



*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)

November 18, 2020

1. Welcome & Introduction

The Visalia Environmental Committee (V.E.C.) meeting was called to order at 5:46 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: Holly Deniston-Sheets

City Staff: Andrew Munn

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 October 14, 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. Member Applicant Interview: Holly Deniston-Sheets

The Committee reviewed the application and interviewed Holly Deniston-Sheets to assume the member position vacated by Renee Burton. Committee member Shelburn made the motion to recommend to the City Council that Deniston-Sheets be appointed as a voting member of the Committee; Member Falconer seconded; the motion carried 6-0.

5. Low Water Land Use Landscape Award Judging Criteria Subcommittee

Members Wall and Sanders reported to the Committee on their work for updates to the judging criteria for the Low Water Use Landscape Award, with Member Wall presenting a proposal for new framework for the event.

The subcommittee suggested the following framework:

- Two categories of award recognition would be available to participants; certificate- and plaque-level awards.
- Applicants would submit a landscape plan utilizing a form developed by the committee that awards points for meeting criteria listed on a V.E.C. created scoresheet that is based on the MWELo prescriptive guidelines.
- The applicants who meet achieve a minimum number of points would receive a V.E.C. certificate of recognition.
- Applicants who submit a landscape plan that follows the guidelines noted above and meet additional "bonus" points for further features would receive a plaque in recognition of their achievement. Examples of features could include providing greater water savings (rainfall capture, permeable hard surfaces, etc.); or using native water-saving trees, plants and grasses.

Chair Melkonian and Member Johnson suggested that applicants should submit photos of their completed project, or V.E.C. members perform site visits to verify results before awards are issued.

Member Falconer suggested bonus points could be given for landscapes that take measures to improve soil health.

Member Johnson suggested approaching the Visalia Realtors Association to consider their endorsement for the award program as homes that are recognized as having well designed water efficient landscapes could be a selling point in the future.

Member Wall inquired whether an enhanced V.E.C. award program might require approval by the City Council, where the City logo or letterhead is used in the award certificates and the applications. Several members endorsed the idea making a recommendation to Council for the City to adopt a Mwelo based residential landscape rehabilitation ordinance that would apply to both front- and back yard improvements.

6. 2020-21 Committee Goal Planning Subcommittee

Chair Melkonian , Vice-Chair Sanders and Member Falconer met and prepared a “slate” of recommended goals for the Committee to consider adopting for 2021 calendar year, and the members who would be responsible for the measures to accomplish them:

Goal 1: Provide coordination for Visalia Earth Day 2020 “Plus 1” scheduled for April 24 2021. Maile Melkonian and Kathy Falconer

Goal 2: Continue to provide support for the Battery Recycling Program. Consolidate location of battery drop-off to a single location. David Shelburne

Goal 3: Complete revision of the criteria and application process for the Low Water Landscape Award. Mark Wall and Steve Sanders

Goal 4: Commercial Environmental Recognition Award

Goal 5: Establish an Environmental Calendar webpage on the City of Visalia website. Kathy Falconer and Dustin Johnson

Goal 6: Encourage the City Council to promote policies that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and that sequester CO2 with view to meet or exceed state & federal goals.

Goal 7: Encourage the City Council to look into innovative ways to help residents and businesses comply with the stricter water regulations (Stage 3) that are coming into effect; recommending the City conduct an extensive PR campaign (including PSA’s), and consider establishing a grant program that motivate landscape conversion from turf to water wise landscapes.

Goal 8: Encourage the City to promote policies and technologies that reduce air pollution with a view to have the Visalia area meet and exceed State & Federal air quality goals.

7. EcoCreate Art Contest Funding

Member Falconer reported on the receipt of grant funding from Arts Visalia to pay the for the 2020 EcoCreate Art Contest feature of the 2020 EarthDay event. A surplus balance remains after expenses were deducted. Member Falconer made the motion that the surplus funds be directed to fund the 2021 EcoCreate event; Member Johnson seconded. The motion carried 6—0.

8. Climate-Safe California Rapid Decarbonization Campaign Platform Endorsement

Chair Melkonian tabled consideration of the matter until the next meeting.

9. Visalia Environmental Committee 2021 Meeting Schedule

Staff Munn representative provided the Committee with the 2021 Meeting Schedule

January 13th

February 10th

March 10th

April 14th

May 12th

June 9th

July 14th

August 11th

September 8th

October 13th

November 10th

December 8th

10. Adjourn

Chair Melkonian adjourned the meeting at 7:35 pm.