

**TOWN OF SAN ANSELMO  
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES OF APRIL 4, 2011**

Commissioners Present: Chair Pascal Sisich, Commissioners Brasler, Brown, Krebs, Schinner

Commissioners Absent: Vice-Chair Marty Zwick

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Sisich called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**OPEN TIME FOR PUBLIC EXPRESSION**

No one spoke.

**PLANNING AND BUILDING DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Interim Planning Director Diane Henderson observed that the Town has received many calls with regard to the signage and outside seating at the Marin Yogurt Company on San Anselmo Avenue. Senior Planner Phil Boyle has been working closely with the owners, who have filed a partial application at this time.

Overberger noted that the Marin Yogurt Company is thriving.

Henderson advised that Boyle has been assisting them with all aspects of their application and that ultimately they must comply with the same rules and regulations applied to other commercial establishments in San Anselmo.

Sisich observed that a new bakery will be opening on 101 San Anselmo Avenue.

Henderson added that the Marin Yogurt Shop has already increased activity on the south end of San Anselmo Avenue and she expects that the bakery will add to that trend.

**PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS**

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Minutes of Planning Commission Meeting of March 21, 2011.

M/s, Brasler/Brown, to move the consent agenda.

AYES: Brasler, Brown, Schinner, Sisich

ABSENT: Zwick

ABSTAIN: Krebs, Overberger

NOES: None

**REGULAR AGENDA**

**Discussion and recommendation on the draft San Anselmo Climate Action Plan**

The purpose of the Climate Action Plan (CAP) is to compile existing and potential strategies that the Town's government and the community can take to address climate change. (Staff person: Boyle)

Senior Planner Phil Boyle presented the staff report.

San Anselmo residents have long recognized the importance of reducing greenhouse gases and observed that there is room for improvement, as Marin County's per capita ecological footprint is considerably larger than the US average.

There is currently no federal, state, or local mandate for adoption of a plan; nevertheless, many jurisdictions throughout the state have found that adopting such a plan provides a tool for assisting California in meeting the requirements of AB-32, the Global Warming Solutions Act. The act mandates that California reduce emissions to 1990 levels by 2020.

The plan is also important in that when San Anselmo updates its general plan, the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires that climate change is examined as part of the update.

Boyle summarized the steps taken by the Town to develop the CAP, including joining the Marin Climate and Energy Partnership (MCEP), conducting a greenhouse gas emissions inventory, and setting a target for reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 15% below 1990 levels by 2020.

Boyle recommended that the Commissioners hear public comment and discuss the plan before forwarding a recommendation to the Town Council for their adoption of the plan. Boyle introduced Christine O'Rourke, Sustainability Coordinator with the Marin Climate and Energy Partnership.

Commissioner Brown asked if the Planning Commission should be examining the housing element only of the CAP, or if staff is asking the Commission to provide a comprehensive recommendation to the Town Council.

Brown also asked how the CAP objectives line up with the objectives of the Town of San Anselmo's housing element now under consideration by the state.

Boyle responded that despite the fact that the CAP is not specifically a planning document, it was felt that the Commission should have the opportunity to provide feedback on the plan.

Henderson advised that the plan relates to a mandate to reduce greenhouse gas and that the Planning Commission is being consulted as it is the advisory body on this issue to the Town Council. Henderson added that the town manager also asked the Quality of Life Commission to consider the plan and provide feedback. With regard to the Commission's purview, Henderson explained that Commissioners were being asked to examine the plan in its entirety and to direct comments at any and all aspects of the plan.

O'Rourke confirmed that Regional Housing Needs Assignment (RHNA) and Association of Bay Area Government figures were considered to ensure that the projected housing development in this plan is consistent with the Town's housing element. Further, the housing element requires implementation of energy efficiency programs; this plan will enhance the housing element by creating energy efficiency throughout the housing stock.

O'Rourke reviewed the summary tables for specific greenhouse gas reduction (GGR) strategies and the projected reductions, noting that although many local government programs exist to help achieve reductions, many of the strategies are dependent on changes in residents' behavior. She further reviewed summaries of recommended community and government operations actions and their resulting GHG projected reductions in metric tons.

Brown asked for clarification of Item 3.4.C1 on Page A-14 (Appendix B) as to what the 20% references.

O'Rourke replied that the target is 20% reduction in GHG achieved in 20% of all existing buildings.

Sisich noted that Item 3.3.C4 calls for a reduction of 311 metric tons of GHG by increasing ridesharing and asked how the current savings attributed to ridesharing is known.

Roarke replied that annual studies conducted by the county under the auspices of the Federal government are consulted, as well as county surveys of ridership.

Overberger confirmed that the pie chart on Page 12, identifying San Anselmo's emissions by sector, indicates that 52% of the opportunity for reduction in GHG is in the transportation sector and that 34% is in the residential sector.

O'Rourke reviewed the recommended government operations actions on Page A-15, including (1) replacing Town vehicles with electric vehicles; (2) replacing police vehicles with more fuel-efficient vehicles; (3) installing energy efficiency upgrades in Town buildings; and (4) upgrading street lighting.

Overberger asked if any consideration was given to strategies other than replacing assets with more energy efficient models; for example, has the effect of removing one police vehicle per shift been considered? In some jurisdictions, officers walk or bike through neighborhoods.

O'Rourke advised that she would certainly try to quantify that if the Town is interested.

Sisich opened the public discussion.

Woody Weingarten, Chair, Quality of Life Commission, Fernwood Road, asked how much of the plan is practical and what the timeframe is for implementation. Weingarten noted that although the study was funded by grants from the Marin Community Foundation (MCF), implementing the recommendations would involve costs to the Town. He asked if any attempt has been made to quantify those costs.

O'Rourke replied that attempts were made to quantify some of the costs, particularly those for mitigating government emissions. She referred to Page A-15, adding that cost figures are also found throughout the plan. Many cities and towns are researching grant opportunities; for example, the MCEP is currently talking with the MCF regarding the availability of funds to switch out more street lights.

Henderson noted that the strategy is to have an approved CAP in place so that future funding opportunities can be taken advantage of as they become available.

Brasler suggested that the Town secure the services of a volunteer grant writer to seek available funding.

Sisich closed the public hearing.

Krebs asked how Marin County's carbon footprint compares to that of California.

O'Rourke did not have the comparative figures.

Krebs asked what is unique about San Anselmo with regard to the way the Town's residents and employees use or create carbon.

O'Rourke observed that San Anselmo is fortunate in not having the Highway 101 emissions that communities such as San Rafael and Corte Madera are exposed to. Also, the number of solar system installations is higher in San Anselmo than the average for the county. San Anselmo has taken some positive steps forward, including adopting the Safe Routes to Schools program. Some other jurisdictions have made greater progress in pursuing energy efficiency programs for buildings.

Krebs noted that the plan distinguishes government and community-at-large emissions numbers; there is probably more flexibility in pursuing emissions controls in the non-governmental sector.

O'Rourke confirmed, adding that governmental participation is essential because residents make note of what steps are being taken at the Town level.

Krebs suggested that it might be helpful to identify the five most effective measures the Town can take, e.g., marketing solar solutions.

O'Rourke agreed, adding that it is also helpful to hear what the Planning Commission and Town Council identify as priorities, as these bodies may have already considered some of the more effective measures.

Overberger asked why San Anselmo's target in GHG reduction is 15% and if this is the same target chosen by other jurisdictions.

O'Rourke replied that some jurisdictions chose a higher target, e.g., Marin County and San Rafael. Most cities and towns have chosen 15% because it is in alignment with the state's goal.

Sisich observed that embarking on a major remodel already requires achieving more energy efficiency; the real gains are to be made in transportation. He asked if the plan gives consideration to the fact that many Town employees commute considerable distances. Commuter checks offsetting the cost of mass transit for employees or credits for purchasing higher efficiency vehicles are possibilities.

O'Rourke explained that the program in the CAP targets reducing employee miles traveled by 10%. There is a series of programs outlining the various incentives the Town could offer. Areas of consideration include public transportation, ridesharing, telecommuting, alternative schedules and reducing the work week.

Sisich observed that government operation emissions is about 1% of the total Town's emissions and asked if this is a typical figure.

O'Rourke confirmed.

Sisich asked if the government operation emissions included employee commutes.

O'Rourke confirmed.

Sisich would like to see the plan mitigate the employee commutes.

Krebs noted that although he is in favor of shorter employee commutes, addressing this sector first will not significantly reduce total usage.

Brown believes the situation requires more action than formulating a list of strategies. Transportation and housing are the largest elements. He asked if it is possible to tax residents with vehicles averaging fewer than 20 mpg; the tax revenues could be used to purchase carbon offsets or solar panels.

Brown is a fan of market-based solutions. He suggested the Town aggregate all households committed to installing solar systems into a pool and negotiating a price per installation with a vendor. Brown believes a cost reduction in installation of 25 to 30% could be achieved in this way.

With regard to transportation and housing combined, Brown believes the density of the downtown area needs to be reconsidered. More density promotes more business activity and more pedestrian traffic as opposed to vehicular traffic. He understands the concern of many with regard to allowing three story buildings downtown, but believes the topic needs to be discussed again.

Schinner wants to clarify what the Planning Commission can do with regard to the plan. Looking at Exhibit B, he does not believe the Commission can achieve much with regard to government operations beyond making recommendations.

With respect to community actions and transportation matters, one specific measure the Commission can take is to re-examine the Green Building Ordinance recently approved. A lot of consumers tend to be intractable and a way to change that is to consider what kinds of credits, rebates, or other measures might be offered at the local level.

The Commission might look at a point system that could be recalibrated to incentivize the specific recommendations that do have a significant impact.

Overberger agreed with both Schinner and Brown. Housing needs to be reconsidered and green building needs to be strongly endorsed. The plan is a great start, but more action needs to be taken. More draconian measures should be considered; taxing SUV's at some level, prohibiting high school students from driving to school, providing buses for students are possibilities. Overberger believes that choosing one specific target per year is a good strategy.

Brasler agreed that there are many actions the Town can take to promote recommended actions. The Ross Valley School District is currently undergoing the process of redefining boundaries. Wade Thomas could be designated a bike school only, incentives could be offered to students to walk, etc. Brasler is not sure these kinds of measures are within the Commission's purview.

The Quality of Life Commission can sponsor meetings to gather input and ideas, but ultimately an act of the Town is required—such as instituting the Green Building Ordinance.

Incentives are important: installing collection systems designed to handle household waste could be rewarded; permit fees could be waived for significant solar energy system installations; a six-story building could be placed at the end of San Anselmo Avenue for no fees; offer permit expediting and consultation with the Planner or Town Engineer to help get construction plans approved.

Brasler concluded that carbon offsets and writing checks is not effective; reducing, reusing or using less, and taking political action are effective.

Krebs believes it would be helpful to list priorities and advocates determining the most effective means of implementing changes and then creating incentives. He also believes there is some benefit to funding some efforts and supports projecting a cost/benefit analysis for funded projects. The Town could measure progress in terms of individual projects rather than trying to estimate actual reduction of energy use.

Krebs supports the idea of an annual goal or theme that the Town supports and publicizes, believing this may be a way to increase awareness. He further noted that Marin County has perhaps one of the highest numbers of hybrid vehicles when compared to other counties and feels the use of alternative-fuel/fuel-efficient vehicles is one aspect in which the county is doing a great job.

Brown suggested that the Town prepare a Request for Proposal (RFP) inviting a number of engineering firms to present prescriptive specifications for a few different solar installation designs, with the idea that those designs could be offered to residents who could then forgo the expense of acquiring an engineering stamp on their plans.

An RFP could then be prepared for a couple of installation companies and a lower price negotiated for a guaranteed number of projects—this represents a bulk buying opportunity that could be promoted to Town residents.

Krebs noted that several solar panel installers have made bulk buying proposals to other towns.

Sisich observed that the transportation sector is the most crucial and supports encouraging residents to make better vehicle purchasing decisions, but does not support taxing SUV drivers. He likes the concept of permit cost reductions for green building projects but also recognizes that revenues must be generated to compensate staff.

In conclusion, Sisich recommends encouraging 4 day/10 hour work week schedules, looking for telecommuting opportunities for staff, and offering carpooling incentives to staff. He further supports revisiting purchasing decisions for police vehicles, noting that the Town could make a statement by purchasing more fuel-efficient cars.

M/s, Overberger/Schinner, to recommend that the Town Council accept the CAP with the following suggestions as an addendum: (1) to identify the top five value-for-effort issues; (2) to focus on transportation issues; (3) to revisit the Green Building Ordinance to insure its consistency with the CAP; (4) to develop a marketing-based, grant-based, bulk-buying based program for a solar promotional campaign and an insulation campaign; (5) to conduct community outreach to educate and solicit community input for CAP activities; (6) to promote the reduction of employee commute miles with telecommuting, 4 day/10 hour work weeks, bus passes, alternative shifts, etc.; (7) to accelerate conversion of city vehicles including police vehicles to higher mileage vehicles; and (8) to reach out and provide incentives to large commercial developments to encourage solar and energy efficiency.

AYES: Brasler, Brown, Krebs, Overberger, Schinner, Sisich

ABSENT: Zwick

NOES: None

#### **ITEMS FROM PLANNING COMMISSION**

No one spoke.

#### **ADJOURN TO THE MEETING DATE OF April 18, 2011**

Chair Sisich adjourned the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Nancy Harris