

CITY OF BOULDER COLORADO

BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

MEETING SUMMARY

NAME OF BOARD/COMMISSION: Environmental Advisory Board

DATE OF MEETING: June 5, 2024

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

NAMES OF MEMBERS, STAFF AND INVITED GUESTS:

Environmental Advisory Board Members Present: Brook Brockett, Alex Bothwell, Hannah Davis, Anie Roche

Environmental Advisory Board Members Absent: Hernan Villanueva

City Staff Members & Presenters Present: Jonathan Koehn, Brett KenCairn, Heather Sandine

1. CALL TO ORDER

- A. **B. Brockett** declared a quorum and called the meeting to order at 6:06 PM.
- B. **H. Sandine** reviewed the meeting protocols.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- A. On a motion by **B. Brockett**, seconded by **H. Davis**, the Environmental Advisory Board (EAB) approved the April 17, 2024 meeting minutes.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- A. No public participants

4. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- A. Community Forestry Corps
 - i Overview
 - **B. KenCairn** talked about the Nature-based Solutions (NBS) team and Community Forestry Corps (CFC). The NBS team is using new tools to help the city get ready for the impacts of climate change. One tool, made by Paul Chinowsky of Resilient Analytics, provides detailed climate modeling. The other tool, called Tree Plotter, shows information about urban tree cover. He demonstrated both tools.
 - The climate modeling tool predicts more changes in the next 10 to 15 years, including more high fire risk days and more days over 95 degrees.
 - The Tree Plotter tool shows how much tree cover there is in different areas and can also track tree loss. This data will be updated every two years instead of every ten years.
 - Urban forestry and tree cover are important for reducing heat in certain areas. The CFC was created to plant and care for urban trees to help cool down areas most at risk, as identified by the climate modeling tool.
 - ii Clarifying Questions & Discussion

- **A. Bothwell** asked if the tool can adjust for different inputs over the next ten years.
- **B. KenCairn** replied that the model is conservative and does take those variables into account.
- **A. Roche** asked if the model could predict when high fire risk days and days over 95 degrees will occur. She also wanted to know why there is more tree canopy on the west side of Boulder than on the east and if planting smaller trees and shrubs is as effective as planting larger ones.
- **B. KenCairn** said the model cannot predict dates when high fire risk and days over 95 degrees will occur. He said the Boulder area used to have a fire season, but now high fire risk days can happen even in winter. He explained that the west side of the city is forested mountains, while the east is plains. Some argue Boulder didn't historically have many trees on the east side and didn't face high heat risks. Although trees didn't originally exist there, we need to plant them now to reduce heat risk, especially in school areas and neighborhoods with many homes lacking air conditioning. He added that small plants are important in the larger ecosystem. We need to plant more shrubs while waiting for trees to grow. A shrub can reach 15 feet in a few years, but an oak might take 30-40 years.
- **B. Brockett** added that shading the ground, even if not shading people, can help cool an area.
- **B. KenCairn** explained that planting trees in under-resourced communities can be challenging. The trees won't provide shade for nearly 30 years, and we need to consider who will water them and pay for that water. The CFC is a youth-powered effort, similar to the Junior Rangers program, that plants and cares for the trees. The county is funding a similar program in Lafayette and Louisville, with five other cities participating.
- **A. Roche** asked if the trees are being planted on public or private lands and if increasing trees raises fire danger.
- **B. KenCairn** replied that trees are planted on both. Deciduous trees don't usually increase fire risk, but any tree too close to a structure could pose a risk. There's new guidance on how far trees should be from structures.
- **A. Bothwell** asked why trees are planted in the summer.
- **B. KenCairn** explained that the trees were planted in the spring and are being watered over the summer.
- **B. Brockett** asked if the program could hire more employees during planting times and help relieve economic pressures year-round.
- **B. KenCairn** said it depends on council resources and priorities.
- **A. Bothwell** asked what community outreach was done to notify people about these available positions.
- **B. KenCairn** replied that staff worked with about a dozen organizations to share the information.

B. Updates on Recent Council Items

i Energy Code

- Two amendments were requested by council: 1) move the implementation date to December 1, 2024 to allow builders to have more time to understand the code and 2) allow off site solar.

- The second request was based on commercial property owner feedback that the cost to purchase solar energy is lower than adding solar capacity on site. This will be revisited in quarter 3 of 2024 and will be a standalone code update separate from the energy code updates.
 - ii Landscape equipment
 - Staff recommended not implementing regulatory measures.
 - iii Community Wildfire Protection Plan
 - This will be presented to the board at a future date.
 - iv Climate Action Plan
 - This is a priority for council. The city will not be creating a new plan, but rather updating the current plan and making it a more user-friendly document.
- C. Plant-based Challenge
- i Denver started an initiative to choose plant-based meals and no single-use plastics as the default for city board meetings and has challenged other cities to do the same.
 - **J. Koehn** will share a link with more information. He asked if the board would like to discuss participation at the July meeting.
 - **B. Brockett** responded that it would be a missed opportunity if another board brought it to the city's attention before the EAB does. She asked if the board would like to vote on it tonight and then discuss at the July meeting what information to send the other boards.
 - This item will be included under matters at the next meeting.
 - **A. Bothwell** recommended sharing with other City of Boulder boards that plant-based meals and no single-use plastics are the norm for the EAB. The board could share recommendations for other boards taking on the challenge, including how to communicate preferences with restaurants.
 - **H. Davis** asked if the challenge could extend to all city meal purchases.
 - **J. Koehn** explained that Climate Initiatives currently provides reusable dinnerware for all city departments.

5. OLD BUSINESS/ UPDATES

- A. None

6. MATTERS FROM THE ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY BOARD, CITY MANAGER AND CITY ATTORNEY

- A. ICLEI World Congress
 - i. **Mayor Brockett** and **B. KenCairn** are attending the ICLEI World Congress in Sao Palo Brazil. The Mayor will participate in the water, water rights, and climate change preparations discussions and will have opportunities to meet with other leaders.
- B. 2024 United Nations Biodiversity Conference of the Parties (COP)
 - i. Several staff members will attend COP16 in Cali, Columbia October 21 to November 2, 2024.
- C. Council Calendar Preview
 - i Date TBD - Williams Village. Council requested for Planning & Development to receive input from the EAB.
 - ii June 27 – Planning Reserves. There is currently discussion about development in area 3. It will be important for the board to understand this conversation as the Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan update moves forward.

- iii Date TBD – East Boulder Sub-Community Plan. J. Koehn has requested staff from Planning & Development to present to the board.

7. DEBRIEF MEETING/ CALENDAR CHECK

- A. The next EAB meeting will be hybrid on July 3rd at 6 PM.

8. ADJOURNMENT

- A. The Environmental Advisory Board adjourned at **7:40 PM**.

Approved:



Chair



Date