

Environmental Affairs Commission

Regular Meeting Minutes
Pedro Castro Center
October 28, 2015

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Kennedy called the meeting to order at 3:30 pm.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Tom Kennedy
Norm Patten
Tait Wilcox
Bernie Stalman
Dennis Ehrenberger

Members Absent: George Monken

Associate Members Present: Gene Fenstermacher
Amy Carter
Joanne Roberts

Council Liaison Present: Hank Huisking

Staff Liaison Present: Ryan Kooi, Transportation & Environmental Services

Community Member: Tricia Gerrodette
Jerry Burns, J3 Construction
Joyce Bernie

ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA

Chairman Kennedy moved to accept the agenda for the meeting.
Commissioner Ehrenberger seconded the motion.

Vote: Unanimous to accept (4-0)

ACCEPTANCE OF THE SEPTEMBER 23, 2015 MEETING MINUTES

Chairman Kennedy moved to accept the minutes for the meeting.
Commissioner Ehrenberger seconded the motion.

Vote: Unanimous to accept (4-0)

COUNCIL LIAISON'S COMMENTS

Chairman Kennedy prefaced council liaison's comments by saying he, Ryan, Hank and Jill Adams would like to try out a new procedure. After Council Liaison Huisking's comments, she would field questions on agenda information provided to Ryan prior to the meeting. Council Liaison Huisking agreed to try this. She had no comments at this time.

She would like the commission to assign someone to organize the award process previously discussed for outstanding businesses or groups who have excelled in some way environmentally. Chairman Kennedy will take the action to find out if Associate Member Joanne Roberts would still be interested in developing the process for this award.

Council Liaison Huisking would also like the commission to look into and learn about Joanne Roberts' ideas on urban forestry and pursue her contacts for more information, and whether this information (and any possible grant opportunities) would help the City of Sierra Vista. Ryan will resend this information and then the commission will decide whether to make this an agenda item for the next meeting.

STAFF LIAISON COMMENTS

Ryan Kooi reported that he had great success in coordinating with the Public Affairs Office (PAO) to advertise the EAC's outreach programs, such as battery recycling and compost giveaways, through social media such as Facebook and Twitter. The PAO would be able to do even more advertising for City sponsored events.

EAC CHAIR COMMENTS:

Chairman Kennedy reported the field trip was cancelled due to the rain causing erosion which led to operational problems. Chairman Kennedy hoped this could be rescheduled for February.

Chairman Kennedy stated there were no further presentations scheduled, and no further comments.

OLD BUSINESS:

Property Clean Up - Commissioner Patten commented on the presentation done to the City Council on 10/06/15 by Matt McLachlan, Director of Community Development, concerning a consolidation of ordinances and development of a plan for guidance in everything that deals with property clean up. They have come up with a recommendation of a standard operating procedure for community resource officers. They are looking at an ordinance that would put the onus of property clean up on the banks, who have taken ownership of unoccupied, foreclosed properties in the city. They are also looking at the definition of a "junked" vehicle. There is a definite push by Matt to make the code more operative to allow the resource officers to do their job better. Council Liaison Huisking mentioned Mr. McLachlan is putting these ordinances online so that people will know what they can do, and the council had already been briefed. A comment period for the ordinance changes will follow.

Any comments from commissioners should be sent to Staff Liaison Kooi for consolidation and submission to the agenda. The next question will deal with finding support in cleanup efforts, possibly utilizing volunteer organizations if the City attorney could look into possible liability for these volunteers doing clean up on private property.

Commissioner Ehrenberger commented on a new program called RSVP (Retired Sierra Vista Program). This program was set up by some major business leaders in Sierra Vista with the purpose of advertising Sierra Vista as a great place to relocate in various publications on the east coast and Canada. They propose to raise \$150,000, all from business donations. We should start to see this with the January and February visitors. We need to clean up the weeds along Fry Blvd. and Sierra Vista proper before this to make a good impression.

Several businesses that are behind this are Lawley, Castle and Cooke, and the Sierra Vista Herald. If, after a two year period, 100 people relocated here times the average cost of their residences, plus taxes and purchases, it is a pretty impressive program. In the January/February issue of Where to Retire magazine, there will be a special article on Sierra Vista to kick off the program, with articles following in other publications in the United States. Simone McFarland already has this information, and we need to let Matt know about this program as well. We should not let this push for clean up fall to the side.

Commissioner Wilcox also commented that the owner of Waste Disposal informed him he has almost 100 roll offs that are not being utilized. He would like to juncture with the City to have a cleanup day with no dumping fee to help out the City. Council Liaison Huisking commented the West End Cleanup has been completed.

PV Solar – Chairman Kennedy explained that he and Commissioner Wilcox and Associate Member Carter met earlier in the week to come up with a list of

potential solar uses in Sierra Vista. They also discussed the potential of a solar farm located at the Environmental Operations Park (EOP), which has the acreage needed. Chairman Kennedy's goal is to have a presentation ready for the council in a few weeks, with the hopes of more action than the discussion of solar received a few years ago. Discussion in the past also included mention of solar panels and shading over the drainage ponds. Staff Liaison Kooi will find out the total acreage at the EOP and let the commission know.

EAC Public Awareness – Commissioner Wilcox addressed the meet and greet at Art in the Park. He suspected the decreased traffic at the EAC booth may have been due to poor location at the end of all the rows, but some outreach was done. Thank you to all who assisted with the booth.

SierraVistability Day's booth had a better location and traffic, with a great turn out. Not a very high traffic event, but outreach on disability issues and Niagara Toilets from the Cochise Water Project were a big focus, along with information on the trails. Commissioner Wilcox hoped that the advertising with the PAO might help them out in future. Battery recycling was better at this event, receiving approximately 4 lbs. of batteries in a couple of hours. Compost drawings were good, as people are becoming more aware of those now. Almost everyone he talked to had picked up Cado Daily's Waterwise information. No scheduled events until next year's West End Fair.

Chairman Kennedy praised all the hard work done by Bernie Stalman and Tait Wilcox.

Replacement for Ms. Mulhern – Chairman Kennedy asked Associate Member Roberts if she would be interested in taking over the assignments. She stated she would be. Chairman Kennedy will have Commissioner Mulhern provide her with all the information needed.

Battery Recycling Update – Commissioner Wilcox stated above that the recycling was much better at the SierraVistability event, as the word is getting out now on these outreach opportunities.

NEW BUSINESS

Potential New EAC Members Discussion - Chairman Kennedy would like all members to bring the name of a potential candidate to the next meeting. He would like to keep Ron Faulkner on the list.

Commissioner Dennis Ehrenberger would like to include Ron Smith on the list. Mr. Smith is looking for involvement in the community.

Chairman Kennedy asked again if potential names could be emailed to him. Staff Liaison Kooi will send applications for membership to everyone.

Villages at Vigneto in Benson Discussion – Chairman Kennedy mentioned several articles in the newspaper mentioning Villages at Vigneto.

Commissioner Norm Patten will be reporting on issues that are sensitive in the community, such as the potential impact of this development on the watershed. He stressed that any time the city talks about sensitive areas we need to make sure their facts are straight, and the newspaper's facts are straight, to avoid any situation that might discourage people from coming to Sierra Vista.

Chairman Kennedy added the commission needs to remain focused on the purpose of the commission of environmental affairs. It was also mentioned that there were more resources than water at risk.

Chairman Kennedy asked if the members think the commission should take a position on the Villages at Vigneto. Discussion followed on whether the city has a vested interest in protecting the environment or whether the city should remain vigilant. Chairman Kennedy explained that they are a subset of the council. Council Liaison Huisking reminded the commission that they are an advisory committee for the council, and there are other forums for opinions.

Commissioner Fenstermacher recommended Benson be given information on how to be a net zero water community.

Chairman Kennedy will keep this as an action item on the agenda, and possibly appoint someone to keep the commission up to date. It was also asked if Staff Liaison Kooi would find out if the commission has a history of making formal recommendations to the County.

SSVEC Electric Rate Increases Discussion – Commissioner Ehrenberger informed the commission of the increase of base rate from \$10 to \$25 (150%) for non-solar customers and \$10 to \$50 (500%) for solar customers as discussed at SSVEC's 10/27/15 meeting per the Arizona Corporation Commission (ACC) regulations, which now means there is no incentive to conserve electricity consumption for non-solar users. SSVEC's policy on solar discourages customers from changing to solar. Solar use in this area helped to change the afternoon power surge from 2:30 – 5 pm to 5:30 - 8 pm, when solar users stop producing power.

Chairman Kennedy stated SSVEC's reasoning behind the rate change may be to charge solar people more because they are not paying their fair share for the grid.

Council Liaison Huisling stated the City does not own any utilities so we do not offer any incentives.

Commissioner Ehrenberger stated he will be prepared at the next meeting to make a motion for the City Council to say something of concern to SSVEC about the rate increase as it effects everyone who lives in the City. It was also mentioned that the commission should advise the Council to take a position favoring solar energy.

Commissioner Wilcox, Associate Member Carter and Chairman Kennedy will continue with their action to look into solar uses.

FIELD TRIPS OR OTHER FUTURE ACTION ITEMS

Discussion of Potential New Field Trip Locations – Chairman Kennedy will attempt to reschedule the field trip to TEP in February. Mr. Kooi will add TEP to the next agenda.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC

Tricia Gerrodette stated she is well versed in the plans and issues with the Villages at Vigneto as she has been attending the Benson Council meetings and the developer's presentations for some time, if anyone needs to know more. Per ADWR, Benson has enough water.

Jerry Burns with J3 Construction would like to donate his company's time and energy to help the City with cleanup of foreclosed properties. He suggests "taking" of properties and then building low income housing. Mr. Burns pointed out there were close to 40 properties in the Crossing Point area that are bank owned properties and pose a potential fire risk.

Mr. Burns said there is a mandate by the ACC by 2030 to have over 60% of their power generated from renewable sources. The only way to do this is with new panels, which are very efficient and warranted for 30 years. As a City, are we ready to put down solar panels in non-residential areas?

Mr. Burns feels that it should be a joint understanding on the use of the water table, as it relates to the water for Villages at Vigneto, between our City, Benson and even Tucson. In order to build these houses, we should make it so they have to have 100% water harvesting.

Mr. Burns put forth his name for application to the commission.

Joyce Bernie addressed Kartchner Cave becoming a dry cave and losing its status as a growing cave. She would like to restrict building to prevent a dry cave, which would impact tourism. Mr. Burns stressed caves in Tucson would also be impacted by water in Benson.

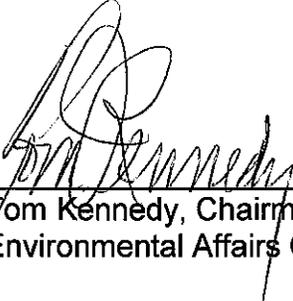
REQUEST FOR FUTURE ACTIONS ITEMS

Associate member Joanne Roberts suggested the commission invite Dr. Robert Cassavant, Science and Research Manager, who oversees Kartchner Caverns, to talk to the commission.

Mr. Kooi reminded everyone to email additional research or literature to him to be disseminated to the commission.

ADJOURNMENT: Meeting was adjourned at 4:41 pm.

Next meeting: November 18, 2015 at 3:30 pm.



Tom Kennedy, Chairman
Environmental Affairs Commission