



*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 (Draft)

August 12, 2020

1. Welcome & Introduction

The Visalia Environmental Committee (V.E.C.) meeting was called to order at 5:55 p.m. by Chair Melkonian.

Members Present: Maile Melkonian, Kathy Falconer, and Mark Wall were present in person. David Shelburne, Renee Burton, and Melisa Prins were present by Zoom web link.

Members Not Present: Steve Saunders

Members of the Public: None present

City Staff: Nathan Garza and Andrew Munn

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 July 8, 2020 monthly meeting. After reviewing, Member Wall made the motion to accept the meeting minutes from the June Environmental Committee meeting. Member Falconer seconded, the motion carried 6-0.

4. Low Water Usage Landscape Awards Update

Member Wall submitted a report, with an accompanying memo, on his efforts to have landscape professionals review the criteria and score sheet utilized for the Low Water Usage Landscape Awards. Member Wall contacted four landscape professionals, and to date had received one respondent, Dan Veyna of Sierra Landscape Designs. Member Wall told the committee that Mr. Veyna offered the following suggestions:

- The committee should be briefed on the State Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance (MWELo), and consider how it may be address in the judging criteria.
- Judges for the awards should all receive formalized training in the judging criteria; development of a judging handbook was suggested.
- The Committee should look into ways to improve the City W.C. website to provide more useful links to climate appropriate water efficient plants (including natives) and suggestions for garden layout.

Chair Melkonian requested that City staff charged with performing MWELo landscape plan reviews brief the committee. Staff member Garza suggested that he or staff member Munn would contact Community Development to arrange the appropriate staff be invited to the next Committee meeting.

Member Falconer and Chair Melkonian suggested that the Committee reach out to the local colleges to create a research project on opportunity for students to assist the Committee in establishing a plant list and planting schemes.

5. Water Conservation Ordinance State 3 Update

Prior to the presentation of the staff update, Member Prins informed the Committee that she was tendering her resignation from the Committee, indicating that work and family commitments did not allow her to devote the time to the Committee that she believes it merits. She offered to continue contributing to the Committee until a replacement is found.

Staff members Garza and Munn presented a summary of the Stage 3 water restrictions approved by the City Council at the July 20th 2020 Council meeting.

The Committee adopted a motion endorsing the City Council's decision and recommend that the City develop a comprehensive educational and promotional water conservation campaign; Member Falconer made the motion to adopt, Member Wall seconded, the motion carried 6-0.

During the course of the Committee's discussion of this item, the Zoom feed by which members Burton, Prins and Shelburne were participating ended. With a quorum no longer available, the remaining committee members continued the meeting on an informational basis.

6. Alternate Applicants Interviews

No applicants were present at the meeting. Since the July meeting the Committee received one additional applicant. Staff will contact applicants and invite them to the September meeting.

7. Public Works Update

Staff member Garza informed the Committee that after a hiatus due to COVID-19 restrictions, the Public Works Department has resumed its Saturday household hazardous waste collection events at the Visalia Corporation yard. The "Dump on Us" campaign is beginning again with an event on August 22nd.

The City will also be hosting the CSET Department of Recycling Electronic Waste (E-Waste) booth every 1st Saturday of the month.

8. 2020-21 Committee Goal Planning

Chair Melkonian suggested the committee review the Goals set by the Committee in the recent past.

Members suggested staff provide the committee members with Goal documents from 2012 to 2019.

Further discussion was tabled until the September meeting.

9. Member Requests & Announcement

Chair Melkonian suggested that staff be briefed on the City of Visalia's 2013 Climate Action Plan to learn how the City is performing in regards to the goals set forth in the document for 2020.

Member Wall requested staff brief the Committee on the environmental impacts of the street maintenance programs the City performs (PW Streets Maintenance Jon Pierce ext. 4258).

Member Falconer reported the Ecocreate Art Contest was open for submissions through August 15th, with articles publicizing the event published in the Visalia Times-Delta, Valley Voice, Sun-Gazette, and on the City webpage and Facebook page. Additionally advertising banners were placed on the Visalia Transit Buses. The Judging is scheduled for the end of August, with winners to be announced in early September. Member Falconer indicated she is looking for an exhibit space to display the submissions, and requested suggestions from the committee. Staff member Garza suggested the lobby area within the Visalia Convention Center, which has been used by other groups to exhibit artwork.

10. Adjourn

Chair Melkonian adjourned the meeting at 7:40 pm.