

OPEN SPACE & ECOLOGY COMMITTEE
Minutes

September 27, 2017 6:30 PM
Community Meeting Room
Brisbane City Hall
50 Park Place, Brisbane, CA 94005

Call to order:

Fieldman called the meeting to order at 6:36 PM.

Committee members present: Abney, Fieldman, Hayuk, Salmon, Ebel

Committee members absent: Ankenbruck, Vladimirova

Staff members present: Deputy Director of Public Works - Kinser
Engineering Technician - Sage

1. Adoption of the agenda

- Agenda Adopted

2. Presentation of Annual Waste Diversion Report – Teresa Montgomery, South San Francisco Scavenger

- Teresa Montgomery began the presentation with a teddy bear, Fuzz #1, which was made from recycled plastic water bottles. She then highlighted actions in the last year related to diversion of the waste stream.
- She visited BES to make sure the kids are sorting and recycling at school. The students will be touring the SSF Scavenger facility this year.
- In response to a question about plastic recycling, she explained that higher value plastics are recycled and the lower value plastics are bundled and sent offshore.
- SSF Scavenger has been working to right-size services to prevent litter, including using a safety officer that diligently goes out looking for service locations that need right-sizing.
- AB 1826 – As of January 2017, the State requires that any business that generates 4 cu yds. of organics a week must compost their green waste. In 2019, the law changes such that any business that generates 4 cu yds. of waste of any sort per week must add a compost service and use the green waste bins.
- The committee asked to be informed regarding enforcement of AB 1826. So far, there have been no enforcement actions regarding the bill.
- Compostable bags, and thus the food scraps inside of them, will not break down in SSF Scavenger's anaerobic digester.
- After the digester process, Scavenger sends the green waste to a commercial composter who as a quality control practice, removes all bags.
- Teresa showed how to fold newspaper like origami into a hat-shape to line the compost bin. Instructions were also included in a recent SSF Scavenger newsletter.

- Scavenger will be able to provide new compost bins to anybody that has worn out their compost bins.
- Glass and metal are still recycled in California. Aluminum and glass are back on the shelf very quickly.
- Scavenger is doing a pilot program with locking lids on garbage totes. 100 residents have tried the locking critter-proof bins, and all have liked them. They will continue this pilot program with a different locking mechanism on organics carts in the future.
- There is no charge to bring box springs and mattresses to the Blue Line Transfer Station separately, up to four per year. There are 25 tons of mattresses and box springs a month that are hauled to southern California, where they are torn apart and recycled. (Link added to Brisbane's Sustainability web page.)
- Clean rolls of carpet can also be recycled at Blue Line.
- You can recycle paint at Blue Line, as well as at most paint stores.
- Brisbane's annual yard waste cleanup event will be held on the first weekend in November.
- The anaerobic digester is operating at 99% capacity. Anything that doesn't go into the digester goes to a commercial composter.
- The residential truckloads go straight to the digester, as they have the heavier and "juicier" green waste. The commercial loads generally go to the external composter.
- Scavenger's trucks use the treated gas produced by the digester as fuel.
- The condos at the Ridge don't have organic green waste bins, often due to accessibility issues with the trucks. Teresa said that she would have a discussion with the residents at the condos that currently don't have service.
- Teresa noted that any customer with an account can get green waste if they just ask. (The recycling program is free, the organic program is not free. There is a charge that is 20% less than the trash program.)
- The committee is interested in outreach to businesses that do not use the organics program.
- The diversion rate for this last year is still in the 80th percentile. Brisbane is among the highest in the Bay Area.
- Styrofoam can't be allowed in mixed recycling. It's so light that it needs to be bagged so that it doesn't blow away.
- In the recent past, Recology initiated a fabric recycling program in San Francisco. They received a lot of fabric for recycling in the beginning of their pilot program, and they are looking into expanding this program. Scavenger has a sister company that picks up lightly used clothing on a quarterly basis for charitable donation purposes.
- The committee asked about what happens to plastic bags that are used to gather recyclables. Teresa said they are a problem at their facilities, as they clog up the machinery.
- Any paper contaminated with food waste won't be able to be recycled but can be composted.
- Standard beverage and food grade glass all melts at the same temperature. Non-beverage glass, such as lab or auto glass, would be detrimental to the overall recycling glass program, because it could ruin the load and the reputation of Scavenger's glass quality.
- Scavenger's recycling truck is divided in to two compartments, one side for plastic, glass and aluminum, and one side for paper. By having "split" recycling, Scavenger is able to move more recycled materials to more markets because of their cleaner materials. The one-stream bin

used elsewhere is more convenient, but the dual bin is superior for separation and higher quality recyclables. Scavenger was requested but does not currently have any videos that show the waste stream process, but Teresa is interested in producing some. Regarding cleaning recyclable materials before sorting, food jars, etc. should be emptied but not scraped clean before being put into the recycling container.

- For clean plastic bags and film plastic such as shrink wrap and dry cleaning plastic covers, there is a collection bin located at the Brisbane Post Office that SSF Scavenger services.

- The committee asked Teresa to make a 'hit list' of things that we shouldn't use. The committee would like to promote such a list on social media and in the Star. Neither compostable bags nor cereal bags are recyclable.

- Green Citizen (greencitizen.com) in Burlingame recycles EPS Number 6 Styrofoam and all electronics for a fee. (Link added to the City's Sustainability page.)

- Barbara Ebel has newspaper bags on her doorstep that people can use for their dog waste bags.

- Recycled stuffed animals are available on Amazon and on eBay's websites by searching the name 'Fuzz that Wuzz.'

3. Oral Communications (public comment)*

- No comments

4. Approval of the minutes

- Minutes approved unanimously (with spelling correction).

5. Discuss tree canopy

- Fieldman requested this topic be agendaized after a couple of large trees were recently removed in town, with approved permits. The committee is concerned about the loss of canopy due to such removals and trees lost from the beetle pine disease. According to the contractor that removed a large tree near Fieldman's home, one tree will be planted as a replacement.

- Hayuk asked about an aerial photo that shows the loss of canopy.

- The committee recommend that larger trees and heritage trees not be removed without greater scrutiny due to climate change concerns.

- It was noted that the redwood trees that have been planted in front of the community center in the 1980s are causing many problems, such as uprooting the sidewalk and sucking water out of the water table.

- Fieldman understood that a permit is required for a heritage tree to come down, and she wishes that there were notifications sent out so that there could be consideration and input from neighbors.

- OSEC is interested in asking Council if the ordinance could be reviewed.

- In response to inquiry, staff said that they would look into the tree removal process, particularly the notification, for the tree that came down recently at 217 Alvarado.

- The committee would like the following topics considered for an ordinance revision: (See Karen's Notes for clarification on following bullet points.)

- Stronger criteria for tree removal in consideration of shade mitigating effects of climate change (versus enjoyment of property)
- Arborist sign off if removal is due to a hazardous situation or health issue
- Different rules for different species
- Trees over certain height as well as circumference should be publicly noticed
- 'Upper-story' trees removed and requiring replacement should be replaced in-kind, not with 'mid or lower-story' trees

- Ebel states that she received the following information from City staff member, Ken Johnson:

- 24 tree removal permits issued in the past six months with two denials. (It was noted that the number is unusually high, possibly due to the drought and rain.)
- 50 trees were slated to be removed.
- 19 of the 50 are at the Altamar development on the Ridge.
- There are 36 trees that are required as replacements.
- There are a number of Monterey Pines in Crocker Park being removed, but most are to be replaced

- According to Salmon, the trees at Altamar have gotten taller than the structures, and they impede the flight of the butterflies on the ridge, so removal of some of those trees isn't bad.

- Salmon suggested that many trees are in shock after our recent heatwaves, and she is urging the City's planning staff to act cautiously when issuing permits, as some of these trees may still recover.

- The Committee mentioned that trees, like houses and cars, require maintenance. Staff suggested an article reminding people to trim and maintain their trees to keep them healthy.

- The committee mentioned the dead trees on BES property on the Alvarado St side of the playing field. Staff will send them a letter.

- City staff will draft a letter to the City Council encompassing the points discussed. Staff will share the letter with the committee for review.

6. Subcommittee reports/ Calendar items/ Chair and committee member matters

- Brisbane Acres concerns will meet in the near future.

- Chicago has invasive species ordinance that we should look into.

- Kima suggested checking out the tool box from the library for Day in the Park.

- Kima and Barbara both said that they will help staff the OSEC booth at Day in the Park

- The committee expressed their preference for booths such as OSEC's located in the park versus on the street.

- The CAP subcommittee is still working towards an energy disclosure ordinance. They've been working with Stop Waste. They are still working on the staff training slides.

- With new growth on the Festival Tree since being trimmed in June, staff suggested that the subcommittee wait a year to see if the new growth fills in. Michael suggests trying to get kids to stop climbing the trees by possibly cutting the branches up six or so feet.

7. Staff updates

- Kinser provided an update on the EV charging station project. PG&E had a problem with electrical service arrangement proposed. Staff has been working on that issue and is hoping that the charging station will be installed by the end of the year.
- In response to an inquiry about opening city cooling stations during heat waves, staff reported that cooling stations in the past have not had any attendance, and since people haven't expressed a need, there was no plan to open them. The committee suggested contacting Helping Hands to see if they had a need.
- Staff distributed the finished city bike and pedestrian map to the committee.
- Michele asked if we can use unspent money to pull more ivy from Costaños, and staff reported that there is a plan to spend some of the remaining money for replanting. Michele thought upper Costaños ivy removal wouldn't be appropriate work for volunteers. This discussion has been tabled until the next subcommittee meeting.

8. Next meeting: October 25, 2017 at 6:30 PM

9. Adjournment

- Meeting adjourned at 8:52pm