



*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)**

**October 14, 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, Kathy Falconer, David Shelburne, Mark Wall and Dustin Johnson were present in person.

**Members Not Present:** None

**Members of the Public:**

**City Staff:** Andrew Munn, Val Garcia

### **2. Public Comment**

None

### **3. Approval of August 12, 2020 Meeting Minutes**

Chair Melkonian asked that all members review the draft meeting minutes from the September 16, 2020 monthly meeting. After review of the minutes, Member Sanders made the motion to accept the meeting minutes; Member Falconer seconded, the motion carried 6-0.

### **4. Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance (MWELo) discussion led by Val Garcia, Senior Plans Examiner, City of Visalia Building Safety Division**

Mr. Garcia provided a detailed explanation of how the Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance is being implemented by the City of Visalia. He indicated that MWELo standards are enforced by the City Building Department for projects where a building or grading permit is required; on new construction where there will be 500 square feet or greater of landscaping installed, or on already developed property where there is 2,500 square feet + of landscaped area. The current standards have been in place since 2015. In the period 2015-2018 MWELo landscaping standards have been applied to 2071 new housing units, 224 commercial buildings, containing 3.6 million square feet of landscape area.

Discussion by committee members focused on how the Committee could assist in educating the community about the City's efforts to enforce MWELo standards. Member Wall suggested the Committee recommend the City to establish a landscape permit for yard redevelopment. The Committee also discussed how MWELo standards might be incorporated into the judging criteria for the Low Water Landscape Award.

### **5. Alternate Member Selection Update: Dustin Johnson and Ethan Lewis**

Staff Representative Munn reported that the City Council appointed Dustin Johnson as alternate member of the Committee. Upon the resignation of Melissa Prins from the Committee, Mr. Johnson fills the vacancy as a voting Committee member.

The Committee reviewed the application to the Committee of Ethan Lewis. After deliberation, the Committee requested staff to invite Mr. Lewis to interview for the Committee position.

### **6. Resignation of Committee Member Burton**

Chairman Melkonian noted the resignation of Committee member Burton and the committee expressed their appreciation for her service.

### **7. Low Water Use Landscaping Award Judging Criteria Subcommittee Update**

Members Wall and Sanders reported on their progress on the update the judging format for the Low Water Use Landscape Award. Member Sanders indicated that they recommend changing the award format from a competition to achievement of a standard. Candidates that are of note might still be used in the media announcements.

Reflecting on the information presented in the MWELo presentation, members Sanders and Wall will try to meet with City staff to see how MWELo standards may be applied to the judging criteria, and prepare a

recommendations for the Committee to consider. Member Wall suggested that in December have the judging criteria in place, and draft a pamphlet for public participation. Member Melkonian suggested that Committee members perform outreach in the coming months to find event participants.

**8. 2020-21 Committee Goal Planning**

Chair Melkonian indicated there was no report for the Committee's consideration, and tabled further discussion until the next Committee meeting.

**9. Member Requests & Announcement**

Member Falconer reported that the second \$750 payment from Visalia Arts Commission was received for the EcoCreate Art contest; and requested as an action item for next month's meeting, that any remaining funds from the grant, after the remainder of the expenses for the event were subtracted, be placed in the Earth Day Art fund.

Member Falconer presented a paper for the Committee's consideration, "Climate-Safe California Rapid Decarbonization Campaign Endorsement Platform" prepared by the Climate Center.

Member Falconer also suggested that the Committee establish recycling goals for this coming year to be included in the Annual Goals Planning.

Member Melkonian indicated she would request Council member Collins update the Committee on the status of the City Climate Action Plan.

Member Wall has requested a report from Parks & Recreation on the status of the Cities Bicycle Route map, and whether there has been any effort into providing Google and other Map application with his information.

Staff member Munn informed the Committee that the regularly scheduled meeting would fall on Veteran's Day Holiday, and would be subject to cancellation. The Committee requested a Special Meeting to be scheduled.

Chair Melkonian requested that Staff submit the dates of the Committee meetings for calendar year 2021.

**10. Adjourn**

Chair Melkonian adjourned the meeting at 7:35 pm.