

Environmental Quality Commission



REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Date: 3/18/2026
Time: 6:00 p.m.
Location: Teleconference and
City Hall Downtown Conference Room, 1st Floor
701 Laurel St., Menlo Park, CA 94025

A. Call To Order

Chair McKenna called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

B. Roll Call

Present: Angiel, Hedley, Hernandez, Hill, Kissel, McKenna, Meyer
Absent: None
Staff: Sustainability Manager Rachael Londer, Management Analyst II Ori Paz

C. Public Comment

None.

D. Regular Business

D1. Approve the February 26, 2026, Environmental Quality Commission meeting minutes (Attachment)

ACTION: Motion and second (Hedley/ Kissel), to approve the February 26, 2026 Environmental Quality Commission meeting minutes, passed unanimously.

D2. Presentation from community engagement ad hoc subcommittee (Attachment)

Chair McKenna and Commissioners Kissel and Meyer made a presentation (Attachment).

The Commission received clarification on the proposed objectives of the Community Climate Ambassador Team (CCAT).

- Jocelyn Anaya Galvan spoke in support of community stakeholder engagement, loss-avoidance framing for messaging and Menlo Spark's continued commitment to supporting community engagement efforts.

The Commission discussed options for the initial steps and responsibilities for the establishment of the CCAT, organizing kickoff meetings, identifying stakeholder groups, outreach, partnering with local organizations, potential challenges based on past engagement efforts and potential for a new subcommittee to develop a recommendation for City Council.

D3. Zero Emissions Landscaping Equipment (ZELE) ordinance implementation update (Attachment)

Sustainability Manager Londer made the presentation (Attachment).

The Commission discussed the third phase of the ZELE voucher and options for early engagement and development of a voucher for lawn mowers.

E. Reports and Announcements

E1. Reports and announcements from staff and Commissioners

Sustainability Manager Rachael Londer reported out on the Bay Area Regional Energy Network (BayREN) permit simplification effort for heat pump water heaters, community funding program applications due March 5, BayREN workshop March 18, City Council priority setting workshop March 21, Efficiency And Sustainable Energy (EASE) Home Program, advisory body recruitment, Love our Earth Festival April 25, recognition by Peninsula Clean Energy (PCE) and Sustainable San Mateo County for amendments to the building code.

Management Analyst II Ori Paz reported out on the PCE GovPV solar.

Commissioner Kissel reported on the La Entrada survey closing March 31.

F. Informational items

F1. 2025-26 Environmental Quality Commission work plan (Attachment)

G. Adjournment

Chair McKenna adjourned the meeting at 7:25 p.m.

Management Analyst II Ori Paz

Community Engagement Ad Hoc Subcommittee final report

Commissioner Kissel, Chair McKenna, Vice Chair Meyer

March 18, 2026

Agenda

- Scope
- Strategy
- CCAT model
- Steps to success
- City & community resources
- Stakeholders
- Messaging & tools
- Other considerations
- EQC discussion & recommendation

Scope

Research potential engagement with a comprehensive set of stakeholders and explore potential of a community taskforce with purpose of aligning City/community-wide efforts to achieve climate action plan (CAP) goals

Strategy

- Form “Community Climate Ambassador Team - CCAT”
 - Organized group of community volunteers and stakeholder group leaders, in partnership with City of Menlo Park, who educate residents, businesses and building owners, to promote sustainability and implement City of Menlo Park Climate Action Plan (CAP) strategies
 - Encourage active participation and potential leadership roles from:
 - Current and former EQC commissioners
 - Community group leaders
 - Business and building owners
 - Local contractors

CCAT model

- Kick-off meetings - two dates with in-person and hybrid options
 - Climate Action Plan (CAP) overview and progress
 - Inspire action (each stakeholder group determines best messaging)
 - Discuss solutions, actions, and barriers by stakeholder group & CAP goal (buildings, transportation, and adaptation)
 - Explore best practices for stakeholder group engagement and action
 - Define stakeholder group leader roles, responsibilities, and goals
 - Create CCAT steering committee
- Implement engagement and action phase of stakeholder engagement (one year) - structure informed by kick-off meeting input
 - Possible structure
 - Stakeholder leaders design & hold meetings with their stakeholder group
 - Stakeholder groups establish goals, actions, and metrics (align with CAP)
 - Quarterly progress meetings with stakeholder leaders and steering committee (updates on available resources and technologies)
- Annual steering committee meetings to evaluate effectiveness of program

Steps to success

- Step 1 - Form **organizing committee** to create program for initial meeting
 - Organizing committee - staff, EQC commissioners, and community based organizations
 - Identify all potential stakeholder groups
 - Identify best messaging to maximize participation at kick-off meeting
- Step 2 - City **promotes** kick-off meeting and organizing committee performs targeted **outreach** to key stakeholder groups
- Step 3 - Organizing committee (with input from key stakeholder groups) **establishes two Community Climate Ambassador Team kick-off meeting dates**
- Step 4 - **Host kick-off meetings**
 - Establish **steering committee**
- Step 5 - **Stakeholder group meetings** held over next twelve months
 - Establish schedule for **quarterly steering committee progress report meetings**
- Step 6 - **Annual steering committee meeting** to evaluate success and make programmatic changes as needed

City and community resources

- Effort led by community volunteers with City partnership
 - City may provide:
 - Facility for meetings
 - Promotion through City channels
 - Materials for kick-off meeting
 - Staff resources (budget time for organizing)
 - Funding
 - Community volunteers/orgs may provide:
 - Organization and leadership of meetings
 - Promotion through organization channels
 - Funding (possible community grant funds in future)

Potential stakeholders

- Residents representing all districts, income levels, and ages
- Small business owners & associations
- Large corporations
- Property owners (commercial, multifamily apartment and condominium, single family)
- School districts, schools and Parent Teacher Associations (PTA), youth/students
- Youth/adult sports leagues
- PG&E
- Peninsula Clean Energy (PCE)
- Realtors/realty associations
- Elected city leaders
- City staff
- General contractors, electricians and plumbers

Potential stakeholders

Community organizations (included but not limited to - in alphabetical order):

- Chamber San Mateo County
- Climate Resilient Communities
- Belle Haven Action
- Belle Haven Empowered
- Belle Haven Community Development Fund
- Downtown Menlo Fund
- Felton Gables Homeowners Association
- Home Electrifiers Group (NextDoor)
- Junior League
- Menlo Spark
- Menlo Together
- Sharon Heights Community Association
- 350 Silicon Valley

Messaging and tools

- Messaging
 - Economic benefits (potentially save on operating, health, and home insurance costs)
 - Cost of action will be far less than the cost of inaction (i.e. rising costs of insurance, damages from extreme weather events, healthcare, and food)
 - Jobs (clean energy workforce)
 - Investing in our collective future
 - Health: cleaner indoor & outdoor air
 - Safety: no explosions or gas leaks
 - Climate: reduce greenhouse gas emissions
 - Togetherness: build community and support neighbors

Messaging and tools

- Tools
 - City of Menlo Park - [Sustainability](#)
 - Information and resources
 - San Mateo County Sustainability Department - [Let's Go Electric](#)
 - Toolkit and campaign assets available
 - City of San Mateo - [Electrify San Mateo](#)
 - Information and resources
 - [Peninsula Clean Energy](#)
 - Technical resources and financial incentives
 - [Peninsula Conflict Resolution Center](#)
 - Possible facilitation services to provide framework for groups to work together more effectively and efficiently to achieve desired objectives

Other considerations

- EQC work plan to include annual update from staff on community engagement
- Sustainability team to enhance communications (videos)
- Role of other City of Menlo Park commissions as possible “ambassadors” to engage broader community in climate action?
- Assess CAP goals
 - How to include “food” as a possible additional area of focus

EQC discussion and recommendation

- EQC commissioners and sustainability staff discussion
- EQC recommendation



Zero Emissions Landscaping Equipment (ZELE) ordinance implementation update

Sustainability staff



Agenda

- Background
- Outreach
- Voucher program
- Enforcement
- Neighboring city ordinances
- Next steps



Background

- July 11, 2023, City Council:
 - Adopted ZELE requirement that prohibits using gas powered landscaping equipment due to its negative impacts on health, and noise and air pollution
 - As of July 1, 2024: gas-powered leaf blowers and string trimmers are prohibited
 - Beginning Jan. 1, 2029: gas-powered walk behind lawnmowers, hedge trimmers and chainsaws are prohibited
 - Hours of allowable operation remain the same for electric powered equipment
 - Violations are the property owner's responsibility.
 - Approved electric gardening equipment rebate program
 - Directed staff to provide public outreach



Background

- March 2025: EQC recommended staff to use remaining rebate funds for a final round of the existing voucher program
- July 1, 2025: Enforcement began



Outreach and education

- Continuous updates to ZELE webpage
- Weekly letters sent to reported addresses in ACT Menlo Park
 - 669 reports, all responded to with letters
 - Active July 2024 to June 2025
- Continuously distribute yard signs to residents



GAS IS OUT. ELECTRIC IS IN.

Gas leaf blowers and string trimmers
are prohibited in Menlo Park.
*Sopladoras de hojas y cortadoras de hilo a
gasolina están prohibidas en Menlo Park.*

 menlopark.gov/ZELE 

Outreach and education

- Citywide bilingual postcard sent July 2025
- Weekly Digest reminders July and August 2025
- Continuous tabling at community events
- Posted ZELE banner downtown Jan. to Feb. 2026
- Reminder letters to landscapers March 2026



ELECTRIC GARDEN TOOLS ARE REQUIRED IN MENLO PARK
Gas-powered leaf blowers and string trimmers are banned. Learn more at menlopark.gov/ZELE.

SE REQUIEREN HERRAMIENTAS DE JARDÍN ELÉCTRICAS EN MENLO PARK
Sopladoras de hojas y cortadoras de hilo a gasolina están prohibidas. Obtenga más información en menlopark.gov/ZELE.

ELECTRIC  

GAS  

Property owners are liable for violations and may incur monetary penalties.
Los propietarios serán responsables por infracciones y podrán incurrir en multas monetarias.



menlopark.gov/ZELE

Voucher program

- Launched third (final) round of voucher program with remaining funds ~\$6,000
 - 3 residents
 - All Belle Haven residents
 - 5 businesses operating in Menlo Park
 - 1 Menlo Park
 - 2 East Palo Alto
 - 1 Mountain View
 - 8 total vouchers issued



Enforcement

- Citation enforcement began July 1, 2025 after 1-year period of education and outreach
- Reports can be made to non-emergency police by phone
- All calls responded to
 - If homeowner present, officer can cite
 - PD will speak and educate the landscaper
- If no one present, door hanger left
- Most interactions result in education rather than citation

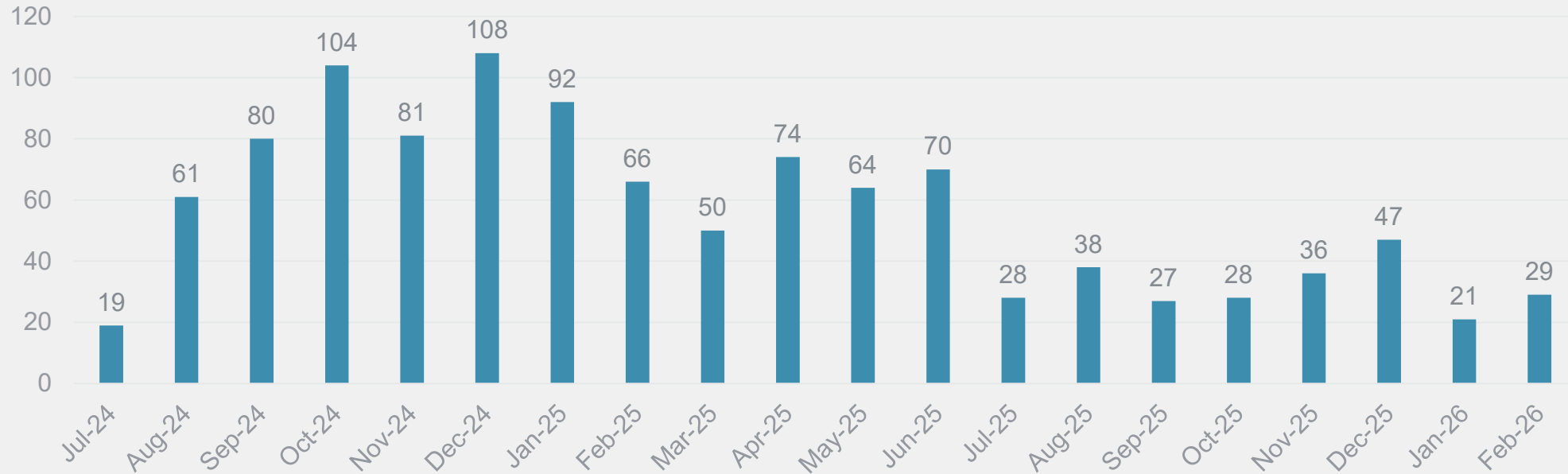




Enforcement

- Reports to date: 1123
 - ACT Menlo Park, 669
 - Phone reports, 454
 - Average one call per day in last 6 months

Reports since implementation



Enforcement

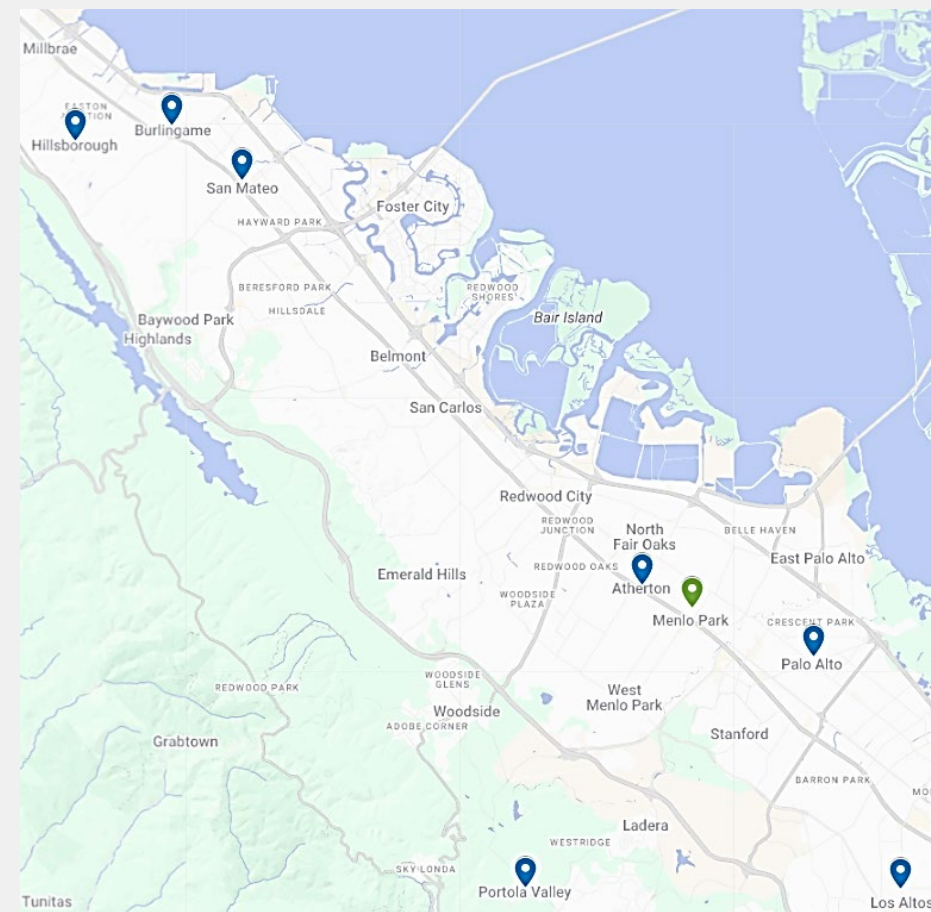
- 3 ZELE details with Sustainability and police department
- Provided in-person education
 - June 4, 2025 (pilot)
 - Oct. 15, 2025
 - 13 landscapers using gas spoken to
 - 1 landscaper observed using electric
 - March 10, 2025
 - 4 landscapers using gas spoken to
 - 3 landscapers observed using electric





Neighboring city ordinances

- Several neighboring cities have existing or recently adopted ZELE ordinances
 - Atherton
 - Burlingame
 - Hillsborough
 - Los Altos
 - Palo Alto
 - Portola Valley
 - San Mateo
- Staff continues to coordinate with neighboring cities to share implementation and outreach strategies
- San Mateo is the most recently adopted an ordinance, with Menlo Park staff providing lessons learned from our implementation



Next steps

- Provide ZELE implementation update to City Council in May 2026
- Continue outreach and education to residents and landscapers
- Track enforcement data and reports
- Continue to collaborate with neighboring cities
- Plan for phase 2 of ordinance implementation: Ban of gas-powered walk behind lawnmowers, hedge trimmers and chainsaws, July 1, 2029