

Clean Air Fund Advisory Committee Meeting Summary

May 18, 2017

- I. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 5:05 p.m. by Mike Stubblefield.
- II. Approve summary of the March 2, 2017, meeting: It was moved and seconded approval. The Committee approved the summary without any changes.
- III. Public Comment: There was no public comment on items not related to the agenda.
- IV. Staff Report: Mr. Villegas, Air Pollution Control Officer, provided the staff report. County Counsel confirmed that the Committee was subject to the Brown Act. This means a 72 hour posting of the agenda, and that the approved minutes should be posted on the website. County Counsel indicated that Conflict of Interest forms are not required because the committee serves only in an advisory capacity.
- V. Old Business:
Phase 2 Ventura County APCD Electric Vehicle Rebate Program (Revisit)
 1. **Funding Goal of Battery EVs vs Plug-in Hybrids at least 60/40 in favor of Battery EVs:** Mr. Reach stated that he believed this recommendation was incorrect in that the funding goal favoring Battery EVs should have been established in terms of units (rebates issued) instead of terms of funds allocated. These goals differ because of different rebate amounts (\$2,200 for the Battery EV versus \$1,100 for the Plug-in Hybrids). The existing recommendation would actual provide 57 percent of the rebates to Plug-in Hybrids. After much discussion, the Committee decided to table this motion. Ms. Neiswender indicated that Battery EVs are already favored since the rebate amount is twice as large. Mr. King indicated that there was no need to change this goal at this time. Ms Neiswender requested that APCD staff report back to the Committee on the rebate program by October 1, 2017 (about 3 months after the program start).
 2. **Funding Rebates for Vehicles Base MSRP capped at \$75,000:** Mr. Reach indicated that SUVs are currently the most dominant vehicle category, and that the only current Battery EV (Tesla Model X) should be eligible for this rebate program. The Base MSRP for Tesla Model X is \$83,700. Mr. Stubblefield expressed concern with incentivizing such an expensive vehicle, and that the incentive has limited usefulness to customers who are not moved by such relatively small amounts. Mr. De George echoed these comments by emphasizing that the incentive should be directed at more middle class individuals who are on the fence about purchasing an EV. Mr. Merkord agreed that the incentive should be directed where it can get the most bang for the buck. He was also concerned about a potential issue with public opinion regarding incentivizing luxury vehicles such as the Tesla. The consensus of the Committee was to leave the recommendation at a \$75,000 cap. Mr. Reach withdrew the motion.

3. **Rebate Reservation Expiration at 60 days from Issue Date:** Since staff does not have the resources to track this program in real time or on the weekends, a rebate reservation system with a reasonable expiration period of 60 days is recommended to ensure that rebates will still be available to program participants when they purchase their vehicles. Reservation expirations are necessary to ensure that the program grant funds will not be in limbo indefinitely. A notable example of this issue was a Clean Air Fund grant issued to the fire department back in 2002 for retrofitting a training facility that was never built, and this tied up \$150,000 in grant funds until April 12, 2016 because there was no expiration date assigned to this grant. Mr. Bullard expressed concern that a person with a legitimate purchase order where vehicle delivery is delayed would be ineligible for the rebate. He recommended some flexibility whereby the consumer could request an extension provided that a valid sales contract with deposit has been made. Ms. Neiswender indicated that the reservation form should state in bold large font that the reservation is only valid for 60 days to avoid any misunderstandings. Mr. Reach moved and Mr. Merkord seconded the motion to provide a 60 day reservation expiration subject to the ability for the consumer to apply for an extension if a valid sales contract is produced. The Committee approved this motion unanimously.

VI. New Business:

1. Proposed Demonstration Project: Replacement of Small Off Road Engines with Battery Electric Models for Landscaping/Gardening (The City of Ojai, Grant Request \$60,000)

Johnny Johnson, Mayor of Ojai, and his consultant Steve Colome presented a proposal to replace their gardening and landscaping equipment that is gasoline or diesel powered with battery electric models. The types of equipment include leaf blowers, weed eaters, hedge trimmers, pole hedge trimmers, pole saws, concrete cutters, chainsaws, small and large mowers. According to the Air Resources Board, the emissions from Small Off Road Engines will exceed emissions from light duty vehicles starting in 2020. Since these small engines are not very easily retrofitted with emission control equipment, ARB may consider a complete sales prohibition of this equipment in the future.

The Committee overall was impressed with the proposal and thought the conversion to battery electric gardening equipment was worthwhile. Mr. Merkord expressed some reservations about the adequacy of the equipment for all applications, especially heavy-duty use. His experience with switching to battery electric equipment at his ranch indicated that it worked well for about 80 percent of the applications. The City of Ojai was working closely with the American Green Zone Alliance (AGZA), which was instrumental in switching the gardening equipment to battery electric at Garfield Park in South Pasadena.

The Committee discussed the pros and cons of a limited equipment swap vs. a wholesale replacement of the city's Public Works gardening equipment. The feeling was that the gardeners would want to stick with the old equipment because they have more familiarity

and know its capabilities. Therefore, the Committee seemed to prefer a total swap out of all their equipment. The Committee also discussed the risk to the city if the battery electric equipment failed, and the City would have to buy new equipment if the grant required them to dispose or recycle their existing gasoline-powered equipment. Mr. King indicated that the grant amount was relatively small, and the Committee would not assume any of the risk if the equipment failed. Ms. Neiswender made a motion to commit the \$60,000 to this project provided certain conditions are met. These include recycling or destroying the old gasoline engines, annual reports, and replace worn out equipment with battery electric models.

Since the conditions for any grant agreement for this project would need to be approved by the Ojai City Council, it was suggested that the Committee make the financial commitment of \$60,000 and allow APCD staff to negotiate any restrictions with the city. The negotiated settlement would be brought back to the Committee for a final recommendation. This motion was made by Ms. Neiswender and seconded by Mr. Stubblefield, and the vote was unopposed.

2. Proposed Electric Vehicle DC Fast Charger (Santa Clara River Valley)

The Committee discussed the potential Electric Vehicle DC Fast Charger to be located in the Santa Clara River Valley. There are currently no fast chargers between Ventura and Santa Clarita. Mr. Reach suggested that a site in Fillmore would be suitable to fill the Highway 126 charging infrastructure gap. Staff suggested that a potential site at the Todd Road Jail in Santa Paula might be a feasible project, which would involve upgrading existing Level 2 Chargers to a DC Fast Charger. This county facility already has photovoltaic solar panels, which might provide the needed power for this charging station. The problem with this facility is the lack of amenities, and it is not easily accessible to Highway 126.

Staff contacted the City of Fillmore to determine if there was any interest in moving forward with a replacement of their legacy charging station at the city hall parking lot. Although the City Manager, David Rowlands, indicated interest by the city, his selection for a project liaison was Claire Faith, a relatively new employee with the Parks and Recreation Department. A more effective choice might have been someone in their Public Works Department. Staff contacted Ms. Faith to determine next steps. Her advice was to locate a DC Fast Charger at the Balden Towne Plaza (owned by Watt Companies) with a VON's grocery store on Highway 126 in Fillmore. Staff has contacted the site owner to see if there was any interest in hosting an EV charging station, and we have not heard back. Since this potential project is not ready to move forward at this time, the Committee tabled the discussion until there was more of a commitment from a Fillmore site owner.

3. Review Clean Air Fund Advisory Committee Operating Procedures and Membership Interest Group Allocation

The Committee decided to form a Subcommittee to draft Bylaws and Project Selection Criteria, and bring it back to the Committee for discussion and approval. Mr. Reach, Mr. King, and Mr. Bullard volunteered to serve on this subcommittee. The next committee

meeting would be used to discuss the draft bylaws and the counterproposal from the City of Ojai on the project to electrify their landscaping equipment. Mr. Reach proposed that the Committee should do fundraising to supplement the limited grant funding that is available from the annual income generated by the permanent endowment. It was decided that this issue should be reviewed by the Subcommittee for the next meeting.

- VII. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.
 Prepared by:
 Stan Cowen, Air Pollution Control District Staff

		City of Ojai Demonstration Project to Convert Gasoline/Diesel Gardening Equipment to Battery Electric (\$60,000 Commitment)		
Member	Attendance	Moved	Second	Vote
Bullard	P			Y
DeGeorge	P			Y
King	P			Y
Kromka	A			
Logan	P			Y
Meeker	P			Y
Merkord	P			Y
Montoya	A			
Neiswender	P	X		Y
Reach	P			Y
Stubblefield	P		X	Y

Attendance – P (present),A(absent),E(excused)

Vote - Y(yes), N(no), A(abstain)

APCD Staff:

Mike Villegas
 Chuck Thomas
 Stan Cowen

Guests:

Johnny Johnston, Mayor of Ojai
 Steven Colome, EcoPas
 Gene Rubin (EV Enthusiast)
 Gil Good, EV Advocate