DISCUSSION OF THE BUILDING EMISSIONS REDUCTION AD HOC SUBCOMMITTEE**

Building Emissions Reduction Ad Hoc Subcommittee expires May 2024

Public comment from Wendy Mihalic: Wendy was thankful for this subcommittee.

Commissioner Bourton gave an update from the Ad Hoc Subcommittee that they've been doing research on what kind of verbiage to use for this type of work. He went on to discuss what language other jurisdictions are doing, such as percentage increase in efficiency in reach codes. He mentioned that "efficiency" seemed to be undefined by other jurisdictions.

Commissioner Lonjaret explained what other jurisdictions reach code are, such as San Luis Obispo. He mentioned that La Mesa can essentially use the same language as San Luis Obispo's code, which is based on percentage of energy efficiency in their climate zone.

Commissioners Nooristani asked about what the efficiency numbers discussed meant, and Commissioner Bourton responded that they were based on the 2022 Energy Code, so the Ad Hoc Subcommittee is unsure

whether just to wait until the new code is adopted by the State in 2025, or if the Commission should work on something and choose a percentage point for efficiency standards in the meantime.

## **6.6 DISCUSSION OF THE GRANT ASSISTANCE AD HOC SUBCOMMITTEE**

Grant Assistance Ad Hoc Subcommittee expires April 2024

No public comment.

Commissioner McFarlin said that she and City staff met, and mentioned they wanted to provide public resources with grants. There is a plan to use a grant to provide transportation to commuters via acoustic or electric bikes. In the Subcommittee meeting, City staff also discussed charging stations and adding them around the city.

Commissioner Bourton asked what an acoustic bike was, to which Commissioner Barbara responded that an acoustic bike is a regular bike.

## **6.7 DISCUSSION OF THE CREATION OF NEW AD HOC SUBCOMMITTEES**

Public comment from Wendy Mihalic: Wendy stated that a new subcommittee could be focused on the SDCP grant program that was announced about a month ago for community grants. Wendy stated that the City would simply need to find a 501c3 organization that does something energy-related, and it would be a great opportunity to educate the population about retrofits in their home.

Commissioner Bourton thinks that an Ad Hoc Subcommittee looking at retrofitting would be good, and have a subcommittee that just looks at what is happening to existing stock in other jurisdictions. Commissioner Grooms stated that he'd like to make a communication pan about retrofitting. This new Subcommittee would be called Building Emission Reduction for Existing Stock Ad Hoc Subcommittee.

**Recommended Motion:** To vote on creating a Building Emission Reduction for Existing Stock ad hoc subcommittee comprised of Commissioners Shustek, Bourton, and Grooms with the purpose of researching what policies and actionable avenues exist to reduce building emissions for three months until June 2024

**Moved by** Commissioner Grooms

**Seconded by** Commissioner Lonjaret

**Vote:** 6-0-1

**Ayes:** Bourton, Grooms, Lonjaret, McFarlin, Nooristani, Shustek

**Noes:** None

**Abstain:** None

**Absent:** Williams

**Motion Approved**

**7. STAFF AND COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Xiomalys Crespo, standing in for Jen Lebron with San Diego Community Power, stated there is a grant application open for \$25,000-\$100,000 with a focus in youth programming that is closing April 5, and that it is similar to the grant that was given last year. The grant must be in energy education or efficiency, or can cover electrification gaps such as preparing roofs to be solar-ready. SDCP will also be hosting an upcoming workshop on March 20th that will explain energy bills and payment assistance programs. Xiomalys stated SDCP is willing to host a similar workshop at the library or a similar location to walk La Mesa residents through their energy bills.

Commissioner Nooristani read out a comment passed on from Commissioner Williams regarding the recent Joint Powers Authority meeting for Harry Griffen Park, where it was voted in favor to purchase new diesel landscaping equipment instead of electric equipment citing immediate costs for the next fiscal year. Commissioner Williams's opinion is that the decision is inconsistent with the La Mesa's CAP , and was unsure whether the Commission has any role in the process of speaking against this decision, and if the Environmental Sustainability Commission cannot play a role, that Commissioners should speak out or write letters individually to the Mayor of La Mesa, who is a voting member of the JPA, or the Council.

Serena Lee with the City of La Mesa stated updates that the next Litter Free La Mesa cleanup, on May 11 at 9-11am, would be at the City Hall parking lot and would route through downtown La Mesa. Serena Lee also stated that there is an upcoming webinar in partnership with the San Diego County Bicycle Coalition on Thursday, March 21 from 6-7pm for the Parent and Student University bike class. In addition, City staff were given a CAP and waste training on February 29, and there was a Tree Steward Training at Helix Charter High School on March 6. Serena Lee also gave updates on the EV Charging Station Master Plan Request for Proposals and that staff are preparing to go to Council for this item, and that City staff are concurrently continuing to refine the CAP Update with EPIC and embed equity into the CAP. Serena Lee mentioned the upcoming Earth Day event on April 20 at 11am-3pm still needs volunteers from Helix Charter High

School for the Kids Zone, and that the City partnered with Solana Center to host a worm composting booth, and a Fixit Clinic station at Earth Day.

Serena Lee gave updates that City staff are working on applying to the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) from the Department of Energy, which would be a grant of up to \$120,000, and the San Diego Community Power member agency grant for up to \$50,000. Additionally, the City was awarded around \$160,000 for organic waste program implementation.

Commissioner Dagman stated that Helix Charter High School is working on Career Technology Education and pairing that with sustainability. Commissioner Dagman stated that there was confusion about the March 2 Waite Drive Litter Free La Mesa event being cancelled or not due to the rain, and that there was difficulty finding the event kick-off location, and asked for better event directions in the future.

**8. ADJOURNMENT**

Vice Chair Nooristani adjourned the meeting at 7:25 PM.