

**CITY OF BOULDER, COLORADO
BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS
MEETING SUMMARY**

NAME OF BOARD/COMMISSION: Environmental Advisory Board

DATE OF MEETING: November 2, 2022

NAME/TELEPHONE OF PERSON PREPARING SUMMARY: Heather Sandine, 303-441-4390

NAMES OF MEMBERS, STAFF AND INVITED GUESTS:

Environmental Advisory Board Members Present: Michael SanClements, Brook Brockett, Amanda Groziak, Hernan Villanueva

Environmental Advisory Board Members Absent: None

City Staff Members Present: Carl Castillo, Brett KenCairn, Heather Sandine

1. CALL TO ORDER

M. SanClements declared a quorum and called the meeting to order at **6:03 pm**.

B. KenCairn reviewed the meeting protocols.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On a motion by **M. SanClements**, seconded by **A. Groziak**, the Environmental Advisory Board (EAB) approved the October 12, 2022 meeting minutes.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- Paul Culnan said he is happy to hear the Policy Statement will be discussed. He highlighted customer electricity choice on page 18 of the packet and noted that Xcel Energy has increased their rates. He believes that market competition will prevent continued rate increases. The PUC is now studying Community Choice Energy. He hopes to see it as a bill in the future.
- Meghan Courvan and Hannah Davis joined as observers.

4. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Proposed Policy Agenda – C. Castillo

i. Overview

- **C. Castillo** spoke about the proposed 2023 Policy Statement. The statement allows the city to advocate at the state and federal level without the need to return to council.
- Timeline for the 2023 Policy Statement: Nov. 17 council approval, Dec. 11 first distribution, Feb. 2023 revisions.
- City advocacy team consists of Carl Castillo - Policy Chief Advisor; Laurel Witt - Assistant City Attorney, Headwater Strategies, Smith Dawson & Andrews, council, and department experts.
- Advocacy partners include Colorado Communities for Climate Action, Boulder County Consortium of Cities, US Conference of Mayors, National League of

Cities, Colorado Municipal League, Metro Mayors Caucus, and Northwest Mayors, and Commissioners Coalition.

- Climate Change and Community Resilience items begin the policy statement. Climate Initiatives has the most positions. Regional Environmental Quality, Natural Resources and Parks (positions 49, 52 and 53 respectively) are relevant to Climate Initiatives.
- Policy topics to expect in 2023:
 - Geothermal electricity production as a stable, renewable power source from abandoned oil and gas wells
 - Creation of a clean hydrogen hub for hard-to-decarbonize sectors such as heavy trucks
 - EV charging requirements and wiring for multifamily and commercial properties
 - Implementing the transportation greenhouse gas (GHG) rules and CO Department of Transportation ten-year plan
 - Funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA)
 - Clean Air Act now identifies carbon emissions as a pollutant

ii. Clarifying Questions

- **H. Villanueva** asked for an explanation of the process after council approval.
- **C. Castillo** responded that staff approaches senators who are interested in the work to draft an outline, identify opposition, and help draft the bill. Lobbyists help identify co-sponsors, and coalition members reach out to their representatives. There is a legislative drafter who uses the draft to create a bill. Some items are sensitive and must be brought forward at a time that does not interfere with other work.
- **A. Groziak** said that capping GHG emissions is more politically persuasive than trading GHGs. She asked which entities or industries may have a cap imposed on their emissions. She also wanted to know about devices that measure vehicle emissions and if a cost-benefit analysis had been completed for those devices. Additionally, she recalled a study that CO did not have enough geothermal sources from hot springs to generate energy and asked for more information.
- **C. Castillo** said that there are state-wide GHG standards and standards for each industry. Staff may request caps for specific industries. He is unsure if a cost-benefit analysis has been completed on the devices that measure vehicle emissions. The CO Municipal League is considering addressing nuisance vehicle noise. It may be possible to add pollution reduction work to the nuisance vehicle work the CO Municipal League is pursuing. If someone is cutting off their muffler they may be cutting off their catalytic converter. He clarified that the geothermal energy would be sourced from abandoned oil and gas wells.
- **B. Brockett** asked how long the process is from the time the policy statement is approved by council to a bill being passed into law.
- **C. Castillo** responded that the process can be as short as council approval in November and a law in May or June.
- **H. Villanueva** asked at what point does staff call in experts to support drafting a bill. He wanted to know if staff would want to find a local expert for the geothermal bill.

- **C. Castillo** said that experts are called in immediately. For the geothermal bill specifically, the city will be part of a chorus supporting this bill. We don't have the expertise in this area and we acknowledge that.
- **B. KenCairn** said that expertise sometimes comes forward in the hearing process.
- **A. Groziak** said she is somewhat uncomfortable with the city seeking IRA and Infrastructure Bill funds for wildfire mitigation work. The city has access to funds from other sources for this work, and there are many at-risk communities across the country that don't. She believes the city should use our collective voice to encourage funding to go to these at-risk communities.
- **C. Castillo** responded that we want our region, the state, and the front range to be a leader in this area.
- **B. KenCairn** added that the city created a regional consortium for urban forestry so the funds could have a more wide-reaching impact in communities with more marginalized populations. Staff is also working to increase job training. We can increase funding to these communities by creating these consortiums so that communities with fewer funds can access these collaboratively.
- **H. Villanueva** responded that the city could use the money to develop programs and processes. The city can lead the way by example and support other communities. The fact that we have already done the work allows other communities to be able to replicate the work at a lower cost.

B. Annual Letter to Council – B. KenCairn

i. Overview

- Staff will share themes which are important for EAB to have input on and give the board an opportunity to share their high-priority items.
- Potential 2023 topics by quarter
 Quarter 1 - Urban heat management, air quality and urban forestry, electrification, and climate action summary
 Quarter 2 - Lawn equipment and transportation electrification
 Quarter 3 - Building codes, land use and climate, biodiversity, and pesticides
 Quarter 4 - Climate-aligned purchasing and procurement, single-use plastics, and resilience

ii. Clarifying Questions and Discussion

- **M. SanClements** asked for more info on the purchasing and procurement topic.
- **B. KenCairn** explained that staff would like the ability to review a company's policies, actions, and products when deciding whether or not to use their services. For example, we could decide not to use a company who invests in firearms or tobacco. We could also look at the quality and carbon density of products.
- **A. Groziak** asked if this would extend to bonds.
- **B. KenCairn** responded that it would.
- **B. Brockett** asked what staff would be addressing with building codes.
- **B. KenCairn** said that Boulder is one of the first cities to draft advanced building codes. There will be updates to those codes. Some folks in planning are starting to think with us about green infrastructure.

- **A. Groziak** asked if building codes would encompass demolition and deconstruction waste.
- **B. KenCairn** replied that would likely be addressed within a Circular Materials Economy team update. He asked the EAB if there are any additional topics our community should focus on.
- **A. Groziak** said she would like to see a focus on continuous public education on composting and asked if it is possible to use city open space land for a compost facility.
- **B. KenCairn** said that there is a very vocal community organization against composting. Using open space land for this is against the charter and would require a charter change. There are currently no zoned sites within the county for composting.
- **H. Villanueva** reported that the current bins and labels do not support composting efforts. The materials that companies are using are not shown in the photos on the labels. He asked why the board drafts a letter to council each year.
- **B. KenCairn** responded that each year council develops a work plan, and the letter is an opportunity for EAB to voice what they think council should prioritize. The board should choose two to three topics to include in the letter.
- **B. Brockett** said she would like to see green roofs included in the letter.
- **A. Groziak** said she does not think leaf blowers should be prioritized. [She has since researched the topic and does think it should be prioritized.]
- **H. Villanueva** said he is concerned about the negative impact a move to electric landscaping equipment could have on landscaping workers. It may not be equitable.
- **B. KenCairn** said that, because council has received many comments and complaints about leaf blowers, it will be on the council workplan. EAB can choose whether or not to include it in the letter. He pointed out that the community has a unique overlap in urban forestry, urban heat management, air quality, and building electrification.
- **H. Villanueva** asked if staff could draft the letter and then the board review, revise and sign it. He said he thinks the letter would be better coming from experts.
- **B. KenCairn** responded that there are experts on the board.
- **A. Groziak** suggested an approach – the board could draft a letter with both staff recommendations and what raw data supports. EAB would then revise it. She would like to see transportation electrification included. Specifically, she would like to see the use of public transportation encouraged, electrification of city fleet, buses and school buses and vehicle to grid capabilities.
- **M. SanClements** would like to see climate aligned purchasing and procurement included. The litter problem in Boulder has gotten worse over the past few years and he would like to see it addressed.
- **H. Villanueva** commented on the purchasing and procurement discussion. He said farmland costs have increased because companies are buying farmland to purchase “carbon credits” without reducing their emissions.
- **B. KenCairn** responded that we need to ensure companies we use are aligned with our priorities. We need to make sure if a company is claiming to be carbon neutral it is not because they are buying offsets.
- **A. Groziak** asked if it would be possible to have a carbon footprint cap in Boulder and guide companies to the most beneficial changes they can make.

- **B. KenCairn** replied that this falls into consumption-based accounting and added it to the quarter three topics list. There is not currently enough done on this work to bring forward to council, but it can be presented to the board.
- The board choose the following to include in the letter to council:
 1. An integrated and regional approach to address urban forestry, urban heat management, air quality and electrification of buildings.
 2. Climate aligned purchasing/procurement. Although there is not enough work completed to bring forward to council, there should be a continued focus on achieving a circular economy, particularly around organics materials, and investigate climate-aligned purchasing and procurement to accomplish these objectives.
 3. Transportation electrification. Ensuring buildings have charging infrastructure, promote and participate in regional collaboration, and advance electrification of buses.

5. OLD BUSINESS/UPDATES

None

6. MATTERS FROM THE ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY BOARD, CITY MANAGER AND CITY ATTORNEY DEBRIEF MEETING/CALENDAR CHECK

None

7. DEBRIEF MEETING/CALENDAR CHECK

The next EAB meeting is scheduled for December 7 from 6-8 pm.

8. ADJOURNMENT

The Environmental Advisory Board adjourned at **7:59 pm.**

Approved:



01/06/23

Chair

Date