

CONSERVATION COMMITTEE REPORT

August 18, 2010 10:00 -10:30 am

Council Chambers, 140 West Pine Street

Members Present: Marilyn Marler (chair), Pam Walzer, Renee Mitchell, Ed Childers, Jon Wilkins, Lyn Hellegaard, Dave Strohmaier, Roy Houseman, Dick Haines, Stacy Rye

Members Absent: Bob Jaffe

Others Present: Mayor John Engen

I. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

A. Approve minutes. Minutes of August 4, 2010 were approved as submitted.

II. FINAL CONSIDERATION AGENDA ITEMS

III. CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS –

1. Confirm the appointment of Edwin (Bill) Burnett to the Greenough Park Advisory Committee to complete a term commencing immediately and ending September 30, 2011 ([memo](#)).— (Mayor Engen) (Referred to committee: 08/09/10) (REMOVE FROM AGENDA.)

MOTION: The committee recommends Council appoint Edwin (Bill) Burnett to the Greenough Park Advisory Committee to complete a term commencing immediately and ending September 30, 2011.

Mayor John Engen asked that this appointment be approved. He said Burnett replaces Susie Spindler on the committee. Burnett was the only applicant and the mayor interviewed him. He said that Burnett's interest in serving on the committee has everything to do with conservation and preserving the park for generations. Marilyn Marler stated that she knows Burnett and he is knowledgeable about native plants and conservation. She asked if it is requirement for GPAC members to live near the park, and Engen answered that it is not.

Stacy Rye made a motion to confirm the appointment of Edwin (Bill) Burnett to the Greenough Park Advisory Committee to complete a term commencing immediately and ending September 30, 2011. Motion carried unanimously.

1. Appoint one member to the position of a Conservation Sector representative to the Greenhouse Gas & Energy Conservation Team for the term starting August 1, 2010, and ending on July 31, 2013. ([memo](#))— (Marty Rehbein) (Referred to committee: 08/02/10) (REMOVE FROM AGENDA)

MOTION: The committee recommends Council appoint Julie Osborn to the position of a Conservation Sector representative to the Greenhouse Gas & Energy Conservation Team for the term starting August 1, 2010, and ending on July 31, 2013.

Marilyn Marler introduced Ms. Osborn to the committee and stated that she has served on the GGECT since March, 2009.

Renee Mitchell asked if she could deviate from the interview questions to ask the applicant more details about the progress of the GGECT. Marler suggested the committee stick to the written interview questions, but asked Ms. Osborn to include her personal experience on the GGECT when answering. Marler stated the committee is interested in hearing about the progress of the GGECT.

Marler asked: What is your interest in serving on the GGECT Committee?

Ms. Osborn said that over the last six to eight months, the GGECT has become more collaborative and has established a shared vision and common goal. Because of this more recent progress, she is interested in continuing to serve on the team.

She said the GGECT has recently gotten recycling bins installed downtown and initiated renewable energy certificate program for the City. The team is working with City/County Health to promote the program to raise funds and promote greenhouse gas reduction at the same time. In the future, she'd like to see the team focus more on public education about the benefits of energy conservation and greenhouse gas reduction.

Ed Childers asked: What do you feel are the benefits of having a GGECT Plan?

Ms. Osborn said it would be difficult for the committee to make any progress without a plan. She stated the team has recently distilled their large list of projects down into 1-year goals and established some near-term priorities.

Renee Mitchell asked: Do you have any personal or professional expertise that relates to one of the designated categories?

Osborn stated she has diversity of skills and interests related to climate change, and all of her work experience has in the field of conservation and energy. She started an educational non-profit focused on conservation.

Dick Haines asked: What issues do you consider important for the team to consider?

Osborn said that awareness and education are really important. She said the GGECT is very active, but citizens don't know much about the GGECT's work, how they could reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and why they'd want to. She said the team needs to focus on education and awareness to explain why the community would want to reduce greenhouse emissions.

Stacy Rye asked: Can you provide an example of a time when you have had to compromise, collaborate or deal with conflict and what were the results of your efforts?

Osborn said the committee successfully collaborated to create an action plan last fall, using matrix and blind ranking systems. They also developed general priorities for the team. She said it is important to step back and be subjective when dealing with lots of different opinions.

Roy Houseman asked: How would you describe the level of urgency associated with addressing climate change? How do you talk with people who have a different sense of urgency?

Osborn said it's a very urgent issue. Citizens have to be very active—the situation is “beyond proactive.” She's not sure that's the majority opinion in Montana. She advocates bringing some basic knowledge about how the climate is changing to the public. Some people are more motivated by economic arguments than by environmental arguments, it would be worth the GGECT's time to focus on education citizens on both types of arguments.

Pam Walzer asked: GGECT is scheduled to meet monthly at a time designated by the committee. Do you have the time to attend meetings and do the research necessary to participate in committee activities?

Osborn answered that she did have time to participate in the committee. She said that open meeting regulations sometimes restrict the GGECT's ability to react quickly to issues. For example, the GGECT would have liked to respond to the Council's recent discussions of ExxonMobil's proposed truck route through western Montana, but could not call a public meeting in time to formulate an official response.

Walzer said that it's sometimes difficult for boards to operate in a state where open meetings are a priority—it's a challenge, and she thanked Osborn for adhering to open meeting laws.

Ed Childers asked Osborn: Regarding economic versus environment arguments, which is the most effective in convincing the population that something should be done about climate change?

Osborn answered it depends on individual. Childers asked if 68,000 Missoulians would be more likely to respond to the argument that greenhouse gas emissions would save money now, or would the response be greater if GGECT explained that conservation efforts would leave the environment cleaner in 100 years for their grandchildren. Osborn said she would not choose one argument; the GGECT will have to address both.

Marler said she will make a referral to Conservation in the coming weeks to have an update from the GGECT. Osborn said the GGECT plans to send members to upcoming City Council meetings. Dave Strohmaier thanked Osborn for her service and for being willing to reapply.

Strohmaier moved to appoint Julie Osborn to the position of a Conservation Sector representative to the Greenhouse Gas & Energy Conservation Team for the term starting August 1, 2010, and ending on July 31, 2013.

Marler asked for discussion. Jon Wilkins said that Osborn's comment about open meeting laws was a red flag for him. Walzer said, by way of explanation, that boards want to be able to do additional types of work and collaborate; sometimes open meeting regulations make it difficult to really move fast. It's not that boards are trying to do things in private; they just want to do more work.

Marler said: what I heard Osborn saying was that they don't want to run afoul of public meeting laws, and they are trying to be consistent about not violating the regulations. She sees a high level of awareness of the public meeting rules. Osborn said the committee would like a way to share documents electronically and still adhere to state and city public meeting regulations. Jason Weiner, Marler and Childers offered suggestions and suggested she speak with the City Clerk.

The motion carried unanimously.

IV. REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS

V. NON-AGENDA ITEMS

VI. HELD AND ONGOING AGENDA ITEMS -PER COMMITTEE CHAIR – Marilyn Marler

ADJOURNMENT -The meeting adjourned at 10:28 a. m.