



CITY OF HUNTINGTON BEACH

ENVIRONMENTAL BOARD

Meeting Minutes: September 3, 2009

Present: Glover, Guido, Gordon, Marquez, Mootchnik, Rice, Schaaf, Smith
Absent: Marshall
City Staff: Aaron Klemm
Commission: None
Liaisons: None
Public: None
Guests: None

I. Call to Order/Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

II. Approval of Minutes

Minutes were approved for the August 6, 2009 meeting.

III. Public Comments

None

IV. Action Items:

A. Meeting Room Change to Room B-8 & Reasons

Meeting room was changed due to the room having better audio visual access and acoustics.

A request was made to move up Informational Item A up to the next item on the Agenda.

Informational Item:

A. Julia An – Landscape Architecture Intern/City of Huntington Beach – Urban Heat Island Effect and Mitigation

Ms. An presented a PowerPoint on the urban heat island effect (effect) and how to mitigate it. She defined the effect and how it can raise the temperatures of certain areas of the city up to 6 degrees more than other areas. The effect is caused by many impermeable and dark surfaces such as roofs and parking lots. The effect creates waste

heat leading to increased energy demands and cooling loads and increased smog production. What can help mitigate the effect is planting and maintaining large canopy trees.

The benefits of large canopy trees are environmental, social, and economic. Environmental benefits include cleaner and cooler air, cooler surfaces through shading, lower CO₂ emissions, capture of storm water and reduce runoff, and would be beneficial to migrating birds. Social benefits include quality of life enhancing shade enhancing “the place”. Economic benefits include cooling energy savings of up to \$2M/year. Ms. An then talked about 3 phases of implementation. Phase 1 includes securing funding, identifying a civic site to model to the public, selecting appropriate trees, establishing a maintenance plan, planting the trees, conducting a cost benefit and cost savings analysis, identifying potential strategies for marketing and outreach, and finally developing potential strategies for city landscape ordinances. Phase 2 includes identifying other sites in City, conducting public outreach through a sustainable marketing campaign, working with non-profits and individual citizens, and representing all sectors where possible. Phase 3 includes establishing standards for all new plantings, and implementing tree canopy ordinances for future city projects. David Guido recommended city staff be trained to properly prune the trees. Sue Gordon mentioned issues of watering the trees given the drought in southern California. After the presentation, the meeting returned to the normal agenda order.

B. DEIR No. 08-001 (Downtown Specific Plan Update) (Smith, Guido, Mootchnik):

Chairman Robert Smith declared a need for the Environmental Board’s early involvement with sustainability criteria in the DTSP. David Mootchnik and David Guido provided their comments on the DTSP. David Mootchnik focused his review on the traffic circulation element of the DTSP and looked at three areas:

- Traffic Performance
- Parking
- Project Trip Generation

As Huntington Beach is pressing forward as a sustainable community, a responsibility is created insuring that resources are not depleted or permanently diminished. The DTSP looks at a future downtown area which “creates a more urban atmosphere.” This makes the downtown into an excessively densely populated area while taking many unrealistic and unfunded approaches to attempt to justify those high densities.

Traffic Performance

An analysis of the performance of 24 intersections showed that currently they are all performing at LOS (level of service) C or better. The following trends were noted:

- In 2020 the City projects five intersections will degrade to LOS D and one to LOS E
- With mitigation there will be six intersections at LOS D.
- In 2030 the projection is that more than half (13) of the intersections will perform at LOS D.

- The trend continues with or without the Project, with the Project contributing to this degradation

Further, while the city considers LOS D to be acceptable, it is not desirable for a user-friendly community. And the trend is for traffic to continue to worsen. Based on this, he strongly recommended that the City:

- Undertake a study to determine how to alleviate continued degradation in traffic performance
- Look for a less intrusive alternative for the proposed Plan. The Reduced Development Alternative is recommended
- Reconsider the several roadway width reductions in the Plan

Parking

David Mootchnik commented on the parking issues. The EIR states that parking in season and weekends is a significant problem. It also states that 300 to 400 new off site parking spaces will be necessary to support new development. The EIR provides various strategies as to how to accommodate these new spaces. These strategies are suggestions and not an action plan. No specific plan is put forth and no mitigation measure is specified. He recommended:

- A specific mitigation plan be specified as part of accepting this EIR
- To not eliminate on-street parking
- In lieu fees are proposed in the Plan. These fees generally go into the general fund and may or may not result in alternative parking spaces. In lieu fees should not be accepted except wherein actionable alternative parking spaces be specified.

Project Trip Generation

David Mootchnik stated that trip generation of the Plan is the starting point and basis for the whole traffic impact analysis. The table indicates that the plan will generate an increase of 13,131 gross ADT (average daily trips) from retail/restaurants. The methodology used is based on the standard ITE tables of trip generation rate for a typical shopping center. This generation rate is typical of various retail stores. However, 30 percent of the retail/restaurant square footage is restaurant/bars which generate much more traffic. Restaurants generate two to three times the trips per square foot as retail and leaving their rate factor out which significantly underestimates the number of trips generated by the Plan. Thus the methodology uses low-ball trip generation and therefore low-balls traffic impacts. He recommended:

- The EIR analysis address the trip generation in a conservative manner to uncover potential impacts. The corrected number of trips would be about 17,000 ADT, a 33 percent difference in trip generation, large enough to invalidate the current traffic impact analysis.
- This issue be investigated and if confirmed, the traffic impact analysis be redone with a conservative generation estimate.

David Guido stated he wanted to begin with positive comments. The need for the EIR is important. The Board looked at the DTSP in December 2008 and without the EIR, the future

development of the downtown area would tend to be haphazard and not cohesive. With the new plan, the area can develop and evolve in a logical and methodical way. All development projects will now address sustainability/green building practices. It is involvement in the earliest stages of development that true progress in sustainable processes becomes viable and practical for the City. There were some things that were not adequately addressed such as:

- Higher density of the Project
- Tandem parking and mechanized parking
- Water usage
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The Project makes the downtown into an excessively densely populated area while taking many unrealistic and unfunded approaches to justify those high densities. Is the purpose of this document to allow for more urbanization? The Plan states that 1,562 additional residents will inhabit a little more than 300 acres. It also forecasts 13,000 additional vehicle trips per day. While this may be an unrealistically optimistic number, even that number is cause for alarm. It should be reevaluated and if confirmed, the traffic impact analysis be redone with a more realistic trip generation estimate. Tandem parking and automated parking are cited as acceptable methods to lessen the impact of higher densities. These methods may have their place in certain limited applications, but do not believe they are practical enough to be used as justification as part of this Update. Elimination of on street parking only magnifies the situation further. Another area of concern is water usage. Water usage in the update is based on the assumption that there will be enough water and references a water study currently underway. If future growth is allowed without clear data from studies such as the one currently under review, major decisions are being made without the best input available. It would be prudent to wait for study results before this update is accepted. Local residents are unhappy about the provisions in the DTSP for a performing arts venue. Three project alternatives were listed, each one showing no difference in anything regarding the venue itself; it is still 30,000 square foot in size or no project at all. Assessment of the level of significance after mitigation and unavoidable impacts state there will be no significant impacts due to growth. He recommended that the City adopt the reduced development alternative; to reduce the square footages by fifty percent across the board including the Performing Arts venue.

There are not enough specific requirements stressing the need for the use of renewable energy sources in the project. Understanding that it is best to incorporate these measures early in the process of development, this is the perfect time to have this be a major goal built into the Project. A goal of between 15 and 20 percent above current Title 24 energy standards would be a good standard for this project. Bo Glover asked if 15% above the current Title 24 was too low. A discussion ensued regarding the EIR process and when the Board should get involved. When is the right place to provide comments in the process? Currently, the Board only has an EIR to comment on. Aaron Klemm will try to get these items to the Board earlier on in the process so comments can be considered before we get so far into the process. David Guido stated by getting involved earlier in the process we can influence it. Sue Marquez commented that there were five people at the Planning Commission meeting including the Downtown Homeowners Association that spoke about the traffic and preserving the library and park. David Guido will write the comment letter.

C. City Hall & Library Retro-commissioning (6 month payback)

Aaron Klemm stated the City found lots of energy savings in fixing static pressure for ventilation. There is a 100 HD supply fan on the roof that is supposed to throttle back but the sequence is pegged at the upper level. As you double static pressure, you triple energy use. There are savings projections from the fix plus the retrofit and payback is on track. Aaron also mentioned there are “bumps” in the road with Edison funding.

Board member Rice observed that some cities have adopted cool roofs, developed building codes for shaded parking lots all within the context of a green building approach. Green building standards would help mitigate heat islands. Aaron commented that cool roofs are prescribed for commercial buildings but not for residential.

D. Sharp-City plan for Solar Performance

Aaron mentioned that Sharp contractors are happy with the leads and the interest in their solar products. They will prepare testimonials from happy residents and will do outreach to the media.

There was some discussion regarding LEED certification for existing buildings (operations and maintenance). Board member Guido requested that existing buildings be on the agenda for the next meeting as the future of LEED will be found in retrofitting existing buildings.

E. Board Charter: Executive Committee Report on City Council’s Request for Information (Ordinance 3839)

Bob Smith provided an overview of the Executive Board’s recommendations to the Environmental Board in the following areas:

a. Charter

Executive Board members Bob Smith, Sue Gordon and Robert Schaaf will meet with Mayor Pro Tem Cathy Green on September 15, 2009, to discuss the new areas of the Board charter which is “sustainability challenges and opportunities to enhance the overall sustainability: economic, ecological and social environments of Huntington Beach” as well as answer Council’s questions regarding the new direction of the Board. Bob presented PowerPoint slides showing Board duties including reviewing EIR’s and Negative Declarations with staff to promote sustainability; assisting in programs to reduce energy consumption and developing sustainable energy; supporting City’s evolving Sustainability Program with external scanning, educational and advisory projects; delivering an annual Sustainability Report to the City Council on plans and results; in the context of 2009-2020 problems that drive our attention today, staying aware of Federal and State adaptations beyond 1970s legislation, private sector adaptations and advanced thinking by academia and think tanks, and available standards applicable to parts of perceived crises (water, energy, carbon, food, health). Suggestions were made and approved by Board members to revise the slides as follows:

- On slide 8, third bullet change “scanning” to “awareness” and remove “driven by each ad hoc committee”
- On slide 8 add “review plans” to list of duties
- On slide 8 remove “Sustainability” from bullet 4 so it reads “Annual Report”

Aaron Klemm stated that the duty of reviewing plans could be added later after the Board builds credibility first.

b. Context – Why change?

Bob explained that CEQA is over 40 years old and the questions asked in EIRs are not sufficient in today’s world. We need to be proactive; build on new ideas such as cradle to cradle and the City’s Sustainability Program. Sue Gordon emphasized this problem by offering an example of the EIR’s solid waste disposal question, “Is there adequate landfill capacity?” This is backwards. The question should be “What measures will be taken to reduce the amount of waste disposed of in landfills?”

c. Name Action Request

An extensive discussion took place regarding what the new Board’s name should be. There were three names offered for discussion: 1) Environmental Board; 2) Environmental Sustainability Board; and 3) Sustainability Board. A discussion ensued regarding which name should be adopted. Although the central focus of the Board is sustainability, the 39 year history of the Environmental Board is strong and well known in the community; the name should stay the same. Sustainability Board was not approved as sustainability means different things to different people and is the “catch phrase” of the moment much like “Going Green” which has lost its luster. The consensus was stick with what everyone knows, the Environmental Board. Keep the name with a new mission and focus on branding and communicating to the public about what the Environmental Board has accomplished in its 39 years of activities. Dave Mootchnik suggested the mission statement, “Preserving the environment for a sustainable future.”

F. Water, Energy, Carbon Updates (AB811; Solorio’s Committee, City Water Townhall)

There was no discussion on this item.

G. Green Score Card items as Trade-offs for Variances

There was no discussion on this item.

H. Ad Hoc – Committee Information (ad hoc Chair/spokesperson)

- Sustainability Framework (Guido, Schaaf/Smith/Gordon)
- Energy/Green (Mootchnik/Smith/Marshall/Gordon)

There was no discussion on the above two items.

- Communications (Smith/Rice/Marquez/Glover)

Bo will set a time and date for the next meeting of the Communications Committee

- Environmental Awards (Marshall/Marquez/Guido)

Dave Guido announced that the Awards were ready to go. Aaron will confirm if SCE funding is still available. Aaron stated it shouldn't be a problem to get the funding.

- I. Annual Report (2010 goals) and Review of Topics within the Board's Proposed and Current charter

There was no discussion on this item.

V. Informational Items:

- A. Julie An – Urban Heat Island Effect and Mitigation

This Informational Item was moved to the beginning of the Agenda after Action Item A.

- B. Future Board Presentations and Format

There was no discussion on this item.

- C. Additions to Agenda from September 2009 meeting

Board member Guido requested that "educational change

- D. Planning Commission/City Council Future Agendas Overview & Future Roadmaps

There was no discussion on this item.

- E. Ascon Update (www.ascon-hb.com/outreach)

There was no discussion on this item.

VI. Administrative Items:

- A. Correspondence/New Articles/Announcements

A board member announced that a Permaculture lecture was going to be held at the Central Library on Friday, September 4th.

- B. Requests to Place Items on the Next Agenda

VII. Good and Welfare

VIII. Adjournment – Next meeting at 6:30 pm on October 1, 2009

For further information please contact City Administrator's Office, Aaron Klemm, (714) 536-5537 or Aaron.Klemm@surfcity-hb.org