

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY SUB-COMMITTEE

Meeting held in the Conference Room, Operational Services Area, Level One of Civic Centre,
10 Watson Terrace, Mount Gambier, on Tuesday 6th September 2016 at 7:30 a.m.

MINUTES

- PRESENT: Cr I Von Stanke (Presiding Member)
Mayor A Lee, Crs D Mutton and P Richardson
- COUNCIL OFFICERS: Daryl Sexton, Director - Operational Services
Aaron Izzard, Environmental Sustainability Officer
Carmel Ron, Environmental Sustainability Officer
Sarah Moretti, Administration Officer - Operational Services
- APOLOGIES: Nil
- NOT PRESENT: Cr S Mezinec
- COUNCIL MEMBERS
AS OBSERVERS: Nil

WE ACKNOWLEDGE THE BOANDIK PEOPLES AS THE TRADITIONAL CUSTODIANS OF THE LAND WHERE WE MEET TODAY. WE RESPECT THEIR SPIRITUAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LAND AND RECOGNISE THE DEEP FEELINGS OF ATTACHMENT OUR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES HAVE WITH THIS LAND.

- MINUTES: Cr Richardson moved that the minutes of the previous meeting held on Tuesday, 2nd August 2016 be taken as read and confirmed.
- Mayor Lee seconded Carried

- QUESTIONS: (a) With Notice - nil submitted.
(b) Without Notice – nil received.

1. **ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT – Programme Management – Edible Plants in Community Spaces - Ref. AF14/96**

The Presiding Member reported:

- (a) In 2012 the City of Mount Gambier began a program of engaging local residents and community groups to come together and plant small numbers of fruit trees and other edible plants in Council reserves. Due to its success in the past, the City of Mount Gambier has continued to roll out this program with the help of the community.
- (b) In March 2016, Council put out a competitive Expression of Interest (EOI) to partner with local residents to plant fruit and nut trees in local reserves. The EOI was used to encourage participants to agree to work with their neighbours to help look after the trees - including watering over summer - and to make sure that the fruit and nuts get eaten.
- (c) Strong submissions from neighbours near Michielan Reserve; Sealy Reserve; and Tenison Woods College were put together and all were selected to have fruit and nut trees planted in their local reserve.
- (d) As part of this year's program, 26 fruit and nut trees have been planted including:
 - Apricot x 1
 - Apple x 6
 - Avocado x 2
 - Fig x 1

Environmental Sustainability Sub-Committee Minutes of 6th September 2016 Cont'd...

- Lemon x 1
 - Lime x 1
 - Mandarin x 1
 - Nectarine x 1
 - Orange x 2
 - Peach x 1
 - Pear x 6
 - Plum x 2
 - Walnut x 1
- (e) Council coordinated with local residents and these plantings took place on Friday 29th July, in line with Planet Ark's National Schools Tree Day.
- (f) Positive feedback has been provided by participants from this program and some trees have already begun producing fruits and nuts since the program was launched. Additionally, the outcomes of this program strongly link with desired outcomes outlined in the Community Plan – The Futures Paper 2016-2020, including that residents participate in activities that promote physical and mental wellbeing and that the community is engaged in building a sustainable future.

Cr Von Stanke moved it be recommended:

- (a) **The report be received.**
- (b) **Council continue the Edible Plants in Community Spaces program.**

Cr Mutton seconded

Carried

2. HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT – Staff Development – Spark MEFL Conference Summary Report 2016 - Ref. AF11/1164

The Presiding Member reported:

- (a) Over Thursday 18th and Friday 19th of August, Carmel Ron, Environmental Sustainability Officer, attended the inaugural Spark Conference run by Moreland Energy Foundation Limited (MEFL) in Melbourne. The conference was created to ignite local action on climate change and consisted of two days of inspiring panel discussions and workshops geared towards generating action-oriented outcomes.
- (b) The format of the conference included various plenary sessions where all participants attended (which can found at <http://www.mefl.com.au/get-involved/spark-conference/program/>) and 6 workshops of which only 4 could be attended by each participant.
- (c) The sessions which were attended by the Officer included:

1. How can business-as-usual include climate action from SMEs?

The panellists in this session included a mix between local government representatives and business people. The discussion revolved around how best to engage small-medium size enterprises to take steps in improving their energy efficiency as well as investing in renewable energy solutions. The link between positive environmental outcomes and positive economic outcomes was emphasised and the language of successfully engaging businesses was included. The standout point in this session was relating to Environmental Upgrade Agreements (EUAs), and the role council's could play in encouraging businesses to take further steps in the area of energy.

2. How do we unblock the community-owned renewable energy pipeline?

In this session the issues and opportunities relating to community-owned renewable energy projects were discussed. Whilst the legislation was specific to Victoria, the barriers for community groups passionate about taking action in this area were universal. The models which would be used in the future were explained by community members and it was highlighted how important the purchasing costs, financing and feed-in tariffs were on project outcomes. In this respect the interesting point of what actions Council could take to assist in improving outcomes for such projects was considered.

3. How can our housing stock stack up against the challenge of a tougher climate?

This session focussed on links between improving the standard of housing in order to meet both a tougher climate and better health outcomes. The discussion aimed at increasing an understanding of how various building options have direct impacts on energy demands in the future and the negative health impacts of living in inefficient homes. This was especially important for vulnerable residents and relevant to pre-emptively improving physical and mental health in the community. An important note from the discussion included the need to consider investments in building and efficiency to make sure accessibility and affordability were not compromised.

4. Activating the community on urgent climate action

The panellists in this session came from local government, state government and engaged individuals. Each presented their organisation's or their own journey and approach to engaging with the community on climate action. The Darebin Council Solar Savers program was outlined to demonstrate how local government can play a key role in assisting the community to transition to low carbon energy solutions. Passionate individuals emphasised the importance of highlighting the need to take action on climate change through personal stories and grass roots education. The use of story telling was shown to give a voice to the cause without overwhelming people into inaction. This session gave insight into the need for steps to be taken through government and equally to be driven by the community as well.

- (d) Overall the conference provided a platform for discussion and ideas for future investigation. The lessons learnt from the conference were that in every aspect of the community action on climate change was necessary and possible to achieve, and that Local Government has an important role to play in encouraging, supporting, leading and building momentum for such achievements.

Cr Von Stanke moved it be recommended:

- (a) **The report be received and contents noted;**
(b) **Environmental Sustainability Officers further investigate opportunities for transitioning the Council and community to a low carbon future.**

Cr Mutton seconded

Carried

3. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – Project Management – Natural Step Framework and the Community Plan - Ref. AF13/125

The Presiding Member reported:

- (a) The City of Mount Gambier has a history of strong support for Environmental Sustainability. Council's strategic plans over the past ten years have all significantly featured environmental sustainability. The Community Plan strongly features environmental sustainability, with "Our Climate, Natural Resources and Heritage" as one of its four pillars.
- (b) At the 20 May 2008 Council meeting, Council formerly adopted the Natural Step Framework, to be used as a planning tool to enable Council to integrate environmental and social considerations into strategic decisions, as well as daily operations. The Natural Step Framework is Council's measure of what it means to be "environmentally sustainable".
- (c) In order to make sure that Council continues to move towards environmental sustainability, it is necessary to periodically measure progress in relation to the Natural Step. The purpose of this report is to give a snapshot of Council's progress, and outline some of the challenges in achieving environmental sustainability. It is envisaged that this snapshot will also inform the implementation of the Community Plan.
- (d) The Natural Step Framework conditions are:

To become a sustainable society we must...

1. Eliminate our contribution to the progressive build-up of substances extracted from the Earth's crust (e.g. greenhouse gas emissions, toxic metals etc.).
 2. Eliminate our contribution to the progressive build-up of chemicals and compounds produced by society (e.g. plastics, synthetic chemicals etc.).
 3. Eliminate our contribution to the progressive physical degradation and destruction of nature and natural processes.
 4. Eliminate our contribution to conditions that undermine people's capacity to meet their basic human needs.
- (e) The Community Plan states Council's desire to make Mount Gambier a "recognised environmentally sustainable place", and improving the "sustainability of Council operations". To be truly environmentally sustainable Council needs to be meeting the Natural Step Framework conditions outlined above.
 - (f) In recent years Council has undertaken many environmental sustainability projects, and made significant progress towards environmental sustainability. Council is moving in the right direction, but still has a fair way to go to meet the Natural Step conditions.
 - (g) Some of the significant challenges Council faces in moving towards true environmental sustainability include those listed below. This list is not exhaustive, but provides a snapshot of some the challenges when progressing towards environmental sustainability:

Energy

- Reduce electricity use as much as practical.
- Electricity supplied by on site renewable energy.
- Any shortfall in electricity generation to be supplied by green power.

Environmental Sustainability Sub-Committee Minutes of 6th September 2016 Cont'd...

Fuel

- All fleet vehicles run on renewable fuel e.g. electric vehicles, with electricity being supplied by renewable energy.
- All plant run on biodiesel or other renewable fuel source.

Materials

- Only purchase items / materials that are made from renewable resources or 100% recycled materials.
- Eventually eliminate use of synthetic chemicals.

Waste

- Eventually eliminate sending waste to landfill.
- Steps towards no waste: separation, recycling, salvage, composting, deposit schemes. Ultimately any residue (much less than now) incinerated – with heat recovery and electricity generation.

Water

- All run off from roads filtered before being discharged to the aquifer.
- Reduce water use as much as practical.
- All Council buildings capture and use rainwater.
- Use rainwater and grey water on reserves.

Local food

- All catering is supplied using locally grown organic food.
- Emphasis on slightly under catering rather than over catering – to reduce food waste.

Infrastructure

- Council provides best practice cycling and pedestrian infrastructure – to encourage active lifestyles, as per the Community Plan.

Emissions

- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions as much as practical.
- Any residual emissions abated through purchase of carbon offsets.

These actions will take time, and technological development will play a part in many of them. The important thing is that Council is trending towards meeting the Natural Step conditions.

- (h) In order to fulfil the Community Plan all decisions should be made with the Natural Step conditions in mind. The CHAT tool that Council staff have developed is useful in this regard. The tool is used to assess the holistic outcomes of potential projects and programs. This ensures that along with the financial components, the environmental and social components are also considered – leading to more holistically beneficial projects. The tool is easy to use, systematic and measurable.

Cr Von Stanke moved it be recommended:

- (a) The report be received and contents noted;**

Environmental Sustainability Sub-Committee Minutes of 6th September 2016 Cont'd...

Mayor Lee seconded

Carried

4. ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT - Environmental Sustainability Sub-Committee - Reports for Information - Ref. AF12/377

The Presiding Member reported:

(a) Environmental Sustainability Program 2016 - Project Progress

The current table outlining projects for 2016 was attached to the agenda for Members information.

Cr Richardson moved it be recommended:

(a) **The report be received;**

(b) **item (a) as above be received and noted for information.**

Cr Von Stanke seconded

Carried

MOTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE - Nil

The meeting closed at 8:07 a.m.

6 September 2016
AF12/377
SM

CONFIRMED THIS

DAY OF

2016.

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PRESIDING MEMBER