



# City of Emeryville

INCORPORATED 1896

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## **Sustainability Committee Approved Minutes**

Regular Meeting, Monday, May 11, 2020 at 4:00pm

7.1 Call to Order 4:01

7.2 Roll Call

7.3 Ally Medina, Chair, Scott Donahue, Member; Nancy Humphrey, Matt Anderson, Mary Grace Houlihan, Staff; Lina Gonzales, Waste Management of Alameda County, Ron Freund, Emeryville Resident

7.4 Public Comment

Ron Freund's letter to the Committee was read in part:

"May 2020

From: Ron Freund, Emeryville Resident

To: Sustainability Committee

Re: Request for Items to be placed on the Agenda

According to the City of Emeryville website: (as of 4-30-2020)

SUSTAINABILITY includes,

- Environment: People live within the limits of nature, protect and build natural assets, and maintain resources for future generations.
- Economy: Economic activity should serve the common good,
- Equity: All people should have access to an equitable distribution of resources;

The vision of the Emeryville community is "to live within means that do not compromise the ability of future generations in Emeryville to enjoy ...a livable city." Among the steps cited are "*Green construction*

*Techniques and lifestyles with low ecological impacts.”*

Buildings are critical as they generate nearly 40% of annual global GHG emissions. However, the current City General Plan is deficient in dealing with this crisis. It states that,

*“Heights greater than 100 feet are only permitted for buildings that meet specific criteria...”*

But none of the criteria directly mention low ecological impact. As a result, the City is considering permitting the construction of massive Skyscrapers and office buildings.

What will they be built of? Concrete, steel and glass. Why? When one builds higher than 100', more concrete and steel is required to support the weight.

Concrete and steel are high embodied energy materials due to the energy required to produce them, such as mining the ore, heating and shaping products, and transporting a relatively heavy material. From AIA Journal, *“many building materials including steel, concrete, and glass contribute large quantities of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere—resulting in poor environmental performance—”*

An article in the Guardian points out that *“After water, concrete is the most widely used substance on Earth. If the cement industry were a country, it would be the third largest CO2 emitter in the world behind China and the US.”*-(2-19)

Leading architects and engineers are calling for Glass covered skyscrapers to be banned not just because they are difficult and expensive to cool, but also as the Royal Institute of British Architects states *“if you're using glass facades you need a lot of energy to cool them down which equates to a lot of carbon emissions.”*

It's a vicious cycle: we build a glass skyscraper, then have to cool that glass skyscraper, which uses energy, which contributes to the climate crisis, which increases the temperature. The hotter weather makes the glass building even harder to cool.

So I suggest the following for adoption by the Sustainability Committee and referral for Council action:

- 1) Incorporate GHG emissions into the standards required for Hi-Rise construction including minimal use of concrete, steel and glass;
- 2) Link new construction to the state standards for timber and low GHG construction building heights;\*

- 3) Adopt a LEED Platinum standard for new construction;
- 4) Prohibit the use of fossil fuel energy sources in new buildings.

According to the City's CAP, "*Climate change is the greatest environmental challenge of the 21st century, posing a threat to our resources, jobs and health.*"

If we are **really serious** about the Climate crisis (and the ramifications of the pandemic), we should take these steps.

*As the CAP states,*

*"Climate change presents huge opportunities for creating a more equitable zero carbon world. Emeryville has an unparalleled opportunity to make changes in ways that benefit all residents."* Let's embrace the opportunity.

\*Timber based construction in other cities has reached 10-12 stories.

Ron Freund, May 2020

Mr. Freund also asked about pass-through grants for recycling/waste programs to community groups – staff will follow up.

7.5 March 9, 2020 Meeting Action Minutes Approved

7.6 Action Items

7.7 Consideration of Reach Code Elements on Photovoltaic Installation and Building Materials

Proposing the following for discussion at Council:

New construction:

Residential-only construction electric only meeting current electrical code (no fossil fuels).  
Staff to investigate Berkeley's Public Interest Exemption application and process.

Fuel:

- 1) All-electric construction meeting current electrical code requirements; or
- 2) Mixed-fuel construction with natural gas use, subject to the following additional requirements:
  - a. All-electric readiness, meaning the inclusion of electrical infrastructure to enable a future discontinuation of natural gas use
  - b. Improved energy efficiency (10% over code or 10 Energy Design Rating points (as described in CALGreen))

#### Solar:

Recommend additional requirements for installation of PV in all new buildings. Staff to investigate code limitations on height, if any, and the exemption/feasibility process.

#### Building materials:

1. Require the use of low-carbon concrete in new construction (Marin approach) – discussed difference between Marin and Berkeley approaches.

#### 7.8 Allow or incentivize Cross-Laminated Timber up to 18 stories

This matches the ICC approved (but not yet adopted) code. Oregon has adopted it to be in place sooner than ICC. We'd be putting this in place to become effective when the legislature allows it. It is already allowable through alternative means and methods process.

#### 7.9 Adopt IRC Appendices R and S for straw bale and light straw-clay construction

#### Existing buildings:

1. Require the installation of a heat pump space heater system if a new HVAC system with AC is installed.
- 7.10 Require electrification-ready panel installation when panel is replaced.

#### Mechanical Code:

Require range hoods in new mixed-use development with natural gas stoves?  
Staff to gather further information on this requirement in Berkeley.

#### 7. Information Items

##### 7.1 Legislative Activity/Post-COVID Stimulus Planning

- LGC, StopWaste, BayRen, others working to frame funding in a positive way
- Working on developing shovel-ready specs for solar & storage at key City facilities (CM Donahue recommends Art Center to be included)
- Keeping an eye on other possible shovel-ready projects including City Hall BFL

##### 7.2 StopWaste Update

- Doing GHG inventories again for jurisdictions
- Working with EBCE (and other CCAs) on heat pump water heater incentives

- Staff have been very helpful in developing the reach code proposals
- CM Donahue very grateful for StopWaste's support

### 7.3 East Bay Community Energy Update

- Big program effort for resilience in face of PSPS (expected for 10 years)
- Doing outreach on low-income rates
- Suspended collections, not returning customers to PG&E for non-payment, instituting budget billing, donated to meals on wheels and AC Food Bank,
- Grants to cities
- Offering induction cooktop kits to cities (do we have a contact at the commissary kitchen? (no))
- We're still eligible for \$10K toward reach codes

### 7.4 Grant Opportunities

- Working with Ryan O'Connell on Village Greens – potential opportunity for a quick-build grant
- Applying for an Urban Greening grant for this project as well

### 7.5 Check-Ins On Other Programs and Projects

- WMAC as of 5/20 will be sorting and handling all materials (except bulky waste; still on hold)

### 7.6 Future Agenda Items

- Discuss LEED Platinum standard for construction – what that would mean

### 7.7 Announcements / Member Comments

- Refer to Public Works Committee and/or Community Development issues related to designing the built environment to protect against disease transfer
- How to update the General Plan to include more sustainability; the Climate Action Plan is referenced in the General Plan, and will be updated in the next few years, and could be done without doing the whole General Plan
- Adjournment 4:47