

Environmental Issues Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, January 18, 2012

Noon-1 p.m.

Metolius Room, EMU

MEMBERS PRESENT

- Peg Gearhart (Chair)—Oregon Humanities Center
- Alan Dickman—Biology/Environmental Studies
- Heather Brinton—Law
- Ramah Leith—Health Center
- Christian Pich—Neuroscience
- Chris Jones—Sustainable Cities Initiative
- Fred Tepfer—Campus Planning and Real Estate
- Jennifer Ellis—Finance
- Meg Mattson—Education
- Sophie Luthin—student
- Nathan Howard—student
- Ellen Inagmells—student
- Christine Thompson—Campus Planning and Real Estate (Ex Officio)
- Steve Mital—Office of Sustainability (Ex Officio)
- Louisa de Heer—Student Sustainability Center (Ex Officio)
- Doug Brooke—Environmental Health and Safety (Ex Officio)

MEMBERS ABSENT

- Colin Ives—Art

Guests

- Stephen Ames—Office of Sustainability
- Emma Newman – ASUO senator

DECISIONS TAKEN

- The December meeting minutes were approved.
- The EIC voted to support the Take Back the Tap policy with amendments.
- EIC will request a one-year extension of the \$8,000 awarded by the Student Sustainability Fund to purchased carbon offsets.
- The committee resolved to continue discussing the CAP review/update process at future meetings.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

TAKE BACK THE TAP

Emma Newman presented the most recent version of the Take-Back-the-Tap policy, seeking the EIC's approval for the policy to progress to the next step. There was discussion around this process. Steve and Christine said that, typically, the process required the responsible VP – not EIC - to forward the policy for UO approval. Also, the policy would be reviewed by the General Counsel's office prior to moving

forward. Emma requested that the EIC vote to send the policy to the University Senate. Peg Gearhart was unsure whether this was appropriate. EIC members reiterated their support for the overall policy intent but raised many concerns about specific policy language. Members made the following suggestions

- Add the potential for exception, in particular for 5 gallon culligan bottled water used by many offices that do not have a water source in close proximity,
- clarify definitions of key terms, for example what constitutes the University of Oregon Campus,
- delete references to wood and paper purchasing policies, and
- define the distance from soda fountains that soft drink dispensers selling soda in plastic containers may be located.

The EIC voted to support the policy with the above-mentioned clarifications and amendments.

EMU CARBON OFFSETS

Steve Mital gave a brief history of the EMU carbon offset program and presented three potential offsets products that the University may purchase to meet its 2011 EMU offset commitment. Although Steve searched for local offsets, he could only find out-of-state offsets. Steve presented the EIC with the options of either choosing from the three offset products or returning the funds to the Student Sustainability Fund. The group discussed the ideas and considered the possibility of holding the money while waiting for an Oregon offset project (in-state project) to come online. The Committee approved the motion to request an extension for one year pending the availability of a feasible Oregon offset project.

CLIMATE ACTION PLAN (CAP) UPDATE

Steve Mital updated the committee on the status of updating the CAP. With the knowledge that the CAP will require the approval of both the new vice-president and the University president, Steve recommended the EIC wait until a new president is appointed before updating the CAP. Steve made it clear that this does not preclude any CAP related projects going forward or prevent brainstorming ideas for updating the policy so that the EIC will be ready once a new president is in place. There were some questions about why the CAP needed to be updated. Steve pointed to the value of considering new short-term goals and new strategies that responds to trends. The committee resolved to keep discussing the issue at future meetings before reaching any decisions.

FUTURE AGENDA ISSUES

Louisa de Heer asked the committee to review the new Student Sustainability Fund metrics (used to evaluate proposals) and review upcoming proposal applications. Christian shared the idea of inviting guest presenters to discuss waste on campus – this may tie into a larger discussion about what might be included in an updated CAP. Time was up and Peg asked members to email additional ideas.

The Meeting adjourned at 1:00 pm. The February meeting will be held on Monday February 13, 12 to 1pm.