



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)
February 10, 2021

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, Holly Deniston-Sheets and Dustin Johnson were present by Zoom teleconference.

Members Not Present: None

Members of the Public: City Council Member Brett Taylor

City Staff: Andrew Munn, Michelle Nicholson, Alison Mackey, Leslie Caviglia, Nathan Garza and Shelley Albanese

2. Public Comment

None

3. Approval of January 13, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Chair Melkonian welcomed City Councilmember Brett Taylor who was in attendance at the meeting and thanked him on behalf of the Committee for his interest in the VEC.

Chair Melkonian then asked that all members review the draft meeting minutes from the January 13, 2020 monthly meeting. After review of the minutes, Member Johnson made the motion to accept the meeting minutes; Member Sanders seconded, the motion carried 7-0.

4. An Overview of the Brown Act and Best Practices for Committees; discussion with Michelle Nicholson, Chief Deputy City Clerk, City of Visalia

Michelle Nicholson provided an overview of the requirements for the conduct of public business set forth by the Brown Act, highlighting the rules that members and staff must adhere. She clarified what e-mail communications can and cannot be done among Committee members. She also provided an update on the recent additions covering the use of text, email and social media technology.

5. V.E.C. Green Business Award; discussion with Nathan Garza, Natural Resources Technician, Public Works Department –

Nathan Garza provided an update on the upcoming presentation at City Council of the Green Business Award to the Housing Authority of Tulare County (HATC). Chairperson Melkonian would attend the Council meeting to present the award on behalf of the Committee to Ken Kugler, the Executive Director of HATC.

6. V.E.C. Webpage and Calendar Development Discussion with Allison Mackey, City of Visalia Communication Manager

Allison Mackey discussed the City's on-line platforms, describing in detail the features and limitations of the Civica software utilized on the City website, and requirements for posting both there and on the social media platforms Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

She provided examples of how the Committee's Environmental Tips would be presented on these platforms.

She also answered questions from Committee member Wall on how the information on the Committee's Low Water Use Landscape Award could be effectively presented; the possibility of creating links for an on-line application form and to PDF files of an application for and program brochure.

7. Low Water Use Landscape Award Subcommittee update (members Wall and Sanders) – Discussion and Action by Committee

The Committee considered options for a brochure providing information on the VEC Low Water Use Landscape Award. The brochure would provide the program and application information approved by the Committee at the previous meeting, and would be made available for viewing and download online and printed for distribution at local nurseries. Staff was directed to produce a sample for consideration at the next meeting.

The Committee also requested staff to develop an online application form.

8. V.E.C. Op-Ed in Support of Stage 2 Subcommittee Update (members Melkonian and Johnson) – Discussion and Action by Committee

Member Melkonian presented a proposal for the committee to place an editorial supporting the adoption by the City Council of Stage 2 of the Water Conservation ordinance. Chairperson Melkonian and member Johnson volunteered to draft the editorial. Member Wall made the motion to approve the editorial with provision that the subcommittee verify the facts reported and make minor revisions to the text as appropriate so as not to change the general findings presented; member Shelburne seconded, the motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

9. City Water Conservation Communications Strategy Update, Andrew Munn City of Visalia Water Resources Manager –

Staff member Munn updated the Committee on the City's Communication Strategy as the City begins implementation of the Stage 2 Water Conservation requirements on March 1, 2021, with postings on the City website and social media outlets beginning in late January, placement of advertising placards on new City residential waste disposal trucks by the end of February, and newspaper and radio ads scheduled for late February through late March.

10. Visalia Environmental Committee Green Business Award -Discussion and Action by Committee

(moved up from item 9 on the agenda to item 5 during the meeting by consent of the committee at the request of Chair Melkonian)

11. Visalia Earth Day Plus One – Discussion and Action by Committee

Staff representative Munn reported that the City anticipates remaining under County COVID-19 guidelines regulating outdoor gathering for the foreseeable future. As a result the City has cancelled the Earth Day event scheduled for April 24th at the Riverway Sports Park.

The Committee considered whether to begin planning for an Earth Day type event for later this year, or for April 2022. After deliberations, member Wall made a motion, and member Deniston-Sheets seconded, to proceed with plans for an event on Earth Day 2022. The motion passed 6 ayes and 1 no (member Falconer).

12. Santa Fe Bike Trail Extension Feasibility Study Update – Update

Member Wall reported on the outcome of the City Council reconsideration of the Santa Fe Bike Trail Extension Feasibility Study; at the January 18, 2021 meeting the Council voted by a 3-2 to pursue the Study, with consideration of the social and economic benefits of the Trail, and reconsider the related matter of the timing of planned residential development for the adjacent area.

Councilmember Taylor was asked to comment on the matter.

13. Member Requests & Announcements –

Member Wall attended a City Council that decided that a review of Committee and Commissions was in order. Member Wall requested that the matter be placed on the next month meeting agenda and that the Committee provide information to review, suggesting an internal survey of members opinions.

Member Wall requested that consideration of City policies on residential Electric Vehicle charging points be placed on next month's meeting agenda. Member Johnson indicated that he would try to arrange for a specialist in the field of EV's from Southern California Edison be available to make a presentation.

Member Falconer requested that the Committee be updated by City Staff on the status of City recycling programs, including Styrofoam policy, as an agenda item at a future meeting.

Staff member Munn announced that he would be relinquishing his role as staff representative after the March VEC meeting, to be replaced by Shelley Albanese.

14. Adjourn –

Chairperson Melkonian adjourned the meeting at 8:40 pm.