



SF Environment

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EDWIN M. LEE
Mayor

MELANIE NUTTER
Director

**CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO
COMMISSION ON THE ENVIRONMENT**

**REGULAR MEETING
APPROVED MINUTES**

**TUESDAY, MARCH 27, 2012, 5:00 P.M.
CITY HALL, ROOM 416, SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102**

COMMISSION MEMBERS: Commissioners Matt Tuchow (President), Ruth Gravanis (Vice-President), Angelo King, Alan Mok, Heather Stephenson and Johanna Wald

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Public comment will be taken before the Commission takes action on any item.

- 1. Call to Order and Roll Call.** The March 27, 2012 Commission on the Environment meeting convened at 5:20 p.m. Present: Commissioners Tuchow, King, Mok and Stephenson (5:40 p.m.) Excused: Commissioners Gravanis and Wald.

**Items 3, 4 and 9 were heard before Items 2, 5, 6 and 7.
Items 5, 6 and 7 were heard before Item 2.**

- 2. Approval of Minutes of the January 24, 2012 Commission on the Environment Meeting.** (Explanatory Document: January 24, 2012 Draft Minutes) (Discussion and Action) Upon Motion by Commissioner Stephenson, second by Commissioner King, the January 24, 2012 Minutes were approved without objection (AYES: Commissioners Tuchow, King, Mok and Stephenson; Absent: Commissioners Gravanis and Wald).
- 3. Public Comments:** Members of the public may address the Commission on matters that are within the Commission's jurisdiction and are not on today's agenda. There was no public comment at this time.
- 4. Department of the Environment Eco Center Update since Renovation.** (Explanatory Document: Eco Center Presentation) Sponsor: Melanie Nutter, Director; Speaker: Shawn Rosenmoss, Senior Environmental Specialist (Informational Presentation and Discussion)

Ms. Shawn Rosenmoss gave an update on the Department of the Environment's Eco Center at 11 Grove Street and presented on topics that included how well the Eco Center renovation of 2009 was aligned to the vision to make the space transparent, engaging, and inviting to the community. She discussed the function of the Eco Center to relay environmental messages and serve as a flexible community space for revolving displays, meetings of delegations, staff offices, community events, art workshops, cultural events, trainings, brown bags, films, open houses, and dance performances. Ms. Rosenmoss discussed the Department's participation in events such "Parking Day" which brought the Eco Center into the street to transform metered parking spaces for other purposes and "Trolley Dances", site specific performances celebrating mass transit. She also reported on upcoming events and thanked Deputy Director Assmann for his support of the Eco Center.

Commissioner Tuchow inquired about future plans for the Eco Center when the Department transitions into its new space. Ms. Rosenmoss confirmed that funding would be built into the renovation budget to redesign the space. She reported that the new location is still being negotiated, but that many of the functions of the current Eco-Center would remain the same. Deputy Director Assmann reported that the intent is to continue all of the functions of the current Eco Center, and that there would be more flexibility in designing the new space.

Commissioner Mok suggested the possibility of locating the Department's Eco Center in a separate larger space from the Department. Ms. Rosenmoss reported that locating the Eco Center in the same space as the Department provides the ability for the public to interact with staff. She reported that branch libraries serve as off-site small eco centers. Deputy Director Assmann reported that the Literacy for Environmental Justice Eco Center at Herons Head Park building that was supported and funded by the Department serves as an off-site Eco Center, and its activities are linked to the Department's work.

Commissioner King discussed the positive synergy of the Department's current location that may be lost when moving into a new space that may not be a thoroughfare for the community. He asked that alternatives be considered for staying in the same location at 11 Grove Street.

- 5. Approval of Letter supporting the Endangered Pacific Leatherback as the Official Marine Reptile of California.** (Explanatory Document: (Explanatory Documents: Presentation to Commission, Draft Letter, AB1776 Bill, FAQ Sheet, Legend and Sighting Maps and Picture of Sighting) Sponsor: Commissioner Ruth Gravanis; Speaker: Teri Shore, Program Director, Turtle Island Restoration Project (Discussion and Action)

Commission Secretary Fish reported that Commissioner Gravanis has asked that the Turtle Island Restoration Network and Ms. Teri Shore be acknowledged for their work on the AB1776 Bill. Ms. Shore discussed the work of the Sea Turtle Restoration Project (www.Seaturtles.org) sponsoring the bill to make the endangered Pacific Leatherback the official safe marine reptile of California. She discussed its critically endangered status under the United States Endangered Species Act since 1970, reasons for its decline, and the large area along the Central California Coast that has been designated as its critical habitat. Additional information was provided on the large size and magnificent appearance of the turtle, migration patterns from Indonesia to the California, Oregon and Washington coastline to feed on jellyfish, tracking mechanisms, and sightings along the California coast and in waters of San Francisco. She asked that the Commission support AB1776 that would designate the endangered Pacific Leatherback as the official marine reptile

of California that would memorialize the species as important to California, raise awareness of the Pacific Leatherback turtle, and build constituencies for its continued conservation and support.

Commissioner Tuchow confirmed that there was not another reptile in competition for this honor. Commissioner King suggested that there be outreach to California schools to adopt the Leatherback Sea Turtle as a school's official mascot that would bring importance to this reptile and serve as a public relations tool. Upon Motion by Commissioner King, second by Commissioner Mok, the letter supporting the endangered Pacific Leatherback Turtle as the official marine reptile of California was approved without objection (AYES: Commissioners Tuchow, King, Mok and Stephenson; Absent: Commissioners Gravanis and Wald).

6. Resolution urging Congress to permanently establish parity between the parking and mass transit/vanpool portions of the Employee Transportation Benefit. (Explanatory Document: Draft Resolution File 2012-02-COE) Sponsor: Commissioner Ruth Gravanis; Speaker: Bob Hayden, Transportation Manager (Discussion and Action)

Mr. Bob Hayden reported that federal tax provisions that transit and car-sharing tax benefits for commuters be treated equally with tax benefits for commuter costs for automobile parking expired last year, and tax legislation that would have restored the parity that was part of a broader tax bill, was not acted upon by Congress. Now, under the federal tax code for the commuter benefits program, participating employees can deduct a larger amount of their income before taxation (app. 48%) for parking than for transit commuting or van/car-pooling. Mr. Hayden reported that there is legislation proposed in Congress to restore the parity, and that this Resolution before the Commission would be asking the Board of Supervisors and Mayor to urge Congress to enact that parity and make it permanent in the tax code. Mr. Hayden explained that this bill is part of a larger Omnibus Transportation bill that is in considerable controversy within Congress and the Senate. One effort of this Resolution is to make sure this provision of commuter benefits does not get lost in the entire transportation bill.

Upon Motion by Commissioner King, second by Commissioner Stephenson, Resolution File 2012-02-COE was approved without objection (AYES: Commissioners Tuchow, King, Mok and Stephenson; Absent: Commissioners Gravanis and Wald) (Explanatory Document: Approved Resolution 002-12-COE).

7. Resolution commending the Port of San Francisco for passage of their Zero Waste Events and Activities Policy. Sponsor: Commissioners Wald and Gravanis; Speaker: Guillermo Rodriguez, Department of the Environment (Explanatory Documents: Draft Resolution File 2012-03-COE and Port's Policy on Zero Waste Events and Activities Policy) (Discussion and Action)

Mr. Guillermo Rodriguez reported that this Resolution is on behalf of the Commission and Department to recognize the Port, its staff and their Commission for passing a major milestone in advancing the Department's and the City's policies for events and activities that happen on Port property throughout the year. The idea started with conversations for events planned for America's Cup and how to hold folks accountable in San Francisco. The Port was able to devise a policy that took many of the City's programs and policies and made them apply to all permits that seek to use Port property that exceed attendance of over 5,000. This policy not only applies to America's Cup activities, but to other events on Port facilities such as fleet week, New Year's celebration, Oktoberfest, and marathons.

This Resolution is to thank the Port and encourage other departments who issue permits for use of public facilities to follow suit. The Department from a staff level has been in discussions with the Recreation and Park Department to begin crafting similar language for permitting on their facilities.

Ms. Fish reported that Commissioner Gravanis has asked to read into the record that the Treasure Island Development Authority has incorporated language in its events policy to discourage the use of single-use water bottles, plastic bags, and balloons.

Public Comment: Ms. Teri Shore, Program Director, Sea Turtles Restoration Project, spoke in support of this Resolution and the Port's policy. She stated that her organization has been following the America's Cup closely and has been before this Commission on various items related to the event. She acknowledged the Port for successfully addressing the issues around the America's Cup and for setting a model for other Ports in the United States and elsewhere to take proactive efforts to reduce the use of plastics.

Upon Motion by Commissioner Mok, second by Commissioner Stephenson, Resolution File 2012-03-COE was approved without objection (AYES: Commissioners Tuchow, King, Mok and Stephenson; Absent: Commissioners Gravanis and Wald) (Explanatory Document: Approved Resolution 003-12-COE)

8. Commission President's Committee Appointments. (Discussion and Action) Commission President Tuchow appointed Commissioners Wald and Gravanis as members of the Policy Committee with Commissioner Wald as Chair and Commissioners Mok, King and Stephenson as members of the Operations Committee with Commissioner King as Chair.

9. Operations Committee Report. (Information and Discussion)

Chair's Report: The next meeting is scheduled for April 18, 2012 to be held at the Department of the Environment Eco Center, 11 Grove Street.

Committee Chair Mok handed over the floor to Commissioner King who stated that with the President's approval, he would be serving as Committee Chair and would be presenting a plan for the year after review of the Committee Bylaws.

10. Policy Committee Report. (Information and Discussion)

Chairs Report: Highlights of the February 13 meeting and review of the agenda for the April 4 meeting to be held at the Department of the Environment Eco Center and April 30 rescheduled meeting to be held at City Hall, Room 421.

Commission Secretary Fish read a report issued by Commissioner Gravanis on Policy Committee discussions at the February 13th meeting on Community Choice Aggregation, Pre-Tax Commuter Benefits, the Biodiversity Implementation Plan and Policy Committee Recommendations for achieving 2012 Commission goals. The April 4 special meeting agenda will include Policy Committee recommendations on Commission goals and action items to achieve goals for calendar year 2012 for recommendation to the Commission and CleanPowerSF, a presentation by Community Choice Aggregation advocates. The April 30th meeting is scheduled to have a

presentation by the San Francisco County Transportation Authority on high speed rail and other topics that will be discussed at the April 4 meeting.

11. Commission Secretary's Report. (Explanatory Document: Commission Secretary's Report)
(Information and Discussion)

Monica Fish, Commission Secretary

- **Communications and Correspondence**
- **Update on City Legislation**

Ms. Fish reported on special attention items, communications and correspondence received and an update on City legislation since the Commission's last meeting held in January as reflected in the written Commission Secretary's Report explanatory document.

12. Director's Report. Updates on Department of the Environment administrative and programmatic operations relating to Budget Planning, Strategic Planning, Clean Air/Transportation, Climate, Energy, Public Outreach and Education, Environmental Justice, Habitat Restoration, Green Building, Zero Waste, Toxics Reduction, and Urban Forestry. (Explanatory Document: Director's Report) (Information and Discussion)

Deputy Director Assmann reported on highlights of the Director's Report that include (1) achieving full staffing on the Department Outreach team; (2) scheduling of the launch of the Department's new website in April concurrently with the Mayor's Earth Day breakfast; (3) current vacancies to fill; (4) submittal of the Department budget to the Mayor's Office and upcoming Board of Supervisors hearing on May; (5) upcoming negotiations between the unions and the City on labor contracts that will expire at the end of June; and (6) status of the Department's move negotiations and potential move date in October/November. Director Nutter is in Melbourne, Australia at a meeting of C40, International Cities Organization that focuses on climate issues.

Commissioner Tuchow inquired whether progress is being made on the City's zero waste goals and asked if there are challenges to consider to achieving greater diversion. Deputy Director Assmann reported that there are annual measurements being taken and figures for 2010 would be available in May. The last report was an increase from 77 percent to 78 percent diversion. He reported that a better economy leads to more production resulting in more waste, even if the recycling rate is higher. Waste going to landfill is measured on a monthly basis and has been on a rate of decline but is now leveling off. The challenge is to keep the diversion rate higher when the economy gets better. Deputy Director Assmann reported that there are discussions about starting a new processing facility, and that there would be continued emphasis on programs and education to increase participation in recycling and composting programs to help with diversion rates. He reported that the Board of Supervisors will be holding a hearing next month to discuss materials that are being taken out of people's bin.

Commissioner King requested that he be kept apprised of meetings on Community Choice Aggregation that he believes may lead to a loss of local renewable energy being produced and fewer local jobs. He expressed his concern with advertising the Department's program work with Recology that may lead to unforeseen consequences in the future. Deputy Director Assmann reported that the SFPUC is the lead on Community Choice Aggregation. He reported on the success of Marin County's community choice aggregation program that is offering light green

(50% renewable) and deep green (100% renewable) programs to its customers and how this program can be used as a model.

Commissioner Stephenson asked for future regular reports on what accounts for successes in certain programs so activities can be replicated.

13. Announcements. (Information and Discussion) There were no Commissioner announcements made at this time.

14. President's Announcements. (Information and Discussion) Commission President Tuchow congratulated Commissioner Mok and Deputy Director Assmann on celebrating their birthdays. He asked Commissioners and Deputy Director Assmann on ideas for future agenda topics that would be discussed at agenda planning sessions between himself and Director Nutter two to three weeks before each Commission meeting.

15. New Business/Future Agenda Items. (Information, Discussion and Possible Action) Commissioner King asked for a discussion on the impact of the bag law and the idea that work be done with private industries to create canvas bags so that by 2016, there would not be a need for paper bags. Commissioner Mok suggested holding one Commission town-hall meeting once a year and the possibility of holding such a meeting in the next few months.

16. Public Comments: Members of the public may address the Commission on matters that are within the Commission's jurisdiction and are not on today's agenda. There was no public comment at this time.

17. Adjournment. The Commission on the Environment meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

The next meeting of the Commission on the Environment is scheduled for Tuesday, May 22, 2012, 5:00 p.m. at City Hall, Room 416.

Respectfully submitted by Monica Fish, Commission Secretary
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*** Copies of explanatory documents are available at (1) the Commission's office, 11 Grove Street, San Francisco, California between the hours of 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., (2) on the Commission's meeting website at <http://www.sfenvironment.org/commission/agendas> included with minutes by meeting date; (3) upon request to the Commission Secretary, at telephone number 415-355-3709, or via e-mail at Monica.Fish@sfgov.org.*

Approved: May 22, 2012