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DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
Solid Waste Management Division

MINUTES
Special Meeting of
ZERO WASTE COMMISSION
Monday, June 18, 2007
North Berkeley Senior Center, 1901 Hearst Street

Chairman Steen Jensen called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m.

1. Roll Call:

Commissioners present: Blachman, Dodsworth (7:20), Jensen, Miyazaki, Schultze-Allen, Tam.

Commissioners absent: Kalil, Sadigh

Staff: Peter Holtzclaw; Tania Levy

Members of the Public: Daniel Maher of Ecology Center; MaryLou Van Deventer and Dan Knapp of Urban Ore, Meera Chaturvedi, of Green Sangha.

2. Comments from the Public:

Dan Knapp described Urban Ore's experimental hand sorting of roll-off boxes of construction debris at the Berkeley transfer station, Sunday May 27. They were able to divert 80% by volume, half of which was reusable items and the rest was recyclable and compostable.

Meera Chaturvedi stated that Green Sangha supports reducing use of plastic, due to its health problems and environmental impacts.

3. Announcements and Commissioner Comments:

David Tam is pleased that the Solano County Board of Supervisors voted to reject the EIR for the Potrero landfill

4. Approval of Agenda: M/S Blachman/Dodsworth 5/0/0, to approve the agenda.

5. Plastic Bag Reduction Ordinance:

Peter Schultze-Allen attended the meeting of the Environmental Commission and reported on their discussion of a plastic bag ordinance. Source reduction and reuse is their primary goal, and they are wary of compostable bags (Attachment 1) He circulated proposed elements of an ordinance for discussion. (Attachment 2). Levy described the State bag-recycling ordinance (AB 2449) and its preemption of fees, and provided information from the progressive grocers' association, plastic bag recycling association, and Cities of Oakland and Fairfax. Holtzclaw is concerned about who would enforce the ordinance, especially if it requires retailers to charge the fee.

Blachman supported addressing other bags, such as newspaper bags, and including other retailers. Rationale should include greenhouse gas reduction, and harm to the marine environment. Since AB 2449 preempts local jurisdictions from

setting fees to discourage plastic bag use, the only choice left is to ban them. Any compostable bag element should be discussed with the composter, Grover Landscaping.

Proposed elements of a Berkeley bag ordinance would include banning plastic bags, placing a fee of 10-25 cents on other single-use bags (paper and compostable plastic) to be kept by the retailer to cover costs; requiring a rebate to customers bringing their own bags; making durable bags available for \$1.00, and signs with City-approved language about the fee. Other retailers could be included, probably with a time for phase-in. Commissioners and staff will meet with local grocers and Chamber of Commerce in hopes of their voluntarily promoting reusable bags, and to shape the ordinance to accommodate business needs. New businesses should be educated routinely about this and other City programs. Dodsworth distributed a plan for phasing in fees for different retailers.

Commissioners agreed to provide an information item to Council for their July 17 meeting, and to review the draft on June 25. The item will include the rationale for action, options from other cities, and elements of a proposed Berkeley ordinance. The information report will educate Council about plastic bag recycling, AB2449, and compostable bags.

6. Future Agenda Items: Construction/Demolition processing, and update to zero waste activities. The City's Sustainability office asks the Commission to host a greenhouse gas reduction workshop at the July meeting.
7. Adjourn: M/S Miyazaki/Tam to adjourn at 9:15