

MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE

Climate Action Working Group: August 19, 2016

Tamalpais Conference Room, 175 N. Redwood Blvd., San Rafael
Minutes

Present: Doug Wilson, Pam Reaves, Sara Dudley, Rick Fraites, Roger Roberts, Ed Mainland, Nona Dennis, Pat Nelson, Judy Teichman, Doug Karpa, Bill Carney, Tamra Peters, Belle Cole, Bob Miller, Damon Connolly, Max Perrey (on behalf of Katie Rice).

Doug called the meeting to order at 9:03.

Brief Introductions

Adoption of the Agenda by consensus.

July minutes. Correction: Replace certain references to Deep Green with Local Sol. **Approved as amended. M/S/P. Roger/Tamra/Approved.**

Discussion 1: "Time to Lead on Climate" (Bill and Belle)

There has been a name change for the upcoming event on September 19, 7:00 - 9:00 at Dominican. It is now titled "Election 2016: Tipping Point for Climate."

Time to Lead on Climate has put on three complementary events in the last year. In November 2015, they presented "Time to Lead on Climate - CA : US : UN" addressing the Paris Conference and related local and national events. In April 2016, they presented "Saving the Bay from Climate Change," discussing Measure AA. This event considered "political will" at the local level. The upcoming event will be a capstone with emphasis on the national election, carbon pricing and other carbon issues. This election could well determine the fate of climate change. If the wrong people get elected and the electorate is not educated, irreversible climate change is quite possible.

Speakers include Michael Wara, from Stanford, who is on top of the issues; Kate Gordon who can talk to any group and works on China; Congressman Huffman, and Josh Fryday as moderator. Josh will talk to people about what they can do and issue a call to action re the election and influencing wider national results.

GET THE WORD OUT!

Group Suggestions

Pam: Don't lose ground on SB 32 in California. Belle: Michael Wara will emphasize what is happening in California.

Roger: We should have media in attendance. Will the event get TV attention? Belle: This is in progress. Last year we got excellent coverage from the IJ. Roger: The IJ doesn't reach everyone. We should get TV coverage, PBS at least.

Nona: There is Peter Fimrite at the Chronicle. Belle: David Baker. Doug: Spotswood might have TV contacts.

Discussion 2: Climate Action Plan/Staffing of Plan (Damon)

The County already has a sizable budget allocated for implementation—\$1 million this year, climate action and green community, separate allocation for Bay Wave. Damon has tried to invigorate mitigation. There was a memo in October 2015 re community involvement. They are working on implementation as a long-term issue, now working on planning and money.

There are also municipal and community measures in process around energy efficiency, waste reduction. There is the county green building program that entails external effort and entails internal work by the Community Development agency and implementation by the Public Works department. There is a new coordinator. The objective is to get together and speak with one voice. Dana Armanino is coordinating this effort. There is a collaborative policy in place from higher levels, a cross-department approach. Marin has progressive building codes and there are California structural codes that have overtaken San Rafael's requirements. These codes affect private projects.

Comments

Roger: What do the County and City do re retrofits? Subsidies? Damon: It is a battle to retain subsidies. Roger: We need marketing.

Ed: What about a time-of-sale audit and requirements? This is under consideration in Novato as well as San Rafael. This would require sellers to meet energy-efficiency requirements when they sell a house. This is in effect already in Berkeley and other East Bay communities. There has not been the political will to implement it in Marin. Standards are up for discussion. There are templates. Ed will send them to Damon.

Roger: There must be an audit at a minimum.

Ed: Time to Lead on Climate: 40% of the burden is on structures. There is a PUC/CEC plan for all new homes to be net-zero energy by 2020. This would extend to commercial buildings by 2030. But building of new structures is negligible in Marin.

Pam: Part of the package is to integrate with the regulatory piece, to drive homeowners/businesses to PACE.

Damon: Send him examples.

Bill: There are energy improvement triggers in existing regulations. One thing is to suggest levels for house sales.

Roger: Sales are 4 to 6% annually. This is a good way to move the dial.

Damon: Re Community: There has been a 2,890 metric tons reduction. This is 10% of the target. Re Municipal/County: The emphasis is on procuring a cleaner fleet, energy efficiency, waste reduction, etc. Going forward, there is a community implementation committee that will prioritize implementation efforts. Starting 9/12, there will be a new hire who will be working for Brian Crawford re the Climate Action Plan. The new hire is funded by a combination of grants and County funds. The new hire will be responsible for outreach and will work with Damon and Kate on the community implementation committee. There will be a coordinated, interdepartmental approach.

Nona: Community Services Districts.

Bill: Coordinate with cities and towns. Also, will the advisory committee represent incorporated as well as unincorporated areas? How to put the committee together—we should give this some thought.

Rick: Will Bob Brown's plan be part of the Novato General Plan? Ed: Yes (offer to circulate link).

Pam stated that she just sent a link to the Berkeley program to Damon.

Damon: Anyone can show up at the committee meetings. There are many efforts that cross unincorporated/incorporated lines. Efforts will ultimately develop tools for tracking. Dana's role entails continuing energy efficiency efforts and grant seeking.

Roger: There are matching standards for grants. How much local funding is required? Identify the sources for matching.

Tamra: Energy Upgrade California had a free home assessment. This really worked. It ended when the program ended.

Damon: There is interest in Resilient Neighborhoods. He will send a newsletter to Pam with a story re what he learned from 30 days without a car.

Rick: Does climate plan implementation include the special districts? Damon: Yes, this is part of the community piece.

Bill: It is important that the public sector set an example and get it out to the public. The new hire should do this. Emphasize what the individual can do—for example, transportation choices. Build up the EV fleet and realize cost savings.

Belle: Have there been any negative reactions? Damon: No. Even the more conservative people are talking about sea level rise.

Doug noted a recent San Francisco planning and urban development report re renters making energy upgrades and putting the costs on their utility bills.

Tamra: There is a County flyer that goes out to new homebuyers re resources for sustainability and energy efficiency.

Pam: Contra Costa County has a well-established informational program re the health impacts of climate change.

Belle: Can we get the real estate community involved?

Max: The Air District has wood smoke incentives coming out. Funding is available, especially for low-income households.

Discussion 3 and short video: Soil and carbon sequestration, reports from Soil not Oil conference in Richmond (Pam and Doug)

Pam and Doug presented the “Soil Not Oil” video and reported that they attended a conference, “Kiss the Ground.” They met an attendee with 5-minute videos, and learned a game-changing fact: More than half of climate impacts come from agriculture (not industry). Impacts consist of robbing the soil of carbon and putting the carbon into the air. The video described the balance between five pools where carbon is stored on earth. Humans have disrupted this balance, by moving 880 giga tons of carbon out of the soil. We can help by putting excess carbon into soil storage. Placing a thin layer of carbon compost on the soil sets up an ongoing cycle, “carbon farming.” This is an idea whose time has come. Healthy soil improves the crops and water storage. See the video at <http://thesoilstory.com/>. (Pam noted that she has ordered a chipper to build up her own soil.)

Judy: There is a PBS documentary.

Pam: There are lists and tools on the website.

Doug: We should work with people in West Marin on how the County can support and integrate their efforts. The original frustration was that there is no staff person.

Damon: Agriculture is now an aspect of the Climate Action Plan.

Tamra: If you do it wrong (composting), you release more carbon.

Sara: We need an appropriate interface with local hardware stores, where people sometimes get inaccurate information.

Bill: There is a good graphic – recycling truck is a potential East Marin – West Marin connection. Keep the stream going as part of a readymade larger system.

Pam: Tam Junction hauls to Nicasio and gets compost for the community. Efforts to get compost from Redwood Landfill have been counterproductive.

Doug: Transportation is a major cost that is picked up by the purchaser. Keep it in the area where it comes from. We need outreach/re-thought/retraining.

Bob M.: Much of the compost goes to wineries.

Pam: Vegan advocates need to be on the same page re energy and water, and get the correct facts. There are issues re tilling improperly and use of pesticides.

Discussion 4: Deep Green campaign and upcoming regulatory and legislative challenges for MCE and clean power (Doug and Pam, Ed)

We need to pull the various efforts into a common effort. Make the links work together. For example, MCE. We need to do outreach to people and bring things back to the point where decisions are made. Sixty percent of the Climate Action Plan is based on Deep Green. This will come out in the MCL bulletin.

MCE began in controversy. Most people who switched from PG&E switched to Light Green. We stagnated at a rate of approximately 2% of subscribers to Deep Green in Marin. Benefits of subscribing to Deep Green include development of local sources or renewable energy. Napa and El Cerrito are following our example of outreach. Challenges include big utilities' effort to slow down the process. MCL is advocating at the PUC for fair treatment. An example is adjustment of the PCIA, which is approximately \$10/month on our bills.

New issues: Ed is monitoring AB 1110.

Background: The big utilities have been seeking approval to issue marketing materials against community choice aggregation. Yesterday, the PUC voted 5-0 to approve such marketing. The rationale: free speech.

There is a bill in the legislature, AB 1110, "Greenhouse gases emissions intensity reporting: retail electricity suppliers," which CCA advocates oppose. This bill would allow the big utilities to falsely claim better reductions in GHG emission in their energy mix. This should be turned over to the California Energy Commission (CEC) for an evidentiary hearing. Amendments: If there are no amendments, the deadline for a vote is imminent. This bill was instigated by PG&E.

Rick: How did Levine vote?

Ed: Ting put the bill on a two-year basis, said he would not bring it back, but now it is back.

Roger: Can the County weigh in?

Ed: They totaled up donations to legislators. Ting was # 7 among 80 legislators.

Doug: This is an attempt to clarify how to account for GHG reduction. It puts CCAs at a disadvantage because they use more renewable energy.

Doug K.: Pavley voted in favor.

Ed: This was sold to liberal Democrats as clarification/fair accounting. They were sold a bill of goods. Ting, in a meeting with the Sierra Club last year, said he would consult, then reneged and didn't talk to CCAs or advocacy groups.

Doug: Is there support to write a brief letter, send to McGuire, copy to Levine? This must happen quickly. Throw the bill out, replace with one sentence to send to the CEC.

Roger: So move, ask the Excomm to act promptly.

Nona: MCL does not move that quickly in response to complex issues; we discuss and weigh. That is why we have lasted so long as an organization.

Doug: Proposal: give it a try. Will provide template.

Doug K.: Accounting for REC energy imports, firming and shaping, has associated GHG emissions. There may be double counting.

Roger: MCE is reducing RECs to 3%.

Doug: This makes it difficult for new CCAs to begin.

Reports

Resilient Neighborhoods (Tamra): RN has a new associate, Jess Byron, whose background includes persuading the notoriously difficult daycare industry to recycle. There are two new teams. The Marin Carbon Knights of Novato, San Rafael, and San Anselmo, achieved a 29% average carbon reduction, 48,228 pounds. The Mt. Tam Carbon Shredders in the watershed of Mt. Tam (Corte Madera, Larkspur, and Mill Valley, achieved a 64% reduction, 66,816 pounds.

Altogether, 2.85 million tons of carbon reduced. Fall classes are coming up at the San Rafael Community Center and Mill Valley library. This is a 5-meeting series. They are putting the word out in NextDoor. There is another potential team coming out of the Environmental Forum.

West Marin Workshops (Judy): MCL is hosting four Tuesday workshops (6:00 – 8:00) at the Bay Model and Nicasio school. Carbon farming is not a specific topic, but people can raise this as a question. There was a MALT blast yesterday. Make reservations if interested.

Announcements

Bill: Another candidate forum is under consideration. Let him know if you have ideas.

Ed: Sierra Club Marin is seeking candidates for the Excomm. Let Doug K. know if interested.

Roger: Encourage MMWD to look at Deep Green. The board directed staff to do that. They move a lot of water around, have installed solar at pumping facilities.

Rick: North Marin Water will convert facilities to MCE, are using solar arrays.

Ed: Kudos to Novato Unified School District, for placing solar on parking lots. This is an improvement (shade) on something that was already ugly. RE the Hamilton swimming pool, the Council voted 3-2 to approve parking lot solar panels there. Opponents are threatening a Brown Act lawsuit.

Pam: RE future discussion, potential topics include issues for those who live in a fire hazard area. MMWD tree monitoring, sudden oak death, what is necessary to maintain the watershed. Get an update when the report is finished. There will be a symposium in late October at the Portuguese Cultural Center by One Mt. Tam.

Tamra: If you have a home in an urban/woodland interface, don't let the policy lapse. Companies want to cancel these policies.

Meeting adjourned 11:08. Next meeting, September 16, a conversation with Chris Chu.

Minutes: PN.