

**AB 617 Community Air Protection Program
Minutes of the Steering Committee Meeting
Heber Community Center
Heber, CA.
October 2nd, 2019**

Chair of Meeting: Matt Dessert (Alternate: Reyes Romero)

Facilitator: Amy Ramos & Daniela Flores of Harder Co.

I. Attendance

Luis Olmedo, Comite Civico del Valle, **Mersedes Martínez**, Community Corridor; **Diahna García Ruiz**, Community Corridor; **René Felix**, Community Corridor; **Blake Plourd**, Community Corridor; **Sergio Cabañas**, Community Corridor; **Aide Fulton**, Community Corridor; **Mary Salazar**, Community Corridor; **John Hernandez**, Community Corridor; **Jose Celaya**, Community Corridor;

Alternates:

Reyes Romero; Christian Torres; Rosa Guerrero; Bob Fisher; Chris Gomez Wong; Irene Garcia; Juan Villa; Sandra Mendivil; Chris Wong; Michael Moore; Paul Monarrez;

II. Welcome and Opening Remarks by CSC Members

Daniela Flores welcomed all the attendees and mentioned that they were going to discuss the Community Emissions Reduction Program. She mentioned all the agencies had been thoughtful in their responses after going through all the committee members comments. She also said they had all received an updated draft of this plan and that she hoped they had had the time to review it in order to act on this item today. She went over a few logistic indications including a reminder that they were as always, offering interpreting services for those who needed it.

Reyes Romero thanked everyone in attendance for being there. He said this day was a very important day as they had recently adopted their Air Monitoring Plan, and that during this session they were going to go through the second phase of adapting their Community Emissions Reduction Program. He closed saying he had to thank the members of the committee who had made this possible.

Luis Olmedo said this was a historical moment, but efforts like this one are not seen every day. He also said he wanted to acknowledge all the hard work that everybody puts in, not only the members of the committee, but also the consistent participation from the audience and all those who have been actively engaged in providing comments. He said all the work that went into putting this together has gotten them to where they were.

Aide Fulton said she wanted to mention having invited Doreen Johnson from Evaluation and Accountability of the Imperial Office of Education hoping they could learn from her about asthma at schools as well as which schools would benefit the most from the Air Filtration System Program for Schools.

Diahna Garcia said she wanted to make sure that they were keeping up with all their open seats. She said she was aware of two openings from the Heber corridor, and that she would be submitting a list of names to be considered to fill these openings.

John Hernandez asked if they had any information with regards to the performance of the purple monitors being used in Mexicali since they were entertaining the idea of using those types of monitors at their corridor.

Daniela Flores asked for anyone who could answer John's question to please do so during closing remarks.

III. Public Comment Period

Ray Askins asked to have the budget for this committee presented at the next meeting.

Reyes Romero thanked him for his comment and said it had been noted.

Johnny Sample said that after having done some research on plants that reduce carbon capturing, he had gone to the nursery to bring a sample of bamboo, which is probably the best plant in the world to reduce the carbon capture.

Daniela Flores read a comment submitted by Edith Moreno, Environmental Policy Advisor at the Southern California Gas Company. The Gas Company recommended that the proposed mitigation strategy to purchase 5 electric school buses be revised to include the option of purchasing new near zero compressed natural gas fuel school buses as this would be a lower cost option for reducing emissions.

IV. Discussion Item

Meeting Procedures Review – Making Motions; Daniela Flores of Harder Co.

Brief refresher to review the proper motion procedures for the CSC

V. Action Items

Committee to Approve and Adopt the Community Emissions Reduction Program

Daniela Flores mentioned everyone had been provided with the current draft of the Community Emissions Reduction Program. She explained that as they knew, this would be approved by the Air Resources Board (ARB) in January and that after the approval they could review the document and make any additions to it. She also explained that the version they were about to approve would be the version to be submitted to the Imperial Board as well as to the ARB.

Reyes Romero said that before asking for a motion for this program to be approved, he would like to congratulate everyone for having gotten to this point. He added that the plan that they were approving at this meeting gives power to the community to implement programs to reduce air emissions in their neighborhoods and community. He also said he wanted to emphasize that this plan addresses all planning elements laid out by CARB on the Community Air Protection Blueprint, which is a guidance document developed by CARB in order to help develop the local community air protection programs. He also stated that the plan they were approving on this meeting puts emphasis on community focused actions that go beyond the local, regional and statewide air quality programs already in place. He also reminded them that this is a living document that can be modified as needed.

Luis Olmedo said the journey they undertook to get to this point has not been easy, and that they were reaching a significant milestone through getting the committee to vote on this document in order to then pursue the next steps that will make a difference in this Valley.

Reyes Romero proceeded to ask for a motion to approve the Community Emissions Reduction Program.

Sergio Cabañas made the motion, it was seconded by **Diahna Garcia**.

Reyes Romero asked if there were any comments for discussion before proceeding with the vote.

John Hernandez said he echoed the sentiments of the two chairs in view of where they were at and that as a community member, he knows it is very difficult to bring to the table some of the issues that concern their community in order to address them. He finished saying he was glad this document is a living document that can be changed as things continuously change, but that none the less, in his opinion, this is a great start.

Reyes Romero proceeded calling for a vote using roll call. After voting on this, the motion was passed, and the Emissions Reduction Program as distributed on September 26th was approved.

VI. Agency Updates

Belen Leon said the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for the Calexico High School bus and staff parking lot paving project would be held on October 4th at 9:00 AM at the Calexico High School premises on Andrade Ave. She also mentioned that the Community Emissions Reduction Program for the El Centro, Heber, and Calexico corridor has to be presented to the Board of Supervisors and this would take place on October 8th at 10:00 AM at the Imperial County Board Chambers located on Main Street in El Centro, and she extended an invitation to all the steering committee members who could and would like to attend to show their support when they call this item up for presentation. She informed that a CERP Community Meeting by the California Air Resources Board would be held on November 13th during one of their regular committee meeting sessions to be held at the Imperial Valley College Campus from 5:30 to 7:30 PM. She concluded informing that the approval of the Community Emissions Reduction Program by the California Air Resources Board would take place at the Old Eucalyptus House in the Imperial Valley on January 15th from 5:30 to 7:30 PM.

Miguel Hernandez from Comite Civico del Valle extended an invitation for everyone to attend their Annual Environmental Justice Summit to be held on November 1st and 2nd at the Imperial Valley College Campus. He mentioned they had given them flyers with all the registration details.

VII. Agenda Topics for Next Meeting

Reyes Romero reiterated that their next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, November 13th and it would be held at the Imperial Valley College Campus from 5:30 to 7:30 PM.

Christian Torres reminded everyone that they were going to have a Community Emissions Reduction Program workshop conducted by the California Air Resources Board during the first hour of this meeting. He mentioned that during the second hour they would be working on updates on the monitoring plan including a timeline update as well as the status of where this plan currently is.

VIII. Closing Remarks

Reyes Romero said he would like to thank each one of them for their participation as well as **Luis Olmedo**, their partner from Comite Civico del Valle for making this happen. He said he hoped everyone understood how important this is as they are bringing resources in order to implement programs to reduce emissions at the local level.

Luis Olmedo said there is still a lot more to do, but this is a great step forward and he is looking forward to what comes next.

John Hernandez said he was a part of the Imperial County Agency on Aging, and he mentioned they were working on the first binational senior citizen festival to be held in Mexicali on January 18th and that if anyone was interested on this or on finding out more about the kind of lifestyle senior citizens demand, to please feel free to talk to him.

Mary Salazar said she wanted to thank the public for their attendance and participation in general at these meetings.

Chris Gomez Wong also thanked everyone's participation. He said he feels this is just the very beginning of what they need to do as a community and that they need to translate this effort into action.

Aide Fulton said she considered this a historical moment and she thanked the public without whom this could not be possible.

Diahna Garcia Ruiz said she just wanted to thank everyone for being there and she encourage everyone not to let this be the end of their advocacy.

Rene Felix said for him it is a privilege to be there with them. He said he might have been the last member to join this committee and that he wanted to start with a testimonial from his life to show them the reason why he had finally decided to be a part of this. He went on saying that his daughter was with him at this meeting and that approximately 20 months ago, she had been diagnosed with cancer. He stated that they live as they all know at a region, which is one of the most polluted in the world, their asthma and cancer rates are amongst the highest, and being part of this committee and having the opportunity to contribute ideas in order to improve the quality of life for their community for him it is the very least that he can do. He said he was a man of faith and he thanks God as a result because in the last 6 months his daughter has not required treatment, but out there we know that air pollution is still one of the most horrendous in the world and that is why I decided to become a part of this committee. He said everyone knows it is a very long road, but that they had taken the first step and that was most important now is that they count with that combination of financial resource and human resource come together and that in that sense he wanted to recognize the work that Luis, Matt and their organizations and agencies had done and for that commitment they have taken upon their shoulders. He concluded saying that he encourages everyone moving forward and that he was very pleased to see this first step because it represents the first palpable effort that they can show their communities and he was very glad to be a part of it.

Blake Plourd said he wanted to say he appreciates the efforts done to make the meetings run a little bit more professionally. He mentioned he thinks this inspires confidence in both the people outside watching as well as the people on the board itself and he said he thinks they had made a lot of improvements at this over the last couple meetings. He said he was glad the CERP had been approved, but the real history is going to be made in the projects to come as a result from this. He said they must be very responsible with the funds allocated for this program and work hard in order to provide a road for more of these types of projects in the future.

Sergio Cabañas said he appreciated Mr. Felix sharing his personal experiences and personal battles. He said it was almost going to be a year since he was invited to become a part of this committee. He said they must keep moving forward in order to address the issues at hand.

A pediatrician attending the meeting commented that they needed funds for many things in the Imperial Valley, including funding for more flag programs and indoor exercise capabilities, among other things. She said it was devastating to see patients suffering from asthma and other lung issues due to the air quality in the region. Therefore, she said she would like to thank them for what they were doing and said this was just the beginning.

Luis Olmedo told this doctor not to give up on them. He said he was hopeful that the way this program and this committee were set to aim for solutions.

Reyes Romero said with this they would adjourn the meeting and invited everyone to have some cake to celebrate the approval of their Community Emissions Reduction Program.

Meeting Adjourned.

