



## La Mesa Environmental Sustainability Commission

### Minutes of a Regular Meeting

Date: March 17, 2025, 6:00 p.m.  
Location: City Manager's Conference Room, 8130 Allison Avenue  
La Mesa, California

Present: Chair Richard Williams  
Vice Chair Amanda-Dawn Natalia  
Commissioner Michael Bourton  
Commissioner Dasmine McFarlin  
Commissioner Mary Nooristani  
Commissioner Shustek  
Commissioner Jack Sellinger  
Commissioner Mark Gracyk

Staff: Environmental Analyst Serena Lee

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

Chair Ricky Williams 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 **GRID ALTERNATIVES SAN DIEGO PRESENTATION**

Clovis Honore and Claire Lion from GRID Alternatives presented on clean energy education focusing on the benefits and challenges of energy efficiency, solar, battery energy storage systems, and electric vehicles and going over how these systems work. They gave a background on climate change in connection to the importance of transitioning to renewable energy and electrifying. They discussed federal, state, and local programs available to help residents take actionable steps towards a clean energy future. They went over GRID programs such as San Diego Clean Cars 4

All and workforce development that provides free training programs for Installation Basics Training.

Amanda-Dawn Natalia stated that the presentation was incredible and asked what the solutions are for overcoming the barriers of roofing in communities of concerns. Clovis Honore stated that San Diego Community Power gave GRID Alternatives half a million dollars for roof projects. The Solar Home Roofing (SHR) was from funding meant for home upgrading and the TCC was intended for select homes. Claire Lions stated that sometimes people are able to pay for the roof if they know they can get the solar from GRID.

Amanda-Dawn Natalia asked if there are any qualifications/requirements for GRID's training program. Claire Lion and Clovis Honore responded that sometimes there are specific requirements for funding but that no one is ever excluded from the training programs.

Jack asked if GRID has experience with panel shingles and asked if they build their solar panels in house. Clovis Honore stated that the shingles are too expensive of a technology at the moment and Claire Lion stated that they have in house staff for solar panel installation.

Ricky Williams asked what the impacts have been if any from federal funding and asked what programs they have built to improve weatherization and efficiency. Claire Lions stated that a lot of GRID's funding comes from the state. The Disadvantaged Communities-Single-Family Solar Homes (DAC-SASH) program comes from the California Public Utilities Commission. Most of GRID's EV programs are also state funded. The Solar For All Program came from the Inflation Reduction Act and this could be impacted. TCC and SHR are weatherization projects that GRID does not do in house as of right now. GRID has started to look toward electrification in broader ways because it pairs really well with solar and batteries.

Ricky Williams asked about the off-grid solar process on Tribal land and how it could work in urban areas. Claire Lion stated that funding for the project came from Tribal Solar Accelerator Fund (TSAF), which is a branch of GRID. A private donor created a grant making program with specific opportunities for Tribes to get connected to the grid. Utility funded projects require participants to be grid tied which makes off-grid projects difficult in urban areas. Clovis Honore stated that hopefully none of the cost is borne by the consumer. Claire Lions noted if you are tech savvy and have a solar and battery system you can be sending energy to the grid at the right

times to create your own system where you still have a meter and you are just trying not to pull energy from it.

**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: Wendy Mihalic stated that she really enjoyed the video of the ESC’s prior meeting. She thanked Jack Sellinger for attending the Home Electrification Fair in Encinitas. Wendy Mihalic stated that the fair was organized by the Citizens’ Climate Lobby (CCL), in partnership with the City of Encinitas. It was a pilot program and the CCL worked with the City to coordinate the venue and the Building Electrification Coalition for coordination of the event. She stated she would be happy to be the La Mesa Representative if the City wanted to get into contact with the coalition. She stated San Diego Community Power is a very important resource for clean energy related program funding. U.S. Green Building Council California (USGBC CA) applied for the Community Clean Energy grant program Power for outreach and education in communities of concern and La Mesa can utilize them as a resource.

**5. CONFLICT DISCLOSURES**

**6. CURRENT BUSINESS**

**6.1 DISCUSSION OF THE ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE AD HOC SUBCOMMITTEE**

Alternative Transportation Infrastructure ad hoc subcommittee expires in March 2025

Amanda-Dawn Natalia stated the Alternative Transportation Infrastructure Ad Hoc Subcommittee discussed how CAP implementation can be ensured within other City projects. She stated that they discussed the practicality of a checklist for departments’ workflow binders. This would make it so every project has a checklist that brings attention to sustainability actions that can be attached/considered. She stated that the subcommittee discussed Microsoft Teams as a tool for communication and that they left with the homework item of coming up with what CAP measures they want to prioritize for infrastructure projects. She stated that Mary Nooristani is interested in prioritizing traffic calming and that the

subcommittee supports hybrid telework, and trees on pedestrian pathways for shade. The subcommittee also brainstormed how they are going to seek out grants for traffic calming measures. She stated that the subcommittee wants to know what the commission's priorities are.

Mary Nooristani stated that Hilary Ego had been able to get involved in an infrastructure project and add in CAP related objectives. Having a checklist for other departments to incorporate the CAP into their projects would be a small but impactful action.

Ricky Williams stated that he likes the workflow binder idea because departments already follow checklists that they have to comply with and the CAP could be easily integrated into these projects. He stated he remembers that Hilary Ego jumped into a large roadway improvement project and got EV chargers added into the project. He stated that the Mobility Commission could be a good resource for understanding priority traffic calming mechanisms.

Amanda-Dawn, Mary Nooristani, and Ricky Williams stated their interest in roundabouts and discussed the process of implementation and coordination with the Mobility Commission to understand the process better. Michael Bourton stated the need to understand the benefits of roundabouts such as low running costs and environmental benefits. Barbara Shustek and Serena Lee stated the La Mesa Boulevard roundabout project as an example with a timeline of 5 years. Ricky Williams stated that roundabouts open the door for talking about other initiatives such as bike lanes and moving towards seeing how the Mobility Commission operates. Serena Lee stated that roundabouts are something that can be calculated with greenhouse gas reductions. Michael Bourton, Ricky Williams, and Serena Lee stated that funding for roundabouts would be part of capital improvement programs.

## **6.2 DISCUSSION OF THE E-BIKE INCENTIVE PROGRAM AD HOC SUBCOMMITTEE**

E-Bike Incentive Program ad hoc subcommittee expires in March 2025

Ricky Williams stated that Logan Kelly (CivicSpark Fellow) had drafted the website for the E-Bike Incentive Program and application process. The tentative launch for the program is the 24th and the application closes April 14th. The subcommittee discussed the scoring criteria for applicants. The vouchers would be first come first serve and some of them would be reserved for low income applicants. Logan Kelly stated that the income

qualified section is gone and now a portion of vouchers is specifically set for low income residents. The scoring system is based on replacing car trips that aren't for recreational purposes. There will be an all about e-bikes webinar on March 27th with the San Diego Bicycle Coalition and Hilary Ego will talk about the E-Bike Incentive program. Vouchers will go out April 18th and participants will have about a month to use vouchers. Serena Lee stated that agreements with bike shops are still being worked through. She stated the first 150 applicants will be prioritized and if the proportion of low income qualified is not met then they will take from the next batch of applicants. Mark Gracyk asked how much the incentives cover and if it will only involve bike shops in La Mesa. Logan Kelly stated the income qualified applicants will get \$1200 and the standard applicants will get \$800. He stated income qualified is for people who are receiving CalFresh, Fera, Cares, Section 8, or are 50% under the AMI. Serena Lee stated that the incentive could cover most of if not all of the cost of an e-bike. She stated that there are not many bike shops in La Mesa and that they wanted to make sure the e-bikes are UL listed.

Jack Sellinger asked how information about the program is going to be spread. Ricky Williams stated the subcommittee discussed sharing the information at city facilities and schools, posting flyers at gyms and grocery stores. It is also open to people that work in La Mesa so it is important to reach establishments that have a lot of employees. Jack Sellinger, Barbara Shustek, and Ricky Williams stated other community locations to spread information such as starbucks and daycares. Michael Bourton stated that the ad hoc subcommittee sunsets this month and it would be nice to have a report on the results in the coming months. Ricky Williams stated that the subcommittee would be ready to sunset.

### **6.3 DISCUSSION OF THE EQUITY FRAMEWORK AD HOC SUBCOMMITTEE**

Equity Framework ad hoc subcommittee expires in April 2025

Lainey Bloom (CivicSpark Fellow) stated that the subcommittee first discussed what equitable outreach looks like and where the most important community touch points are in La Mesa to spread the word about programs and get feedback. The subcommittee talked about what the barriers are for community members getting involved in sustainability programs and city programs. Lainey Bloom stated how programs should consider accessibility to renters and not just homeowners as 40% of La Mesa is made up of renters. She stated that the subcommittee

brainstormed how acquiring feedback can be incorporated into spaces where the CAP team is already conducting outreach. This could look like having outreach questions prepared when going to tabling events that elicit information from the community on how and where they get their information about city programs. She stated the potential for having a checklist for internal use for staff to engage with equity considerations throughout the planning stages of projects.

Dasmine McFarlin stated that when asking questions in the community it would be important to keep them simple and engaging and making sure we are going out into the public and asking these questions. She stated that tabling at the farmers market could be impactful.

Lainey Bloom asked the commission if they have any priorities for what the checklist items to staff would look like or any thoughts on incorporating equitable engagement at tabling events. Ricky Williams stated he would be curious how the City is tracking engagement online and if there is a way to know how different demographics are being reached. He stated incorporating questions for the community into events like Earth Day. Serena Lee stated our communications manager has access to online engagement data. Ricky Williams stated the subcommittee sunsets next month.

#### **6.4 DISCUSSION OF THE ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION SAFETY EDUCATION AD HOC SUBCOMMITTEE**

Alternative Transportation Safety Education ad hoc subcommittee expires in May 2025

Ricky Williams stated that the direction of the subcommittee is helping to create education for drivers that are pedestrian and bike oriented and working to educate large vehicle owners in this capacity. Amanda-Dawn Natalia stated the subcommittee talked about what education looks like with alternative transportation safety and how it is important to include education outside of the standard bike education and direct it at drivers with specific errors that should be corrected. The subcommittee brought up the sign on Fletcher as a tool for educational messaging. She asked the commission what driver focused education would look like.

Barbara Shustek stated an example of watching out for bikers when you open car doors. Jack Sellinger and Barbara Shustek stated the need for education aimed toward walking safely. Dasmine McFarlin, Ricky Williams,

Michael Bourton stated the potential for understanding signage placements and data connections to placement.

## **6.5 DISCUSSION OF THE CAP IMPLEMENTATION WORK PLAN AD HOC SUBCOMMITTEE**

Climate Action Plan (CAP) Implementation Work Plan ad hoc subcommittee expires in May 2025

Barbara Shustek stated that the subcommittee meeting was a brainstorming session to develop an implementation report. In the past, the reports have been very extensive. The City of San Diego and county have detailed plans. She stated the subcommittee went over prioritization to rank implementation actions. Amanda-Dawn Natalia stated that historically the City of La Mesa has had a robust implementation plan for the size of the City. She stated there is concern over how much effort goes into the implementation plans when they may not necessarily be utilized by City staff or much of the public. The subcommittee discussed the importance of format and presentation to better engage the public as well as a system of prioritization with rough suggestions such as: measures that are already funded or underway, staff availability, metric tons of greenhouse gas reductions, amount or quality of co-benefits, general public feedback and commission feedback. She stated the subcommittee wanted to gain feedback on what prioritization could look like. Ricky Williams stated the timeline to implementation would be a good priority and it ties into co-benefits and prioritizing actions that have direct impacts on community public health.

Public comment: Wendy Mihalic stated that she brought an old La Mesa CAP Implementation Work Plan and stated the importance of including specific information such as cost and staff time. She stated the benefit of performance targets to keep the City on track. She stated the City of San Diego has a great CAP but they are not implementing it. She stated the City of La Mesa should have work plans for their staff with line items that tie their departmental work back to the CAP. Wendy Mihalic stated that the e-bike incentive program is a good initiative and that the same kind of funding would be impactful if put towards electric induction cooktops. The City should look at how to get induction cooktops to people in communities of concern.

## **6.6 DISCUSSION OF SCHEDULING A SPECIAL MEETING FOR THE EDCO FACILITY TOUR**

Serena Lee stated that the special meeting to tour the Lemon Grove EDCO facility tour would be April 24th at 9:00 am for about one hour.

Ricky Williams and Serena Lee stated that they recommend wearing closed toed shoes with long pants and a long shirt to the facility tour and a change of clothes if you are going somewhere after.

**Recommended Motion:** To approve the time of the Lemon Grove EDCO facility tour on April 24th at 9:00 AM

**Moved by** Chair Williams

**Seconded by** Vice Chair Natalia

**Vote:** 6-0-1

**Ayes:** Bourton, McFarlin, Natalia, Sellinger, Shustek, Williams

**Noes:** None

**Abstain:** None

**Absent:** Nooristani

**Motion Approved**

#### **6.7 DISCUSSION OF THE MAY ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING**

Amanda-Dawn Natalia and Ricky Williams stated that Serena Lee and Hilary Ego will not be able to attend the May 19th Environmental Sustainability Commission regular meeting.

**Recommended Motion:** To table the discussion of the May Environmental Sustainability Commission Regular Meeting to be discussed at the April meeting.

**Moved by** Chair Williams

**Seconded by** Commissioner Bourton

**Vote:** 6-0-1

**Ayes:** Bourton, McFarlin, Natalia, Sellinger, Shustek, Williams

**Noes:** None

**Abstain:** None

**Absent:** Nooristani

**Motion Approved**

#### **7. STAFF AND COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Serena Lee stated that she will be working on heat adaptation with other local jurisdictions. She stated that the CAP team submitted a grant in conjunction with

the La Mesa Park and Recreation Foundation for the SDCP Community Grant. GRID will be a partner if the City is chosen for the grant and funds will be put towards electrifying park equipment. She stated the EV Charging Master Plan survey closed. EDCO is providing free mulch at the Ramona facility to anyone that comes and says how they will apply the mulch. The City will also be working on compost awareness week, May 4th-10th in conjunction with the County of San Diego and other jurisdictions. The City is researching and exploring sustainable commutes with SANDAG.

Amanda-Dawn Natalia questioned how to get involved in the La Mesa Earth Day Fair on April 19th. Serena Lee stated that people interested in volunteering can contact Hilary Ego. Ricky Williams stated that commission members have volunteered to table for the CAP team in the past.

Amanda-Dawn Natalia stated that the 8th annual State of Biodiversity Symposium is happening on April 8th at the San Diego Natural History Museum from 5 pm- 9 pm.

Mark Gracyk stated that the Helix Water District ground breaking ceremony for the electric vehicle fleet is next Tuesday at 10 am.

**8. ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Ricky Williams adjourned the meeting at 8:08 PM.