



# MINUTES

## REGULAR MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, May 13, 2014, 7:00 p.m.

El Cerrito City Hall – Council Chambers

10890 San Pablo Avenue

**This Meeting Place Is Wheelchair Accessible**

Miner called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm.

### **Roll Call:**

Chair Miner, Vice Chair Goudey, Members Doan, Krueger, Schaadt, Solari, Spitalnik, Weinstein, Wildenberg

Absent: Benjamin, Pavel

Also Present: Maria Sanders, Environmental Analyst and Staff Liaison; Assistant City Manager Karen Pinkos; Community Development Director Melanie Mintz

1. **Council/ Staff Liaison Report** – Sanders announced that the two spring homeowner workshops went very well, in which approximately 160 residents attended. Assistant City Manager Karen Pinkos announced an upcoming City Council study session on the parameters of a smoking pollution prevention ordinance in preparation for a community meeting to be held on June 5.
2. **Comments from the public on non-agenda items** – Alison Chan from Save the Bay reported that the Assembly Bill 1504, the ban on single use cigarette butts, did not pass out of Committee, and is thus dead. She believes that a strong smoking pollution prevention ordinance will help also reduce litter and subsequent water pollution from cigarette butts.
3. **Approval of the Minutes** – Motion to adopt the minutes of the Regular Meeting from April 8, 2014. (Weinstein, Krueger, Unanimous)
4. **San Pablo Avenue Planning Initiatives** – Community Development Director Melanie Mintz gave a presentation on planning initiatives concerning San Pablo Avenue, with a primary emphasis on the upcoming *San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan and Complete Streets Plan*. Both plans are scheduled to be circulated for public comment in early June.
5. **Community Choice Aggregation** – Miner circulated for discussion a document (attached) outlining the pros and cons regarding the various CCA options previously presented at the EQC and mentioned that the Committee will continue the discussion during the June meeting, in hopes of making a possible recommendation to Council on CCA. Community member Alan Hanger provided a handout (contained in EQC binder) regarding issues, opportunities and options for creating a municipal electric utility. Sanders indicated that she will be bringing a staff report to Council concerning acceptance of the World Wildlife Fund CCA feasibility study in July. Miner gave an update on AB2145, a new bill to reverse the “opt-out” provisions of the original CCA law. Motion to recommend that City Council consider sending a letter of opposition to the author and other law makers (Weinstein, Schaadt, Unanimous).
6. **Eco Film Series: Updates and Action Items** – Goudey reported that the *Chasing Ice* film showing at the Rialto was successful. Sanders communicated concerns from the Rialto management regarding the

### **COMMUNICATION ACCESS INFORMATION**

***To request a meeting agenda in large print, Braille, or on cassette, or to request a sign language interpreter for the meeting, call Maria Sanders, Staff Liaison at 215-4361 (voice) at least FIVE (5) WORKING DAYS NOTICE PRIOR TO THE MEETING to ensure availability.***

10890 San Pablo Avenue, El Cerrito, CA 94530 | 510-215-4361 | msanders@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us

fact that the panel discussion ran over time and impacted the next showing. Goudey confirmed a showing for *Symphony of the Soil* at the Rialto on Saturday, June 28, between 10 AM and 12 noon. Motion to appropriate \$325 to purchase a film license to show the film (Weinstein, Spitalnik, Unanimous).

7. **Hillside Natural Area Open Space Fundraising** – Weinstein gave an update on the upcoming Hillside Festival event on May 17. He asked for volunteers to help participants locate the various activities planned for the day. He also reported that East Bay Sanitary has donated \$3,000 to the El Cerrito Open Space Campaign, and that the Campaign has raised approximately \$40,000 towards the purchase of the Madera Open Space. Motion to move the unspent port-a-potty funds appropriated last month towards brochure printing costs, approximately \$150 (Weinstein, Doan, Unanimous).

8. **Green Teams: Update and Action Items** – Schaadt announced that the Green Teams will be holding several clean-ups on Sunday, May 18, one near the Library and the other in Central Park.

9. **Announcements and future agenda items**

Future agenda items requested included:

- Status update on Plastic Bag and Foam Bans
- Pollinator Safe City Resolution
- Doan's presentation on Abrupt Climate Change
- Follow-up on CCA
- Status Update on Animal Ordinance
- Revisit and Refine EQC Work Plan

These upcoming Meetings + Events were also mentioned

- May 17 Hillside Festival (5/17/14)
- May 18 Green Teams Clean Up Our Park (5/18/14)
- May 31 Ohlone Greenway Fun Day (5/31/14)

10. **Adjournment** – Miner adjourned the meeting at 9:20 PM.

*Any writings or documents provided to a majority of the Environmental Quality Committee regarding any item on this agenda will be made available for public inspection at the El Cerrito Recycling + Environmental Resource Center Administrative Office at 7501 Schmidt Lane, El Cerrito, Monday - Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 pm*

Attachment  
**CCA Pros and Cons**

**Join MCE Pros**

1. **Supports El Cerrito's Climate Action Plan** – Joining a CCA is one of the biggest single item in El Cerrito's Climate Action Plan and may also be the most leveraged action we could take to reduce GHG's in our community. It may be difficult to meet our goals with out it.
2. **Reduce GHG's** –MCE light green at 50% renewable while PG&E is a little above 20%. AB 2145 analysis incorrectly includes large hydro.
3. **Established Entity** - MCE has already been through the more difficult start up period and now has an established track record with suppliers, customers and bankers.
4. **Low Risk to City** – Under the Joint Authority governance structure, El Cerrito would not have any liability exposure
5. **Low Risk to Residents and Businesses** – Opt out is an option for businesses and residents at the beginning of the program and on an annual basis. AB 2145 (which will change opt out to opt in, effectively killing new CCA areas) is a solution to a problem that doesn't exist
6. **Reduce Cost of Renewable Energy** - Cut the cost of renewable energy projects like wind farms and solar panels by 50 percent or more.
7. **Local Control** - Shift political power away from large energy corporations and into the hands of local governments, residents, and small businesses. CCA shifts financial power away from corporate utilities and the California Public Utilities Commission (which many activists characterize as suffering from "regulatory capture" by the companies it is tasked with overseeing) and places the power of the purse in the hands of local officials. With this ability comes the potential for reinvesting in conservation and efficiency programs, creating new local jobs, and lowering consumers' energy bills
8. **Green and Local Jobs** - Provide private sector incentives for the creation of local clean energy jobs and keep energy dollars circulating in the local economy. Attract investment and new, "green collar" manufacturing jobs;
9. **Customer Choice** - Light Green, Deep Green or PG&E. Competition in business
10. **Cost Competitiveness** - Cost at or below PG&E, commercial rates are currently less expensive than PG&E while residential is slightly more
11. **Cost Stability** - Predetermined supply costs

12. **Choice** – Creating competition will make the incumbent supplier work harder to win our business. For example PG&E is pushing the PUC for the ability to offer more green options, which they may not have if the choice was not available elsewhere
13. **Tailored Energy Efficiency Programs** –More focus on developing energy efficiency programs that are most effective for our communities. MCE has a lot going on in energy efficiency

### **Join MCE Cons**

1. **Initial Renewable Mix** - Shell Energy was the only company to bid on MCE's first contract. PG&E and AB 2145 proponents are making a lot of noise that REC (renewable certificates) make a large portion of MCE's renewables, bringing into question if their product results in incremental renewables. MCE's mix has evolved significantly since their early days and they now have more than a dozen different contracts and they will be able to sunset their Shell contract by 2017. (if memory serves)
2. **Transparency** – AB 2145 committee analysis claims MCE's GHG is not fully audited. I believe this is probably a spurious assertion, but would be worth getting the details from MCE. AB 2145 requires CCA implementation plans to include information to customers about the greenhouse gas emission rate using protocols established by the California Air Resources Board (CARB).
3. **Governance** - Under their new rules, El Cerrito will not have a vote on the MCE Board of Directors as board meetings would become more like a legislature in number. However, the small cities and towns in Marin that are on the board have a lot in common with El Cerrito. Richmond also has a voice,
4. **Limited Local Power to date** – The benefits in jobs and local resiliency won't come until investment in local power becomes a reality. MCE is a young organization and has to always balance other priorities with maintaining competitive rates. They're making steady progress in making local power a reality. People tend to overestimate what can be accomplished in one year and underestimate what can be done in 5 or 10 years.
5. **Doesn't Include Gas** –MCE is electric only, so gas related energy efficiency programs are outside its scope.

### **Work to Establish CCC CCA Pros**

1. **Potential Bigger Win** – Contra Costa County has 1 million residents vs. only 25,000 for El Cerrito. If we could make a CCA happen in CCC, it would have a significant impact on GHG
2. **Leadership** - El Cerrito could work to be a county champion
3. **Free Market Proposition** – CCA isn't necessarily a liberal only idea and makes as much sense in east county as it does in west county. Providing an alternative to PG&E enables market competition to drive improved service, reduced prices, and more customized alternatives.

### **Work to Establish CCC CCA Cons**

1. **Long Time Frame** – Five years at the least, probably much more
2. **Low Probability of Success** – due to lack of a champion at the county level, and the more conservative nature of east county Municipal Utility Pros
3. **Increase Risk** - CCA not established any new entity will have to go through the process of hiring staff, setting contracts, getting credit history, etc.
- 4.

## **Municipal Utility Pros**

1. **Most Local Control**
2. **Broadband** - Potential for the city to make money from broadband as well as provide residents with economical broadband services
3. **Potential to Remove Unsightly Power lines from EC** – I think neighbors can already do this with PG&E if they are willing to pay. Don't know if PG&E does this work at cost, or how their prioritization process works.
4. **Proven to Work** - Alameda, Palo Alto and other moderate sized Bay Area cities have had success with managing their own power.

## **Municipal Utility Cons**

1. **Very expensive**
2. **Very Risk**
3. **Not A Competency of El Cerrito**
4. **Hercules Bad Experience** - Decided to terminate local utility. Recently sold back to PG&E for \$9m. Don't know how much it would take to buy PG&E distribution network in El Cerrito, but it probably would be several times that amount