

## **Kim Shirley's Council Report for Tuesday, January 24, 2023**

**Wednesday, January 4th- ReGen Monterey Finance Meeting-** Many interesting topics were included as we started off the year with our finance subcommittee for ReGen Monterey. Many of these topics, as usual, provide an introduction so that staff can take a reading and get feedback from directors in preparation for the general board meeting which will take place later this month on January 20th. The first of these topics was a landfill equipment guidance system. In short, this is a GPS system which would go onto the bulldozers and compactors that spread and compact the waste throughout the landfill. It would allow them to meticulously guide the fill process which would reduce work time, improve the waste build out, protect infrastructure by easily avoiding areas with gas lines, and ultimately, save money and increase the capacity of the landfill. Although this is an expensive system, the benefits far outweigh the costs (in my opinion) and seem to be a much smarter approach than our current system of flagging areas and using "gut instinct" in terms of compaction.

Our second topic was learning more about a group named "Sitos" that wants to do a pilot study for creating "biochar" from our oversized wood waste and potentially, organic waste (biosludge) from M1Water. The process of burning these materials in a high heat environment with limited oxygen, produces a crystal-like structure that sequesters carbon which then can be used in multiple ways. This pilot study will focus on producing biochar that will be used in farming practices as it improves soil quality, but it has the potential to be used in many other areas, too (addition to concrete or areas that require filtration or surface areas for biogrowth, just to name a few). In terms of ReGen, this is an opportunity to learn about new technology that could eventually provide us with another profitable source for our organic waste, while at the same time, providing energy (heat is a by product of the biochar process), sequestering carbon from the planet, and then being able to use that product for greater production or efficiencies in other industries. Besides the resources (land, water, electricity) we'd provide at cost, we'd also be providing them with our organic waste, which seems reasonable in the effort to learn more about this technology. There are multiple entities involved in this pilot project, including our composter, Keith Day. This pilot study would end by June 2024. I look forward to this being brought to the entire board on January 20th.

The rest of the meeting included talking about surplus equipment that will be sold off or donated. We also received an update on the joint feasibility organic waste processing, microgrid, and renewable energy study with M1Water, which should be completed in July or August of this year. It's not always easy to have two different agencies working together on a task, but given the potential for great collaboration, I'm grateful that this continues to move forward.

**Thursday, January 5th- Special Council Meeting-** This meeting was to decide on a process for filling the vacant seat on our council. After receiving a report from City Manager Guertin, we were able to clarify that there were more options for appointment than what was mentioned in the staff report. Even though the staff report only spoke about appointing through the application process, which has been the historical process, we also talked about the ability to do a direct

appointment, which in this instance could have used the election results to do so. After hearing public comments that showed great support for doing a direct appointment based on vote totals which would mean appointing former Mayor Alison Kerr, the discussion came back to the council. With a split vote on the motion to do a direct appointment, our new focus was to appoint through an application process. After much discussion, our final decision was to use our typical application process and include an evaluation tool or rubric for evaluating the candidates.

**Monday, January 9th- Monterey Peninsula Plastic Reduction Coalition Meeting-** Much of this meeting was talking about some of the updates in the area such as the next beach clean up from the Surfrider Foundation or hearing about different businesses offering reusable products and talking about implementation. But the main focus was talking about the Community-Based Social Marketing workshop that's being offered Feb. 7-9, 8:30am-12:30pm. This workshop is meant for people working in areas where they are trying to influence behavior changes that will benefit the environment. It's being sponsored by the Monterey Bay Aquarium, Central Coast Community Energy, in addition to ReGen Monterey, Salinas Valley Recycles, and the Surfrider Foundation.

**Wednesday, January 11th- Special Council Meeting-** This was the council meeting where we were tasked with creating the evaluation tool that will be used in interviews for the vacant council position. Knowing that I'm not comfortable, or frankly very good at creating and editing on the fly, I put some time into creating a tool that integrated some of our city core values with a few of the interview questions that the City of Monterey used for their recent council appointment. I sent this to our City Manager before the meeting and we then used it to review as a potential tool. After much discussion, we eliminated any type of scoring that you'd typically see with a rubric and then we reviewed each criteria, first looking at the criteria (core value or skill) and then reviewing the corresponding question. In the end, after a few edits, we were able to unanimously decide on using this tool, which established the four questions we would ask and the process that will be used for our interviews on the 24th.

**Thursday, January 12th- Sustainable Del Rey Oaks Meeting-** It was great to see our usual members at our first meeting of the year. We were able to discuss upkeep with the Butterfly Garden (an ongoing topic!), which includes our new once a month clean-ups which will happen the second Saturday of every month and will be "sponsored" or organized by one of our members. The first workday will take place Feb. 11th from 10am-12 and will be organized by Scott Waltz. Everyone is invited to bring their gloves and help us as we weed the garden and do a bit of upkeep in Work Memorial as we try and maintain the removal of the french broom. In this meeting we also appointed Karen Harris as our representative for the Communities for Sustainable Monterey County (CSMC) Board (thank you, Karen!) and talked about how to go about sending updates for our website to Anne Canright (thank you, Anne!), which will then be done through CSMC. Lastly, we had a bit of time, so we talked about planning for our Earth Day celebration in April and decided that it might be nice if we could collaborate with CAG, as it's around the same time they had scheduled for their Ice Cream Social. We're hoping we can join forces to create a wonderful opportunity for families and friends to come to the park for some ice cream and to learn more about what they can be doing to protect our favorite planet!

**Saturday, January 14th- Monterey Peninsula Housing Coalition-** This was the first in-person meeting with this group, which included various electeds from the region, as well as city and county staff members. As we all know, housing is a BIG topic with lots of variables, but this group is looking forward to working together to see what can be done to help increase housing on the peninsula that is more affordable to all. The idea is that if we're all on the same page, with everyone working together, we may be able to make some inroads on this daunting topic.