



*Visalia Environmental Committee informs and advises the Visalia City Council and Citizens
on preserving and improving environmental quality for the benefit of the community.*

MEETING MINUTES – ZOOM meeting

July 8, 2020

1. Welcome & Introduction

The Visalia Environmental Committee (V.E.C.) meeting was called to order at 5:47 p.m. by Chair Melkonian.

Members Present: Maile Melkonian, Steve Sanders, Mark Wall, David Shelburne, and Renee Burton, Melisa Prins, and Kathy Falconer

Members Not Present:

Members of the Public:

City Staff: Leslie Caviglia, Andrew Munn, and Nathan Garza

2. Public Comment

None

3. Approval of March 13, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Chair Melkonian asked that all members review the draft meeting minutes from the June 10, 2020 monthly meeting. After reviewing, Member Sanders made the motion to accept the meeting minutes from the June Environmental Committee meeting. Member Falconer seconded, the motion carried 7-0.

4. Introduction of C.O.V. Water resource Manager

Leslie Caviglia introduced Mr. Andrew Munn to the Environmental Committee Members. Mr. Munn shared that he had grown up in Orsi California and that he had attended U.C. David where he earned a degree in Community Development. Mr. Munn explained that he was also a retired farmer and that he completely understands the importance of managing our water resources. Chair Melkonian asked Mr. Munn what his focus will be to help address our local water issues. Mr. Munn stated that his focus will primarily be on the policy side of water conservation. Member Wall asked Mr. Munn if there was anything that the Environmental Committee Members can do to help support his efforts. Mr. Munn stated that it's a little too early to tell, but that he will begin his work with the groundwater management plan and keep the Environmental Committee Members informed.

5. Earth Day 2020 Sub-Committee Update

Chair Melkonian informed the event, layout and participants are confirmed for September 19, 2020. Member Wall suggested that the Earth Day sub-committee consider how they plan to address the states "Stay at Home" order if the rules have not been lifted by September 19, 2020. Chair Melkonian stated that the sub-committee will be discussing potential COVID-19 precautions at their July meeting.

6. Low Water Usage Landscape Awards Update

Leslie Caviglia informed the Members that due to the COVID-19 pandemic all community events of 10 or more people have been cancelled throughout the City meaning that the Earth Day 2020 event that had been rescheduled for September 19, 2020 will be cancelled. Member Falconer then shared that the Electric Vehicle Test Drive event that was to coincide with the Earth Day celebration was also cancelled but that the contact with this program did state that they were interested in supporting a future Earth Day event here in Visalia.

Member Melkonian then shared that the planned speaking events at College of the Sequoias had been cancelled and that FOX Theater was likely going to cancel the movie screening of "WALLE" as planned in conjunction with Earth Day.

Member Falconer then reviewed the "Recycle Art Contest" bus cards which have been displayed in City Transit buses. She also shared that she has received 25 entry's for the contest and that she was working on a few other outreach opportunities to help get the word out about the contest continuing and having the winner announced on September 19, 2020.

Chair Melkonian suggested that all sponsors and booth exhibitors be contacted and given a choice to either be reimbursed or have their funds applied towards the 2021 Earth Day celebration. Member Shelburne seconded the idea of having funds rolled over in support of the 2021 event. Chair Melkonian then asked all members to consider new dates for the 2021 Earth Day celebration. After some discussion Member Sanders made the motion to reschedule the Earth Day event for Saturday April 24, 2021. Member Wall seconded the motion and the motion carried 7-0. Staff Member Garza stated that all sponsors and booth exhibitors will be contacted and informed of the Earth Day cancellation, and that each would be asked if they would like a refund or if they would like to have their funds transferred over in support of the 2021 Earth Day event. Staff was also asked to contact the Parks Department to check on the availability of reserving the same site at Riverway Sports Park for the proposed April 24, 2021 Earth Day event.

7. Low Water Use Landscape Award

Member Wall explained that he has had a tough time getting connected with the Fresno/Clovis low water use landscape program and that he would like to use local professionals to assist with developing Visalia's program. Chair Melkonian recommended that Member Wall contact local landscape architect's like Mr. Dan Verna and/ or Ms. Peyton Ellis who may be interested in assisting with updating Visalia's low-water use landscape program. Chair Melkonian also suggested that Mr. Wall reach out to Inner Mountain Nursery as well.

Member Burton stated that Cal-Water Service Company might be interested in supporting or sponsoring the Low-Water Use Landscape award program. Member Burton will check with the powers that be and provide an update at the August Environmental Committee meeting. Member Falconer recommended that perhaps Cal-Water could help to support the cost of the award signage.

Member Wall then asked that Members review the self-checking table which he provided and stated that he would email the program application to Members for their review. Member Wall then suggested that Members consider asking local professional like those that Chair Melkonian had suggested to serve as judges when new applications are received.

Member Prins suggested that Members consider separating the categories for the award between professionally installed and D.I.Y. projects. Member Wall stated that his low-water use project was a hybrid as he had a professional design it, yet it was installed by him.

8. New Member Application Review

Member Sanders suggested that staff invite the applicants that are willing to serve as an alternate to be interviewed at the August 12, 2020 Environmental Committee meeting. Staff will contact those willing to serve as alternates and invite them to the August meeting.

9. Select 2020/21 Committee Officers

The Committee selected Chair Melkonian and Vice Chair Sanders to continue in their current positions. Motion approved 7-0.

10. Member Requests & Announcements

Chair Melkonian asked that staff provide an update on Household Hazardous Waste program in August. She also asked all Members if they would like to have the August meeting in a location where social distancing can be accomplished while meeting at one location. Leslie Caviglia suggested the Convention Center Sequoia room. Staff was directed to look into reserving the Convention Center Sequoia room for the August 12, 2020 regularly scheduled Environmental Committee meeting.

11. Adjourn

Chair Melkonian adjourned the meeting at 7:40 pm.