

CONSERVATION COMMITTEE REPORT

May 16, 2012
2:35 pm - 3:00 pm
140 West Pine Street

Members Present Dave Strohmaier (chair), Marilyn Marler, Adam Hertz, Bob Jaffe, Caitlin Copple, Cynthia Wolken, and Ed Childers, Jon Wilkins, Dick Haines

Members Absent:

Others Present: Marty Rehbein, Suzette Dussault, Jan Hoem, Chic Fitzsimons, Gary Beck, Jay Gore, Terry Mcnerey, Chuck Erickson, Max Higgins, Mike Jakob, Linda Helding

I. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

A. Approve minutes.

Minutes of April 25, May 2, May 9, 2012 were approved as submitted.

II. FINAL CONSIDERATION AGENDA ITEMS

III. CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

IV. REGULAR AGENDA

Approve a letter requesting a programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for coal export terminals ([memo](#))—Regular Agenda (Dave Strohmaier) (Referred to committee: 05/14/12)

Motion: The Committee recommends Council adopt a [resolution](#) of the Missoula City Council to request that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers prepare a comprehensive Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) on the cumulative impacts of new coal export terminals in Washington and Oregon and hold public hearings in Missoula, Montana and other communities that will be significantly impacted from coal that will be transported by train from the Powder River Basin in Montana and Wyoming to terminals along the Pacific Coast.

Strohmaier noted the council has heard concerns about the issue of railroad tracks on the community on a number of issues--air quality, noise, blocking access and broader climate change. The concerns will be more acute with a proposal to increase the number of trains hauling coal to a terminal proposed for construction on the west coast. The Council is being asked to sign on to a letter to the Army Corps of Engineers to include upstream impacts of the terminal project and hold scoping meetings in those upstream areas. There is also an updated version of the letter from [Jason Wiener](#).

Public Comment:

Jan Hoem member of the Montana Elders for a Livable Tomorrow. They recently held a forum on this issue. She said one of the things that came out of those meetings was people in the community should be involved in what is happening. One of the ways in this case to be involved is to request that a programmatic EIS be conducted on the project. Her [handout](#) summarizes the legal justification and framework for a programmatic environmental review. They are requesting that the areas upstream from the project will be included in the analysis that is conducted by the decision makers. Other communities and agencies in the Pacific Northwest have requested an EIS review too.

Harold Hoem said he first became aware of the issue when he saw all the coal trains parked in rail yard. He spent a great deal of time on the ocean and is aware of impacts at the terminal location as well as the impacts upstream through the communities by train traffic. He wonders when he sees the trains idling how much of the diesel fumes are getting into the environment of the city. Have there been adequately testing for diesel fumes? This is a big concern in other areas, like Spokane and Portland. Diesel fumes are a health issue, no matter what kind of load a train is carrying. It is also a concern as the switching yard is in middle of town and impacts the north and west side neighborhoods. The crossing at Madison is also a concern. What will be the global, regional and affects on Missoula? We need a close look at what is going on.

Mark Kersting - I would repeat the same concerns as they are valid. When they say there is no coal dust in rail yard, but have to keep clean of coal dust - they should agree that coal dust is there.

Gary Beck - I am in support of the letter, with coal development it is in our best interest to look

into this seriously. The coal was sold too cheap, and it is much better to do something before rather than after. I am not opposed to trains, but let's make sure everything is clean. The study would look at the issues. Thank you.

Suzette Dussault, I am interested in protecting the health of the environment of Missoula. I grew up on Spruce Street and feel the trains have negatively impacted the neighborhood. What will be the toxicity of the amount of coal and we knowing we have air quality issues in Missoula. The city has invested in the health of air shed, and trains will negatively impact the community. I applaud your courage to say we don't want this to happen here.

Discussion:

Wilkins: we haven't got a report from the Health Department and I will support the letter. We need to know if we have a problem, not only in Missoula but all the way up and down the line. The other issue is if we are being impacted by coal, where is our share of the taxes, which we could use to fix the crossing at Madison. I would move to send the letter of support.

The committee members all voiced their opinion on whether or not to support this letter. It was discussed whether or not a resolution would be a more appropriate process. The discussion went back and forth as to whether or not a resolution or just having a letter signed by all those Council members who support sending the letter was the preferred process. According to the City Clerk, the letter would go out with a cover letter stating whether or not the letter was unanimously support by City Council.

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According to the City Clerk, the letter would go out with a cover letter stating whether or not the letter was unanimously supported by City Council.

Strohmaier - the letter would go out with a majority of the vote by Council.

Other Committee members voiced their opinion as whether they supported sending the letter asking for a programmatic Environmental Impact Statement.

Jaffe - Is the motion to support the new version of the letter by Weiner?

Copple - I have made some additional edits which I feel more specifically related to just Missoula and Montana.

Hertz: I agree with Copple's edits as this is about the impact to Missoula and not if you agree to the philosophy of using coal as an energy source.

Jaffe - I think the motion should refer to the Weiner version of the letter as not everyone (public) has access to Copple's edits.

Jon Wilkins had moved the Missoula City Council send a letter to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers urging preparation of a programmatic Environmental Impact Statement that assesses the cumulative impacts of proposed coal export terminals in Washington and Oregon.

Bob Jaffe substitute motion to submit a resolution with the letter as an attachment. On a show of hands, the motion carried.

The City Clerk will draft a resolution for the Council to review at Monday's meeting.

HELD IN COMMITTEE

1. Discuss the city's strategy to complete a boundary survey of Greenough Park. ([memo](#))—Regular Agenda (Dave Strohmaier) (Referred to committee: 04/04/2011)
2. Approve and authorize the Mayor to sign an amendment to the agreement with Territorial Landworks, Inc. (TLI) in an amount not to exceed \$136,702.37 for professional services, including engineering, surveying, and construction management for Project #PR 08-02 GCT, Grant Creek Trail, CTEP #STPE 8199(105). ([memo](#))—Regular Agenda (Dave Shaw) (Referred to committee: 10/24/11)

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 pm.