

Kim Shirley's Council Report for Tuesday, June 25, 2024

Thursday, May 16th- DRO Housing and Development Workshop- Thank you to City Manager Guertin for creating this event which allowed our developer of interest, City Ventures, to come and speak to the public about their projects and interests in development. Also in attendance were our contract planners, Denise Duffy and Associates, as well as our economic development advisor, David Zender. I also appreciated a representative from Monterey County being there to talk about their housing plans. It was a nice turnout of residents and so very nice of the Mooselodge to host. I spent much of the time, along with many of the planning commissioners, talking with the developer about their thoughts on our Former Fort Ord property. With the Surplus Land Act, we are obligated to continue with these negotiations and I'm excited to see where they take us, as I do believe we need to investigate all possibilities for our Former Fort Ord property.

Tuesday, May 21st- City Council Meeting- Our council meeting started off with wonderful introductions of our new city staff! A big welcome to Laura Batra and Stacy Matthews! I know they'll be a great addition to our city hall staff as we work towards greater efficiency and relieving our overworked City Clerk (thank you, Karen!). Next, we had a presentation from Monterey County staff regarding their Housing Element. I appreciated their willingness to accept feedback and acknowledgment that there is still work that can be done to make it a more acceptable document.

Next, we had proclamations for Pride Month in June and for Public Works Appreciation Week in May. It's always so nice to appreciate both our LGBTQIA+ community as well as the good work that Ron Fucci and Sherman Low provide for our city. After approving our Consent agenda, we moved on to the first new item of business which was approving the rate increase for our garbage/recycling/compost hauler, GreenWaste Recovery. This is an increase that is allowed under the current contract, which is to be expected around this time each year.

The last new item of business was reviewing the draft budget for FY 2024/25. This was slightly closer to the final draft form from what we saw in our first Finance Committee meeting. Again, the good news is that we have a significant amount of reserves and we'll need to start looking at policies for how to handle the money that's accumulated from both our conservative fiscal decisions and the accumulation of money over the time of COVID. I'm also appreciative that we have a capital improvement plan that will help us as we look toward formalizing our fiscal policies.

Friday, May 24th- ReGen Monterey Board Meeting- This was a fairly typical board meeting, although we did have a few very noteworthy presentations/recognition. After

passing the consent agenda, we had a presentation from our Artists in Residence—Melanie Mena and Michael Acevedo. These are senior-year CSUMB students who come in to create art with the items that are discarded at the landfill. They both created artwork that was a bit out of their norm which allowed them to both celebrate reusing items while expanding their reach as an artist. I always enjoy hearing from our Artists in Residence as it's such a refreshing injection of creative thought into an organization that is often heavy on the science.

Our next presentation was a viewing of the newly produced "Charged Conversations" battery video. This 2-minute-long video explains the dangers of putting batteries in the trash and helps people to learn how to properly dispose of the batteries (put them in a zip-lock bag and leave them on top of your recycling can!). ReGen experiences almost 1 fire/day in our MRF or landfill because of improperly disposed of batteries, which puts our staff and our facility at great risk. Start looking for more outreach on this topic, as parts of this video will be used on social media and the audio will be used for radio.

Our recognition for the day went to our legal counsel, Rob Wellington who has been our legal representation for 50 years! It's incredible to think how long he has been representing our agency and in fact, he presented to the board a fascinating 60-year timeline of the agency. He's seen many changes over his 50 years and we're so grateful for his guidance as we went from just a sanitary landfill to an organization that additionally focuses on recycling, composting, and creating electricity from our landfill gas.

Lastly, we received the draft budget for fiscal year 2024/25 and directed staff to continue down their pathway for final approval in June. We also authorized the staff to schedule a public hearing for a tip fee and other minimum fee increases for our June 21st meeting.

Wednesday, May 29th- FORTAG Groundbreaking- What a beautiful day for a celebration! It's been a long time coming, but I was thrilled to celebrate the official start of construction for the first leg of the Fort Ord Regional Trail and Greenway which will be built in Del Rey Oaks. This trail will provide a safe passage for residents and visitors across Hwy 218 while providing a safe space to walk and bike down Carlton, into our park, and through Work-Memorial Park. It will also enhance these spaces with a safer Carlton/Work Ave intersection, in addition to new tennis courts and an improved Butterfly Garden. Many thanks go to Drs. Fred Watson and Scott Waltz for their many, many hours of advocacy for active transportation, as well as TAMC and all of the partners who have contributed to this project. I can't wait to run and walk on our trail! I hope to meet you out there!

Saturday, June 1st- DRO Pride Flag Ceremony- Thank you, Councilmember John Uy for such a happy celebration! I loved having such a positive event, celebrating love and acceptance at our City Hall. I was honored that Councilmember Uy asked me to speak at this year's celebration. While I was talking to him about the speech, I asked if I could also have my daughter, who is part of the LGBTQIA+ community speak, too. He, of course,

said “yes!” and I was thrilled that my daughter agreed. It was such an absolute pleasure and great joy to share my thoughts about Pride while sharing the spotlight with my courageous daughter. We loved being able to raise the Pride flag together! Thank you again to Councilmember John Uy for putting together such a celebratory and inclusive event. And thank you to Del Rey Oaks for showing your support for diversity and love!

Wednesday, June 5th- ReGen Monterey Finance Committee Meeting- Several items were included in the meeting, which began with the presentation of our budget for FY 2024/25. There was nothing new presented in this budget discussion, but there was a highlight of our estimated cash at the end of the year and the amount it would be decreasing over the next 5 years. We will have to include that topic in our discussions as we discuss fiscal policies (closure/post-closure and unfunded liability policies) and decisions about future regional contracts.

We also had an update on our draft White Paper which will be presented to the board in June. The staff has done an excellent job of incorporating additional sections that will have a greater focus on the purpose of the White Paper in addition to highlighting our business practices over the years. In this discussion, it was very interesting to learn that many of our local landfills generally only have about 5-25 years of life left in them. Given that we’re still at the 100+ year mark, we will increasingly be looked at as a resource for regional waste. Our board will have to make some tough decisions about how we may fold these potential contracts into our fiscal landscape while minding the overall life of our landfill.

Our next item was a discussion of our compost operations agreement with Keith Day. As I’ve mentioned before, ReGen Monterey will be taking over as the State Permit owner of composting, while still leasing out the operations of composting to Keith Day. With the permit being held by ReGen, Keith Day is gaining a longer lease-term agreement. In the end, I think this works best for both parties and everyone has had good support for this change.

It’s amazing, but we’re coming up to the end of the year-long BioChar pilot program. It seems things are going well and staff shared that they will be coming back to the full board to discuss an extension of the pilot project. And lastly, we also talked about potential service needs in San Benito County. Recently, their Board of Supervisors voted not to expand their facility, so it is possible they will be investigating the possibility of bringing material to our landfill. With that knowledge, we directed staff to learn more about their needs and potentially bring back information for a regional contract.

Monday, June 10th- Monterey-Salinas Transit Board Meeting- Please see the MST Board Highlights in our agenda packet. I will note that I did not vote in favor of our newly elected Chair of MST. I felt it was critical to appoint a director who would have no perceived conflict with our SURF! Project, which would leave out Sand City, Marina, and Seaside as potential Chairs since those are the locations of the project. Instead, I was in

favor of appointing Carmel to the Chair position, as they would be able to champion the project without having to recuse themselves from votes. Unfortunately, others felt they wanted to go with what “normally” happens and move the Vice Chair to the Chair position without regard to how this might affect the MST organization as we move forward with the SURF! Project. And with that, Mary Ann Carbone, the Mayor of Sand City was appointed as the new Chair of MST.