

Kim Shirley's Council Report for Tuesday, December 19, 2023

Wednesday, Nov. 8th- League of Women Voters- Lunch and Learn- This meeting was an opportunity to learn about the process of Restorative Justice and how it's being used in Monterey County. Restorative justice is a model that brings both the victim and the offender together to acknowledge accountability, work towards reparation, and offering empathy to those affected so that things can be made as right as possible moving forward. This is not only used in our schools but also in the justice system, with the idea that this will help break the cycle of over incarceration since 89% of those who go through this process do not reoffend upon being released. To learn more about this, the Corrections Program Manager from our county jail, Charles DaSilva facilitated a panel of experts which included someone who worked in the juvenile justice system, our assistant District Attorney, and an assistant Public Defender to talk about this beneficial process. Some of the takeaways for me was that this is a process that brings vulnerability which allows growth for the offenders and a way for the victim to heal. It really seems like such a positive way to change the culture of our institutions. I also learned that our Board of Supervisors instituted a Restorative Justice Commission which is the only one in the State! Especially after learning of the benefits, it made me so happy to hear that our County is committed to this process.

Wednesday, Nov. 8th- Planning Commission Mtg- I attended this Planning Commission meeting as it was the first opportunity to learn more about our comment letter that we received from the State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) on our 6th cycle Housing Element. From the presentation, it seems that our letter was similar to other letters that were received by other jurisdictions. The edits they are asking for do seem overwhelming, but I'm happy that our planner Denise Duffy and Associates is working hard to complete the edits by the State's due date of December 15th. For me, the Housing Element takes time to understand and knowing that the City Council would be covering this the following week, attending this meeting allowed me that extra time to understand the requests, our potential responses, and it gave me a chance to jot down some questions of my own.

Saturday, Nov. 11th- Sustainable Del Rey Oaks Butterfly Garden Workday- What a beautiful day it was to gather for a couple of hours to pull weeds and trim back some plants! Many thanks goes to Sustainable Del Rey Oaks for organizing these workdays and maintaining this parcel of city land. The dedicated volunteers are so hardworking and put in a lot of effort into making this space a lovely place to spend time. With two picnic tables now in this location, I hope others don't forget that this is a special space to bring a lunch and enjoy the natural visitors in the garden (including the cats from the Garden Center!).

Monday, Nov. 13th- Monterey-Salinas Transit Board Mtg- Please see the MST board highlights in our agenda packet.

Tuesday, Nov. 14th- Salvation Army's Annual Red Kettle Kickoff- Wow! Is this an organization that both knows how to have fun and raise a lot of money in one afternoon! I was grateful to be invited to this event by Salvation Army Board Member and DRO resident, Frederica Jones. It took place at the Inn in Spanish Bay and included a lovely lunch (and the BEST cookies for dessert), and the fun antics of KSBW reporters Erin Clark and Dan Green. Let's just say that the span of two hours, we laughed, rang little red bells, participated in an auction, and had table captains running around the ballroom collecting cash in red kettles. There was never a dull moment! Nice music and fun(d) times were had by all. In the end, they raised just over \$140,000! I do appreciate all that the Salvation Army does for our community so it was so fun to participate and see the giving hearts of everyone who attended.

Tuesday, Nov. 14th- City Council Mtg- Similar to the Planning Commission meeting the week before, the Council was given the opportunity to learn more about the comments that we received from the State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) on our draft 6th Cycle Housing Element. Between viewing the Planning Commission meeting and reviewing the comments from HCD, I spent quite a bit of time trying to understand what it is we need to edit in order to successfully meet the Dec. 15th deadline. I asked some clarifying questions, but I also am wondering about some of the larger questions, such as this- in our effort to "Affirmatively Further Fair Housing" (HCD requirement), I'm wondering if there's a program that could help us establish our former Fort Ord property as a high value development in terms amenities, transportation, and outdoor spaces, while also putting most of our affordable housing in this location. I certainly don't want to segregate this community, so I look forward to discussing how we can fully positively integrate any new development into our city. In this housing element, we're also relying on ADU's (accessory dwelling units) so I'll be interested in seeing how the city is able to keep up with the commitment to this type of building. I'm also interested in water and how that will be addressed on the former Fort Ord given the settlement cap of 6,160 residential units that are allowed (some feel that this cap has already been mostly allotted). HCD has been informed of this settlement, but I'm curious how they may respond even as we provide additional information about the water that has been promised to us through the Marina Coast Water District (our water provider for our Fort Ord property). I know we'll have more meetings coming up regarding our edits for the 6th Cycle Housing Element. I'm grateful for our staff's work on this important topic and look forward to more discussions.

Thursday, Nov. 16th- City Finance Mtg- This was our first finance meeting in several months, so it was good to come together to talk about some updates. Besides reviewing our latest financials (budget looks good!), we had three other topics of discussion for this meeting. The first was discussing the possibility of hiring a deputy city clerk in City Hall,

which I'm very supportive of. Our city does a lot with its limited staff and many are working above and beyond what they should actually be required to do. An additional staff person would relieve these burdens and allow staff to focus more on their actual job responsibilities. Next, we discussed the possibility of increasing our Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) through a ballot initiative (would need 50% +1 to pass) which would bring in an estimated \$30,000 of additional revenue. Since we don't have any hotels in our city (yet) this tax would apply to our short-term rentals that we have in our city. Our current TOT rate is 10% and city manager Guertin is proposing a 2% increase which is inline with other jurisdictions (average is approximately 11%). We all agreed this would be worthwhile to further explore. Lastly, we discussed putting out a request for proposals (RFP) for a comprehensive fee study. One has not been done in our city for many years and so it's important to evaluate where we're charging too little or sometimes too much for services within our city. As a city we can't make money, but we certainly want to make sure we're covering our costs. We also all agreed that this would be an important next step.

Friday, Nov. 17th- ReGen Monterey Board Mtg- This meeting marked the last board meeting for our Pebble Beach representative, Leo Laska, who is retiring from the board after 20 years. I sat next to Leo on the dias when I first arrived and I appreciated his wisdom and historical context for the organization. He was also very kind and friendly, which was so welcomed when I was the newbie on the board. He will be missed! Another presentation during this meeting was an update on the feasibility study between ReGen Monterey and M1W to look at renewable energy projects that can be achieved between our two organizations. In addition to looking at solar, wind, and batteries, they're focusing on looking at organics to energy as well as a microgrid that can be built to increase our resilience as vital public services. I think we're all excited about the potential and it will take lots of money to move these projects forward, but it's important work to look at specific projects that can benefit both of our orgnaizations.

Our other agenda items addressed our equipment that we're cycling out of commission, sending either to auction or for scrap metal, and then looking at our purchases which will get us closer to the state requirement of having 100% of the cleanest burning engines by 2026.

We received an update from our Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) for SB 1383 (the organic waste recycling bill) and I was happy to hear that there will be another round of funding from CalRecycle which the TAC is applying for on behalf of the jurisdictions. This grant will amount to \$75,000 for each jurisdiction and will help pay for all the work that's coming from the TAC including helping with the edible food recovery program and the required procurement of compost for each city.

Lastly, the other big item from this meeting was the election of our new board chair and vice chair. Jason Campbell, our current chair and representative from Seaside, was stepping down as he did not run for city council again and was serving out the last year of

his term. I'm excited to report that the nominating committee suggested that I serve as board chair and that Mayor Bruce Delgado serve as vice chair for this next year. This nomination was unanimously approved. I'm grateful and honored to serve as chair on this board. It will be a new challenge for me, but I'm looking forward to it, knowing I will learn a lot from this opportunity while serving an organization that I deeply respect.

Friday, Nov. 17th- LandWatch Luncheon- I left the ReGen Monterey Board meeting and ran to the LandWatch luncheon! As always, it was such a wonderful event since it's a place where I get to see so many people from the community that all support sustainable development with an emphasis on curbing climate change. The keynote speaker for the afternoon was MPUSD Superintendent, PK Diffenbaugh. He delivered a talk that addressed how housing is affecting the school district. There is a significant number of students who are considered unhoused with the district, with no permanent place they can call home. Additionally, MPUSD has a fairly significant number of new teachers that leaves the district every year because of their lack of ability to find affordable housing. His message certainly drove home the need to address housing for both of these sectors. On that note, I know that our 6th cycle Housing Element does address the property that MPUSD owns in Del Rey Oaks and provides that as an opportunity for affordable housing. All in all, this luncheon is always well attended and was a nice opportunity to meet up with others in the community who value sustainability.

Saturday, December 1st- Monterey Bay Braver Angels Alliance- I did not attend this meeting as a DRO Council member, but I'd still like to share this experience as others may be interested in learning more about this positive project. Braver Angels is a non-profit, nationwide, volunteer-led group who's mission is to "Bring Americans together to bridge the partisan divide and strengthen our democratic republic." The idea is that it brings together Democrats and Republicans (hopefully in equal numbers or at least in a 60/40 ratio) so that we can practice the skills necessary for finding common ground and moving forward in a manner that supports thoughtful dialogue and kind interactions. Doesn't that sound great? We are so lucky to have one of our own residents, Deanna Ross who is spearheading the effort. In order to form this "Alliance" there needs to be both a blue leaning and a red leaning co-chair, which was established at the first meeting (Deanna is our blue and Mike Gibbs from PG is our red). In this meeting we shared a word that we associated with America (I chose "freedom"), learned more about Braver Angels, and talked about why we were attending. In listening to the participants, many people are hurting from lost relationships (neighbors, families, friends) and feeling uneasy because of the political division within the country. It was also clear that everyone was genuinely interested in working together and creating a positive place for learning and preserving the democracy we all know and love. So, if you're interested in checking out this positive opportunity, let me know and I'll put you in touch with Deanna. Our next meeting is Saturday, January 6th from 10:30-12:00 pm in the Sam Karas room at MPC. We do have more Democrats than Republicans who attended the first meeting, so we'd especially love to have more red leaning folks join the group. I'm looking forward to participating!

Wednesday, December 6th- ReGen Finance Committee Mtg- We covered two ongoing topics for this meeting which will be the only ReGen meeting for the month. First, we talked about the transfer of the state regulated composting permits which are currently held by our on-site contracted composter Keith Day. Because ReGen has greater capacity for dealing with the ongoing regulations and paperwork associated with the permits and because it provides a level of assurance that we will have greater control of composting on our site, ReGen was happy to take on the responsibility of the permits and Keith Day was thankful for the exchange. And since Keith Day is doing such a great job with the composting, in exchange we are offering him a longer lease contract (15 years with two, 5 yr extensions). Once it's all finalized, it will be a win-win for both organizations.

The second item that we discussed was the white paper that's being produced by staff which will talk about the history of waste disposal in the state and then also provide some history about waste disposal within ReGen. We can all learn from this history (especially since we'll have two new board members in January) and it will help us understand where we're at now in terms of accepting waste not only from our member jurisdictions, but also accepting regional waste from outside the member jurisdictions. This greater understanding will help us as we encounter additional waste contracts in the future and will give us all a better understanding as we move forward in addressing not only trash, but recycling, compost, and energy producing capabilities of the landfill.

Wednesday, December 6th- Special Joint Planning Commission/City Council Mtg- This special meeting was to review the most recent updates and edits to our 6th Cycle Housing Element based on the comment letter we received from the State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). The meeting was focused on the updated policies and programs that are within the Housing Element. I had questions on various topics including housing vouchers, ADUs (accessory dwelling units), and water (to clarify our ability to guarantee water availability on the former Fort Ord property). I also asked about how the city will go about identifying houses in our city that may qualify for rehabilitation funds. In the end, I was happy to see Denise Duffy and Associates and our staff address the topics of concern from the comment letter. I also feel that they did a good job of addressing many of the comments that were brought up from previous meetings about the Housing Element. It also made me realize that we will be working on implementing and solidifying many of these housing policies in the next 8 years (most things will happen within the first two years of having a compliant Housing Element). It's been a lot of work now, but really, it has just begun.

Monday, December 11th- Monterey-Salinas Transit- Administrative Performance Committee- In this meeting we learned that the ridership for MST has increased 25% in the last month. Although we are below our ridership levels that we had pre-COVID, with the Better Bus Network that was implemented 1 year ago, we're really seeing a steady increase each month which is great news. We also received a state legislature update

during this meeting where it was noted that there's a projected deficit coming into the next fiscal year. Besides possibly affecting future funding for transit, it may also impact the already appropriated funds (money that has been set aside for transit in the future). The good news for us is that our CEO/General Manager, Carl Sedoryk was recently appointed to a state-wide transit taskforce that was newly created, so he'll be a great advocate for medium sized transit and those on the central coast. The good news on the federal update was that there is still money available from the Infrastructure bill for transit. No surprise, but the House is looking to drastically cut appropriations for transit giving a \$2 billion difference compared to the desires of the Senate. No doubt, there will be interesting times ahead.

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