



Agenda Item #: _____

Staff Report

City of Manhattan Beach

TO: Honorable Mayor Cohen and Members of the City Council

THROUGH: Geoff Dolan, City Manager

FROM: Sona Kalapura, Environmental Programs Manager

DATE: September 15, 2009

SUBJECT: Consideration of Environmental Task Force Issues Including:

- a) Resolution No. 6212 Approving the City's Participation in the International Day of Climate Action, and
- b) Status Report on the Progress of the Environmental Task Force

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the City Council: a) adopt Resolution No. 6212 in order to support the City's participation in the International Day of Climate Action, and b) receive and file this report on the progress of the Environmental Task Force.

FISCAL IMPLICATION:

There are minimal costs associated with the City's participation in the International Day of Climate Action, mainly dealing with advertising and promotion of the event. Other costs associated with the event are the staff time of the Environmental Programs Manager to assist in coordination of the event with the South Bay Climate Action Group.

BACKGROUND:

On September 2, 2008 Council formed a 19-member Environmental Task Force (Task Force). Council selected 14 residents from over 30 qualified applicants to serve on the Task Force. Council then appointed two representatives to the Task Force, Mayor Portia Cohen, and Mayor Pro Tem Mitch Ward. The remaining positions were appointed by the MB Unified School District, including Amy Howorth, School Board Member, and two student representatives.

The Task Force had its first meeting on October 15, 2008, and divided into four subcommittees to tackle priority environmental issues: the Development of a Climate Action Plan; Sustainable ("Green") Design; Waste Reduction and Recycling; and Water Conservation and Storm Water Management Issues. Since this first meeting, the Task Force has held well-attended public meetings, numerous subcommittee meetings, and has hosted an Environmental Speaker Series with engaging environmental experts providing information to the group and the public. The Task Force has also developed recommendations which have led to the adoption of two ordinances by the City Council; the Water Conservation Ordinance and Sustainable Building Standards Ordinance. In addition, the Task Force has supported the tiered water rate structure, which has been initially

adopted by City Council, as well as a “pay-as-you-throw” approach to solid waste rates that will be developed by the waste consultant for the new solid waste contract.

The Task Force is working to increase public education and participation in environmental events, and has had success with the City’s participation in Earth Hour and the Solar Homes Tour. The upcoming International Day of Climate Change, started by the 350 organization, is an event that brings together the Task Force goals of public participation and the City’s Going Green movement.

DISCUSSION:

350: International Day of Climate Action

All around the world, a movement is building to take on the climate crisis, and explain that 350 parts per million (ppm) is the number that leading scientists say is the safe upper limit for carbon dioxide in our atmosphere. Currently, our atmosphere has nearly 390 ppm, which scientists say is too high, and is more CO₂ in the atmosphere than seen at any other time in recorded history. The United Nations is working on a global climate change treaty, which is supposed to be completed in December of 2009 at a conference in Copenhagen, Denmark. To get a treaty strong enough to bring our carbon dioxide emissions down to a safer level, we need the support of people who care about our shared global future to get involved and make their voices heard.

The South Bay Climate Action Group (CAG), a group of 22 local environmental non-profits, is organizing a “350” event in Manhattan Beach on October 24th, the International Day of Climate Action. The CAG would like the City of Manhattan Beach to be the Host City for this event, and pass Resolution 6212 (See Attachment A) to indicate support for the event and the goal of reducing carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere to 350 ppm. The event aims to bring the community together in support of climate action, and will be one of 1,416 events planned in 106 countries around the world.

The event is scheduled to take only one hour and consists of: a) 30 minutes of very brief remarks by elected officials and other event supporters from the community; and b) Forming a “human tide line” across the sand to demonstrate where sea level rise caused by climate change will bring the tide in the future – unless reductions in greenhouse gas emissions are made. The “human tide line” will stretch north, from its starting point at the Manhattan Beach Pier, and extend as far as the number of participants make possible. The goal is to have at least 350 volunteers participate in the event to create a symbolic visual image along our coastline. Although there is the possibility that more volunteers will attend, we do not anticipate reaching a level requiring additional support from Manhattan Beach staff aside from the Environmental Programs Manager.

Manhattan Beach was selected as a site for the event because of the City’s notable green efforts, and the commitment of its residents to protect the marine environment. The South Bay CAG would appreciate the City Council’s endorsement and support of this event, and is working to secure the support of the offices of: State Senator Jenny Oropeza, Congresswoman Jane Harman, and County Supervisor Knabe. As part of the City’s commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, this event poses a unique opportunity to educate individuals about what they can do to participate in solving the challenges of climate change.

Progress of the Environmental Task Force

The Task Force has had several key achievements over the past year, and is making significant progress to accomplishing its tasks by the end of term in March 2010. During nearly one-year of meetings, the Task Force has made progress on the goals it has identified, has included public comment and feedback, and has identified several new areas of study. The following outlines the progress made by each subcommittee:

Climate Action Plan

The Climate Action Subcommittee reviewed climate action plans enacted across the country to understand the types of climate change measures being implemented. The group decided on three areas to focus their efforts in order to best assist the City in developing measures to reduce its carbon footprint. These areas are: Energy Efficiency, Transportation, and Public Education. The group decided to postpone making recommendations on efficiency measures that will reduce the City's carbon footprint until it receives input from the energy audit consultant (expected late September 2009). The group has focused its efforts on studying several transportation related measures, such as the data developed on replacing the City's fleet with low-emission vehicles and the inclusion of bicycle pathways in the City. The subcommittee is also exploring the use of environmentally responsible purchasing (green purchasing) for the City, and is reviewing how other cities are approaching this policy. Finally, the subcommittee has developed several ideas and events on how the City, and Task Force, can reach out to the public and develop the community's understanding of energy efficiency and reduction of an individual's carbon footprint. The group will present its recommendations in these areas, along with the proposals from the energy audit, and prioritize which measures are most important for Council to act upon.

Water Conservation and Storm Water Management Issues

The Water Conservation and Storm Water Subcommittee concentrated its initial efforts on reviewing water conservation ordinances, and developing the essential elements of a water conservation ordinance for the City. The water conservation ordinance was adopted and went into effect on July 2, 2009, and the conservation response from the community has been astounding. Also, while the subcommittee was not responsible for the development of tiered water rates, it did recommend that the City adopt an aggressive rate structure to support the City's water conservation goals. The City is now developing an implementation strategy for a tiered water rate to further encourage water conservation while still meeting the financial demand put in place by the Metropolitan Water District. Finally, the subcommittee is working through a few remaining issues dealing with the conservation ordinance before moving on to explore storm water management.

Waste Reduction and Recycling

In May 2009, the Waste Reduction and Recycling Subcommittee presented several updates to include in the next solid waste contract. The current contract with Waste Management has been extended to April 30, 2011 while contract renegotiations move forward. The subcommittee recommendations, which were unanimously approved by the Environmental Task Force, are made up of improvements and additions to service they feel are important to Manhattan Beach. The group is currently focusing on researching and creating a Zero Waste policy for the City, as well as developing Zero Waste goals and programs for local businesses. The subcommittee is developing a pilot project to understand the impact of implementing a Zero Waste Policy on local businesses. Waste Management is assisting in the subcommittee's efforts to conduct a waste audit, and develop smarter waste and recycling practices for a local business in Manhattan Beach.

Sustainable ("Green") Design

The Sustainable Design Subcommittee has reviewed green building ordinances across the State to better understand what measures are successful in other cities, and what may work best in Manhattan Beach. This resulted in the Sustainable Building Standards ordinance that was adopted in July 2009, and outlines comprehensive recommendations for large public and private development in the City that will utilize a third party rating system and follow LEED certifications. The subcommittee is now developing green building measures that focus on water conservation and reducing storm water runoff, energy efficiency, and other zoning issues such as small wind turbines, solar projects, and green roofs. The group will recommend that Council include these specific green building measures in the City's municipal building and zoning codes. Finally, the subcommittee will develop a recommendation for private residential construction that will not require third party certification, but will focus on energy efficiency, water conservation, materials, etc. The group realizes the importance for public involvement regarding these recommendations, and will work on a public outreach component to gather feedback from residents and the construction community.

CONCLUSION:

The Task Force is successfully making progress on the key environmental areas identified by City Council, and is really an excellent example of a resident-based group partnering with local government. The Task Force aims to reach as many individuals as possible to gather support for protection of our natural resources, and seeks the City's support in this effort in any way it can. The upcoming International Day of Climate Change is an event that reinforces the goals of the Environmental Task Force, as well as those of the City.

The Task Force subcommittees will continue meeting monthly to work on recommendations to present at the public Task Force meetings. As these recommendations are vetted and approved by the entire Task Force, they will be presented to City Council for comment by the subcommittee liaisons and City Staff. City Staff will continue to present status reports to City Council to keep Council updated on the progress of the Task Force until the end of term in March 2010.

Attachments: A. Resolution 6212

cc: Jim Arndt, Public Works Director
Richard Thompson, Community Development Director

RESOLUTION NO. 6212

RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT THE CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH'S
PARTICIPATION IN THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF CLIMATE ACTION
ON OCTOBER 24, 2009 AS PART OF THE GLOBAL 350 EFFORT

WHEREAS, our community is deeply concerned about the impacts of climate change and the future health and well-being of our planet and believes energy efficiency and natural resource conservation are important elements to combating climate change; and,

WHEREAS, the International Day of Climate Action is both a global and local symbolic event organized by the international 350 organization and the South Bay 350 Climate Action Group to raise awareness about climate change issues, and to encourage all citizens, businesses, and government to take actions to reduce their carbon emissions and their impact on the environment in their daily lives and operations; and,

WHEREAS, the International Day of Climate Action asks all citizens, businesses, and government to participate in a local 350 community event at an iconic location in their area to demonstrate their support for reducing greenhouse gas emissions; and,

WHEREAS, the South Bay 350 Climate Action Group asks the citizens of the South Bay and the broader Los Angeles area to participate for one hour beginning at 3:00 pm on October 24, 2009 in support of the International Day of Climate Action and to commit to actions they can take in the coming year to reduce their carbon footprints; and,

WHEREAS, the International Day of Climate Action will be used as a tool to inform local residents and businesses about existing information and tools already available within the community to assist them in increasing energy efficiency and decreasing emissions and use of natural resources; and,

WHEREAS, participation in the International Day of Climate Action for one hour will send a clear message that the people of Manhattan Beach in the State of California in the United States of America are concerned about climate change, and stand with the rest of the world in seeking solutions; and,

WHEREAS, city-wide participation in the International Day of Climate Action will serve as an important rallying point for the 350 message.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH, CALIFORNIA, DOES HEREBY DECLARE, FIND, DETERMINE AND ORDER AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. The City Council of the City of Manhattan Beach hereby makes the following findings:

1. That the above recitations are true and correct.
2. That the City of Manhattan Beach endorses efforts by the 350 organization through the International Day of Climate Action to raise awareness around global climate change.
3. That the City of Manhattan Beach encourages all citizens to participate in the International Day of Climate Action event for the hour between 3:00 and 4:00 PM on October 24, 2009 to raise awareness about global climate change as part of the 350 event.

SECTION 2. The City Clerk shall certify to the adoption of this resolution and thenceforth and thereafter the same shall be in full force and effect.

PASSED, APPROVED and ADOPTED this 15th day of September, 2009.

AYES:
NOES:
ABSTAIN:
ABSENT:

Mayor, City of Manhattan Beach, California

ATTEST:

City Clerk