

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

NAME OF BOARD/COMMISSION: Environmental Advisory Board

DATE OF MEETING: January 6, 2016

NAME/TELEPHONE OF PERSON PREPARING SUMMARY: Sandy Briggs/303-441-1931.

NAMES OF MEMBERS, STAFF AND INVITED GUESTS PRESENT:

Environmental Advisory Board Members Present: Tim Hillman, Brad Queen, Karen Crofton, Steve Morgan and Morgan Lommele.

Staff Members Present: Jonathan Koehn, Brett KenCairn and Sandy Briggs.

Community Member Present: Stephen Fenberg

MEETING SUMMARY:

❖ **Energy Future Update: Municipalization**

- The board asked several questions regarding service areas and how power will get to customers residing in these different areas. The concept of “wheeling” was defined and the Doctrine of Regulated Monopoly was explained as to why the PUC can’t regulate certain ways for the power to flow.
- **K. Crofton** asked about scenario planning in case municipalization doesn’t happen. A discussion ensued about what things would cause the city to “take the off ramp” and what other ideas are on the table in lieu of creating a local utility. The following were identified as the reasons the city would stop pursuing it:
 - Being unable to meet the \$214 million acquisition cap
 - The PUC says we can’t go forward
 - The time frame expands and the community says no to additional funding
 - The city chooses to stop pursuing it because something changes legislatively that renders it unnecessary
- It was clarified that there is an approximate 50/50 effort with pursuing municipalization versus numerous other avenues for reaching the city’s goals.
- **K. Crofton** mentioned that this kind of information is what’s wanted and informative to people when communicating the plan to the community. Stressing that the efforts will not go to waste regardless of what happens is important.
- **T. Hillman** reminded the board that the community is already on board and has voted for the Carbon Tax on numerous occasions. He also asked about where interested community members would go to obtain information about the Climate Caucus and how to get involved.
- **B. Queen** reminded the board that the perceived loss of value of something is powerful regardless of the actual amount.

❖ **Climate Commitment Community Engagement Process**

- The board agrees that the emission reduction conversation is no longer resonating with the general public and there is no feeling of personal urgency.

- The board also agreed that people need to do things that are tangible and understand what their actions are creating in a real, everyday sense.
- The board posed the following questions, although they understand there isn't any hard data available yet:
 - How much of an investment is needed over the next 30 years to move things forward?
 - What daily choices and priorities need to be adjusted to encourage total energy systems transformation?
 - How will the ratio shift in terms of money being spent on clean energy versus fossil fuels?
- **K. Crofton** stressed that messaging needs to come first and the metrics need to support the messaging. Issues relating to security, resiliency and reliability have recently begun being brought more tangibly to people and need to be personally integrated before metrics are created.
- **B. Queen** suggested that getting to the root of the core rationale behind any opposition would be very effective in building trust with the city and turning opposers into willing participants, especially within the business community.
- **M. Lommele** suggested that creating a network of respected peers who can work as community champions would be useful as peer-to-peer influence is highly effective.
- Some board members suggested that just “dropping the hammer” and telling people what to do might be at least as effective as the proposed engagement strategy, if not more.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Environmental Advisory Board Chair **T. Hillman** declared a quorum called the meeting to order at 6:06 pm.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On a motion by **M. Lommele**, seconded by **S. Morgan**, the Environmental Advisory Board voted 5-0 to approve the December 9, 2015 meeting minutes.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None.

5. PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS

None.

6. DISCUSSION ITEMS

❖ **Energy Future Update: Municipalization (Koehn)**

Regional Sustainability Coordinator, Jonathan Koehn, updated the board on the status of the City's municipalization efforts and how they synchronize with the Climate Commitment Community Engagement efforts that are also moving into full swing in early 2016. The alignment of Climate Commitment and energy work are critical components of the city's 2016 work plan.

He provided key points to set context and reviewed milestones and core objectives of the efforts. He also described how thinking has shifted across the nation from just greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction and purchase of renewable energy credits to communities

positioning themselves to take advantage of the numerous opportunities that exist. This includes how to invest with local systems and businesses to drive innovation and keep these investments local.

He explained the involvement of the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) and their role in relation to the city and Xcel. Their job is to ensure system safety, reliability and integrity for all ratepayers. Their decisions are seen as guidance, not losses, and the latest ruling has solidified the possibility and set the boundaries for the city to move forward.

He further described how the city's rate structures could be creatively different from Xcel's current model, provided reliability metrics and explained the probabilistic analysis that had already been completed.

He clarified the "rent versus own" aspect of purchasing the infrastructure and informed the board that while there is a \$214 million cap in the charter, this isn't as huge as it seems when you amortize the numbers against what we're already paying in rates.

He stressed the importance of ensuring greater reliability for certain circuits that aren't performing at the level they should be. In particular, he mentioned the feeder that includes the city's water treatment facility. This is critical infrastructure for the city that lost power several times during the floods in 2013, among others. It's been recognized as Xcel's worst performing circuit in the State of Colorado.

He went on to posit that a customer driven energy services marketplace business model could make the city less of a utility and more of a service provider selling a commodity. Therefore, a free marketplace for companies to become directly involved with consumers could exist.

He concluded by informing the board about the formation of a Climate Policy Coalition and Climate Caucus that are active on the legislative front and that staff is also remaining creative and innovative in thinking about other ways to achieve the city's goals.

He suggested to the board that since the city needs to align around specific and quantitative targets and determine what areas should be measured and what metrics are needed, the EAB could be directly instrumental in creating part of this work plan by providing their input.

❖ **Climate Commitment Community Engagement Process (KenCairn)**

Senior Environmental Planner, Brett KenCairn, encouraged an open discussion with the board regarding the current status of Boulder's Climate Commitment and next steps in 2016 to engage the community.

He informed the board there a growing body of evidence that talking about reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions is ineffective in instigating action. Therefore, as the ideas in the draft document are taken out into the community, the questions are now how to stimulate conversations around other targets and goals and make it relevant to day-to-day concerns.

He mentioned that while there isn't a large amount of resistance to the Climate Commitment plan, there is also not much movement of the "emissions needle".

He further explained that we're in a time of transition regarding public rhetoric as to what the problem is versus the symptom. The symptom is climate change. And it is now happening.

The problem is a system that burns fossil fuels emitting carbon into the atmosphere.

People's sense of the problem is in flux and we need a new set of metrics. And to determine these metrics, we need to ask the community a useful set of questions that will assist them in making a psychological transition through the various issues over the long term.

He requested feedback from the board regarding community engagement in terms of the right

things to do and ask and/or if there is anything missing. Focus groups are planned to be part of this, and the board's input on what types of groups to engage was also requested. Next steps include laying groundwork that will create road mapping tools to assist people with developing their own energy asset transition plans. The core of this stage revolves around survey questions that will provide guidance for staff about what people want and need to know. The action phase will kick in around May after the culmination of Earth Day events.

7. OLD BUSINESS/UPDATES

None.

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

- Upon a motion by **K. Crofton**, seconded by **B. Queen**, the board unanimously voted 5-0 to approve and submit the Annual Letter to City Council as currently written.
- **B. Queen** will attend the City Council Study Session on Tuesday, January 12 as representative of the EAB to answer any questions and/or offer any requested clarifications regarding the annual letter.
- The board agrees that proactively soliciting and advocating for certain candidates to apply to the board is important and an effective way to ensure an applicant pool that fills the need for varied expertise among members.

9. DEBRIEF MEETING/CALENDAR CHECK

The annual retreat will be on February 3, 2016 from 5-8 pm. Heather Bergman will facilitate. **M. Lommele** will be unable to attend. She will provide any thoughts to share with the board at the retreat prior to that date.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Environmental Advisory Board adjourned at 8:04 pm.

Approved:

Chair

Date