

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

NAME OF BOARD/COMMISSION: Environmental Advisory Board

DATE OF MEETING: September 6, 2023

NAME/TELEPHONE OF PERSON PREPARING SUMMARY:

Heather Sandine, 303-441-4390

NAMES OF MEMBERS, STAFF AND INVITED GUESTS:

Environmental Advisory Board Members Present: Hernan Villanueva, Alex Bothwell, Brook Brockett, Greg Hill, Hannah Davis

Environmental Advisory Board Members Absent: None

City Staff Members & Presenters Present: Jonathan Koehn, Heather Sandine, Antonia-Mia Gallegos, Carl Castillo, Reegan Brown

1. CALL TO ORDER

- A. **H. Villanueva** declared a quorum and called the meeting to order at **6:05 PM**
- B. **H. Sandine** reviewed the meeting protocols.

2. NEW MEMBER OATHS OF OFFICE

- A. Hannah Davis
- B. Greg Hill

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- A. On a motion by **H. Villanueva**, seconded by **B. Brockett**, the Environmental Advisory Board (EAB) approved the July 12, 2023 meeting minutes.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- A. None

5. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. University Hill General Improvement District Update – R. Brown

i. Overview

- **R. Brown** provided an overview and history of the hill neighborhood including challenges related to over consumption of alcohol, public drug use and loitering. She shared past efforts to address these challenges, including requiring restaurants to obtain 50% of their revenue from food sales. This area of town has a higher vacancy rate (14%) when compared to the remainder of the city (4%).
- The goal of the University Hill General Improvement District (UHGD) is to make the hill neighborhood more welcoming by addressing economic and social challenges, complimenting new developments underway, and responding to increasing community desire to see positive change. UHGD would like to see an improved district identity.

- UHGID is considering best options for the 14th street parking lot. One option is to sell or lease the lot to a private developer. With this option, the city would receive revenue from the sale and use the funds to further promote improvements. Options for improvements could include redevelopment to maximize the parking space; redevelopment to include parking and retail stores; or redevelopment to include parking, retail space and faculty housing.
- The next steps for UHGID are to incorporate council feedback, facilitate coordination among other city departments, secure planning and design services, and participate in community and stakeholder engagement.

ii. Clarifying Questions and Feedback

- **H. Villanueva** asked for more information about the 50% food requirement and how it is enforced. He also wanted to know what contributes to the 14% vacancy rate.
- **R. Brown** responded that she is unsure how the food revenue requirement are enforced and will look for more information. One factor contributing to higher vacancy is conflict between students, residents and businesses.
- **A. Bothwell** asked if rent on the hill is comparable to rent in surrounding areas.
- **R. Brown** responded she believes they are comparable.
- The board discussed the need to connect the downtown area with the hill and suggested increasing e-bike station placement.
- **A. Bothwell** pointed out there is a multi-use path on the campus side of Broadway and asked if there has been discussion about connecting that to the commercial side of Broadway.
- **R. Brown** responded that she is unsure but will ask the team. This will likely be under the purview transportation.
- **G. Hill** asked what aspects of the University Hill improvements have environmental considerations. He said the hotel will have a large capacity and parking is limited. He asked about a gondola system that was suggested several years ago to connect the hill to downtown.
- **J. Koehn** and **R. Brown** shared past suggestions to connect the areas, such as improving the arboretum trail. They believed the gondola was no longer being considered.
- **R. Brown** said she would like to see the city hire a consultant to generate ideas. She said any plan staff brings forward will align with the Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan and the city's Sustainability, Equity and Resilience Framework.
- **B. Brockett** said that, given limited parking and amenities for students, she would like to see a grocery store in the area. Renovations that would encourage wider accessibility to amenities would also be a positive change.
- **R. Brown** agreed with the ideas and said that they align with the 15 minute neighborhood concept.
- **G. Hill** would like to see more information in the future on how this project will improve sustainability in the city.
- **H. Villanueva** responded the building codes will have a large impact on this.

B. Policy Agenda Update – C. Castillo

i. Overview

- **C. Castillo** provided an overview of the policy statement, its purpose and how it is developed. He shared examples of 2023 policy items and potential items to expect in 2024. He explained the city's policy team and work with lobbyists and partner organizations.

ii. Clarifying Questions and Feedback

- **H. Villanueva** was interested in a policy item related to direct air carbon capture. He said he believes there will likely federal funds available for this work. He asked how state and local governments will be involved.
- **A. Bothwell** shared there is already related federal work in the national labs.
- **B. Castillo** responded that state and local governments are involved because the companies doing this work are looking for homes, and the city can make our area attractive to these companies. He said direct air carbon capture fits into our strategy to stop climate change, but is important not to lose focus on reducing consumption of fossil fuels. Direct air carbon capture could be an added tool to stop climate change and the city can advocate for this technology to be allowed.
- **A. Bothwell** asked what the board's options and pathways are to share thoughts and advice to those in higher positions.
- **C. Castillo** said the board can give the recommendations to him to take to council. If the board identifies a policy that is missing, please let him know so he can take that recommendation forward.
- **B. Brocket** said changes happen quickly in the capital. She said it would be more beneficial for the board to take positions on issues rather than specific bills.
- **H. Villanueva** agreed and would like the board to have the opportunity to help guide discussions and input.
- **G. Hill** wanted to hear more about wildfire mitigation. He was curious about the balance between removing trees versus Cool Boulder that wants to increase the number of trees.
- **C. Castillo** explained that controlled burns could happen in wildland areas where there are dead or damaged trees while also planting trees in urban areas to improve cooling.
- **H. Davis** wanted to know if the city participates in carbon offsets.
- **J. Koehn** responded that the city does not.

C. Boulder Junction Cross-Board Effort – H. Villanueva

- On a motion by **H. Villanueva**, seconded by **A. Bothwell**, this item was rescheduled to the next meeting.

6. OLD BUSINESS/UPDATES

A. Upcoming RTD EcoPass Changes

- H. Sandine** announced that Eco Passes will move to a digital format and told the board to expect an email with further information.

7. MATTERS FROM THE ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY BOARD, CITY

MANAGER AND CITY ATTORNEY DEBRIEF MEETING

A. Council Calendar Preview

- i. **J. Koehn** reviewed the Council Agenda Committee (CAC) summary and highlighted several upcoming items including the city budget, boards and commissions recommendations, energy codes, water efficiency plan update, and Boulder Junction implementation.
- ii. The board would like to see information about the items listed above in the upcoming months.
- iii. **A. Bothwell** asked how the board's input will be included in the energy code memos.
- iv. **J. Koehn** responded that staff will have specific questions for the board and request feedback. The feedback will go into the memo with a draft ordinance to council. The board will have an opportunity to review the board feedback section of the memo before it goes to council.

8. DEBRIEF MEETING/CALENDAR CHECK

The next EAB meeting is scheduled for **October 4 at 6 PM.**

9. ADJOURNMENT

The Environmental Advisory Board adjourned at **8:01**

Approved:


Chair

10/04/23
Date