

Hazardous Materials Commission

Draft Minutes Operations Committee

January 14, 2022

Members and Alternates

Present: Marielle Boortz, Fred Glueck, Steve Linsley, Gabe Quinto, Treston Shull, Tim Bancroft (alternate), Heather Youngs (alternate), Madeline Kronenberg (alternate), Angelic Cox, intern

Absent: Sara Gurdian (represented by alternate)

Staff: Michael Kent, Matt Kaufmann, Sam Driggers, Jody London,

Members of the Public: Jan Warren, Marti Roach, Bill Caram, Roger Smith

1) Call to order, announcements:

Commissioner Glueck called the meeting to order at 10:02 am.

Michael Kent made the following announcements:

- There will be a public forum on the effects of PFAS on the aquatic environment all day on February 4th. The registration form had previously been sent to Commissioners.

2) Approval of Minutes:

Approval of the minutes from the December 10, 2021 meeting were moved by Commissioner Boortz, seconded by Commissioner Linsley and approved with corrections by a vote of 4-0-1 with Commissioner Shull abstaining, and Commissioners Quinto and Bancroft arriving after the vote.

3) Public Comments: None

4) Old Business: None

5) New Business:

a) Elect committee chair and co-chair

Commissioner Glueck was nominated for Chairperson by Commissioner Boortz, seconded by Commissioner Linsley and was approved by a vote of 5 – 0 with Commissioners Quinto and Bancroft arriving late.

Commissioner Boortz was nominated for Vice-Chairperson by Commissioner Glueck, seconded by Commissioner Youngs and was approved by a vote of 4-0-1 with Commissioner Boortz abstaining, and with Commissioners Quinto and Bancroft arriving late.

b) Exploring the Energy Transition: Lithium-ion battery recycling as an Economic development driver for the Northern Waterfront

Sam Driggers, Economic Development Manager for Contra Costa County, gave a brief presentation (attached) on the purpose of economic development, the Northern Waterfront Economic Development Initiative and Just Transition planning. He added that they have seen 5 hydrogen production proposals come through the office and they submitted a Build Back Better Grant for \$500,000 that they didn't receive. They are currently working on their 2022 workplan, and they have gained momentum from the recent positive affirmation they have received from their City partners. He then opened up the floor to questions.

Michael Kent asked if Lithium-ion battery recycling is something the County would want to support through the Northern Waterfront Economic Development Initiative. Mr. Driggers said that there is opportunity, but lots to discuss and unpack. He would like to work on this with the Commission.

Commissioner Glueck remarked that the technology for recycling Li-ion car batteries is still in its infancy, but that management of the batteries is the current problem. So the collection and management of Li-ion car batteries, as a TSD facility, could be a business opportunity locally, to be coordinated with recyclers elsewhere. Brownfields could be a good location for this type of storage. Mr. Driggers agreed that this could be a good business opportunity.

Commissioner Bancroft said that the California Fire Code prohibited the use of off-spec batteries. Right now, the Fire Codes says Li-ion batteries must be disposed of. He added that Tesla was looking at re-purposing their car batteries as power walls since 60 – 80% of their life was left after they could no longer be used as car batteries, but the Fire Code won't allow this use until more information is available about the risks. But nobody is doing large scale testing yet, because it is expensive, so everyone is waiting for industry to do the tests. Right now, the cost/benefit isn't there for repurposing cells.

Mr. Driggers said that he would need a market analysis to move forward to approach industry to try to convince them to take a closer look at establishing recycling in Contra Costa County. He asked Commissioner Bancroft if the State is currently looking at changing the fire code on this issue. Commissioner Bancroft said that a review committee has looked at recycling of batteries, and a subcommittee will be going back to the Fire Code Committee with recommendations, but there is not enough data right now, so their recommendations were limited. They are hoping to collect more data.

Commissioner Glueck thought policy makers might impose restrictions too soon based on the study being done by the DTSC Lithium-ion car battery recycling advisory group. He would like to see more input from the Fire Code arena and to learn how they are thinking about this issue.

Mr. Driggers asked if the Commission had brought in a speaker from the recycling industry to get their perspective. He said he would be interested in seeing a market feasibility study. Commissioner Shull thought this would be a good idea but wouldn't know where to start.

Commissioner Boortz asked if Tesla is going to make batteries in the US, and what they are planning for the management of those batteries. Mr. Driggers added that it would also be interested in learning where the components are made, and to hear from them.

Jody London noted that there are many electric vehicles in California and therefore may associations for manufacturing that the Commission could talk to about this. She felt the State needs to think about the life-cycle aspects of using lithium-ion batteries.

Marti Roach thought the Commission should look at this in the context of the big picture of sustainability and climate action, and that the problems need to be solved as part of a circular economy. She would like to see a circular-economy approach used more broadly.

Commissioner Quinto said he is trying to bring new business to the region. He thought the Commission needed to look at this more. He thought Federal Department of Transportation funding could help and is currently available. He felt this is all part of transitioning to a blue and then a green economy. He also thought that hydrogen is also going to be a big part of the solution. He said that El Cerrito is getting a hydrogen station for hydrogen fuel cell vehicles. He added that creating electrical vehicle infrastructure is also a big need.

Michael Kent said that he would try to find a speaker from the industry to speak to the Commission about the feasibility of siting a recycling business in California. Mr. Driggers said there are associations the Commission could bring in, and he would help identify some for the Commission.

c) Provide feedback on draft pipeline safety survey for the Alamo Improvement Association

Roger Smith from the Alamo Improvement Association explain the purpose of the survey that they are doing is to get feedback on a similar web site on pipeline safety in Chester County, Pennsylvania to see if something similar would make sense for Contra Costa County. He review the draft survey with the committee. He also said he was looking for Commission feedback on other stakeholders to take the survey, and potential hosts for the website. Bill Caram from the Pipeline Safety Trust, who is working with the AIA on developing the survey, said that if this project works well it could serve as a model for one-stop shopping sites for local pipeline safety information. His organization is expanding, and so will have the capacity to help support this effort. Commissioner Glueck asked if the Fire Marshal had been asked yet. Mr. Smith said they are still working on the draft survey.

Commissioner Shull asked if the web page was going to be hosted on the County's web site. Mr. Smith said that is their goal. Michael Kent clarified that the County has not made any commitment yet to host the web page.

Matt Kaufmann, Hazardous Materials Program Director, added that he thought this website would be very helpful.

Commissioner Boortz recommended that they keep the survey to a 15-minute time limit. She thought it currently has too many questions. They need to focus on the key questions.

Commissioner Glueck asked if there will be other web sites linked to this site, and they should ask a questions about whether this would be helpful.

Michael Kent suggested they clarify who the target audience is for the web page – the public or also professional first responders and agencies.

Mr. Smith thanked the committee for their input and said he would take their comments into account and send the Commission a draft survey to take and provide feedback on.

d) Discuss Commission interest in providing input into the update of the County’s Environmentally Preferred Purchasing policy

Michael Kent explained that he had recently learned that the County’s Public Works Department is updating its Environmentally Preferred Purchasing policy. He contact the staff responsible for implementing this update to see if they would be interested in considering policies related to the use of treated lumber and products containing PFAS, two issues the Commission has been interested in. He said the Public Works staff was interested, and he told them he would discuss the issue at this meeting to gauge the interest of the Commission.

Commissioner Glueck asked about the level of detail of the policy – that is, does it apply to incidentals purchased by individual employees, and would the Commission be asked to provide input down to that level. Mr. Kent said that his understand was that the policy sets general guidelines for purchasing for various categories of products, and the Commission would be expected to provide input at that level. The committee expressed general interest in learning more about what the Public Works has planned, and how they can provide input.

6) Plan Next Agenda: The committee will develop an outreach strategy for seeking applicants for the General Public Seat alternate, if the Commission approves the committee’s recommendation for the General Public seat.

7) Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 pm.