



**TOWN OF PORTOLA VALLEY**  
***Sustainability and Environmental Resources Committee Meeting***  
**Monday, September 18, 2017 10:30 AM**  
**Town Hall Conference Room**  
**765 Portola Road, Portola Valley, CA**

**SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 10:37 AM.

**Roll Call:**

Committee Members:

Present: Al Sill, Rebecca Flynn, Stefan Unnasch, Loverine Taylor, Delle Maxwell, Brandi de Garmeaux

Absent: Mia Di Giovanni, Jim Lussier, Anne-Laure Strong, George Salah,

Other Attendees: Maryann Derwin, Jeff Aalfs, Jeremy Dennis

**Leaf Blowers – Introduction & Next Steps:**

Jeremy – Last Wednesday the Town Council had a study session on leaf blowers. They discussed further regulatory ideas. The issue needs further review. The Town Council would like SERC to consider this issue.

SERC should report back to the Town Council. Report back by the end of the year if possible.

This could be addressed by a new SERC subcommittee or by the full committee. Jeremy will help as needed. Jeremy will provide background material from the study session to Brandi to send out to committee members.

In the Town's General Plan, both the Sustainability and Noise sections have some relevance to this issue. The Town Council is interested in both, but perhaps more interested in the Sustainability aspects.

Other relevant considerations:

- In the town's existing noise ordinance there are rules around when devices can be used and how loud they can be; there are some specific limits on leaf blowers
- Our noise ordinance is 65 dBA at 50 ft
- There can be differences between gas and electric

Main issues for the committee to focus on:

- emissions
- gas vs. electric
- particulate matter generated / use on hardscape vs. whole property
- noise

There may be an opportunity for some type of rebate or trade-in program to encourage conversion to electric from gas. Another possibility is to have some program where residents or gardeners can bring in a leaf blower and have it tested for noise. Education will be an important component of a successful program.

There are a number of areas for the committee to build on the work that staff has already done: impact to soil health, what are other cities doing, possible rebate program, and air pollution studies.

The issue has significant interest with town residents, but it is not super-hot. There were 3 attendees from the general public at the Study Session, and there were approximately 15 emails received.

Delle will contact master gardeners about impact to soil health by leaf blowers used on landscaping

Items to include in the discussion in our next meeting:

- Let Jeremy know how long we think we will need
- Will we handle as committee or sub-committee?

#### **Oral Communications:**

- Loverine: HEA login bug – won't let you use your login ID if the email address was previously used for the HEA water use analyzer.
- Rebecca: HEA comments – tool requires dedication from the user but can have a big impact. Currently many recommendations in the HEA energy analysis tool push you to gas appliances, but for PV it may be more appropriate for the push to be more towards electrification.

#### **Approval of Minutes – August 30, 2017**

August 30, 2017 minutes were approved as written.

## **Old Business:**

### **Updates from Maryann:**

Most reservoir levels are currently above historical average. BAWSCA says that we are currently using 23% less water than in 2013. BAWSCA has an interesting report about the drought that is available on line. Here is a link: <http://www.bawasca.org/droughtreport>. There is lots of money in Prop 1 for water storage projects, but most of it is targeted to the Central Valley.

### **Updates from Brandi:**

Brandi and Jeremy met with Cal Water to discuss including smart meters in the next rate case. They hope to get Cal Water to include testimonials supporting smart meters into the next rate case justification. This is a long term process and any impact would be at least 3 years out.

Rebecca brought up a current Cal Water smart meter issue: once per day data upload vs hourly upload. She heard from Cal Water that it was related to the impact on smart meter battery life, but it may also be related cellular data upload charges.

We briefly discussed heat pump water heaters. Currently, heat pump water heaters are less efficient than gas water heaters because natural gas is very cheap. So even though they may be a better choice long term for reducing GHG, with current rates for electricity and natural gas, gas comes up as a better choice.

PGE Data issue – Privacy issues have complicated access to energy consumption data, but Brandi thinks she has now gotten good energy consumption data for Portola Valley. She will review with Al.

She should have a GHG inventory report for PV by October.

## **New Business:**

### **Select New Committee Chair:**

We will discuss in the next meeting when we hope to have a better turnout.

### **Updates from Subcommittees:**

We discussed the time demands on committee members with our current structure of multiple subcommittees. Some topics currently delegated to subcommittees may be better suited to discussion by the entire committee. We agreed to roll the existing subcommittees back into the overall committee and in the future to utilize subcommittees to focus on implementing and executing specific focused tasks.

**Announcements:**

- SOD meeting Oct 13
- Rodenticide meeting Oct 2

**Next Meeting – Date/Time and Topics:**

Tentative - Monday, October 9, 10:30AM to 12:30PM (note: this is a change from our regularly scheduled date of Oct 16)

**Possible Topics:**

- Subcommittees update / roll back into overall committee
- Native garden tour yes/no (garden tour vs. earth day vs. going native);
- New chairman
- Leaf blowers

**Adjournment:**

Meeting adjourned at 11:55AM