

City of Ashland - Sustainability Committee Meeting Minutes

A meeting of the Ashland Sustainability Committee was held on **Thursday, February 27 2020 at 6:00 p.m.** in the **Ashland City Hall Council Chambers (601 Main St W)**

Committee Members Present: Dale Kupczyk, Kate Ullman, Kaas Baichtal, Val Damstra

Committee Members Absent: Lissa Radke, Jessica Eckart, Cheyanne Reeves

Staff Present: Megan McBride, Aidan Reilley (AmeriCorps Service Member), Coal Gass (AmeriCorps Service Member)

Megan McBride opened the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

Agenda

1) Consent Agenda

Motion to approve the consent agenda by Kate Ullman, seconded by Dale Kupczyk. Passed unanimously.

2) Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes with correction to item 4c from the January 23, 2020 Sustainability Committee meeting by Kaas Baichtal. Seconded by Kate Ullman. Passed unanimously.

3) Public Comment (non-agenda items)

None.

4) Projects/Discussion

a) Discussion of Earth Day 2020 event participation

Megan McBride informed the committee that a collaborative group of community members and representatives of different agencies have begun discussing hosting an Earth Day event. Individuals working on this effort include Aidan Reilley and Coal Gass (the City's AmeriCorps service members), Ella Syverson (Youth Climate Action Team), Lissa Radke (UW-Extension), and Melodie Phipps (Public Works Committee and interested resident). The preliminary plans are to have different agencies and businesses around the region set up tables to promote their activities/services related to sustainability, and also have educational demonstrations from groups such as the Library and UW-Extension.

The committee expressed support for these efforts, and plans for the City to table at the event with information on topics such as composting, keeping of animals in the City, native landscaping, and the variety of topics around water quality for which the AmeriCorps service members have developed materials. The City will also be tabling to sell rain barrels and compost bins through the City's subsidized pre-order sale. Additional updates on the Earth Day event will be provided to the committee at the March Sustainability Committee meeting.

b) Discussion on developing sustainable purchasing policy for City of Ashland

Megan McBride said the topic of City purchasing practices and policies had come up several times in different Sustainability Committee discussions, and that she recently learned of sustainable purchasing policies developed by other WI communities. She asked for feedback from the committee on if this is a project they would like to pursue.

Ideas from the committee on criteria and process for creating this policy included:

Policy Content:

- The policy should include criteria related to purchasing locally-sourced and Wisconsin-made products whenever possible.
- Bulk/consolidated purchasing should be evaluated for cost savings and implemented for items that departments currently purchase individually as needed.
- Metrics for measuring reduction and track progress should be included within the policy so necessary data is easily accessible and these trends can be assessed over time.

Process:

- The Committee expressed that it would be helpful to inventory existing practices and then identify specific areas to go through 1 by 1 to integrate methods for increasing efficiency and sustainability of City purchasing policies.
- The policy should establish a schedule for evaluating products every 1-2 years to identify if there are newer, better, and/or less expensive products available at that time.
- It was noted that most companies including Northern Business Products, Quill, etc. can establish preferred products lists to create ease and continuity in ordering products that best meet the goals of the policy.
- It was suggested that a green office certification program be considered to encourage City departments to reduce energy use where possible, and have competitions based on percentage reduction or some other fun way to engage City staff in taking ownership of promoting sustainability within their area of the City.

Megan McBride said that she would reach out to other municipalities through the WDNR Green Tier network to get examples of sustainable purchasing policies in other communities.

5) Announcements

a) Updates on AmeriCorps Service Member positions and projects

Coal Gass and Aidan Reilley are the two AmeriCorps service members working for the City of Ashland on water quality and green infrastructure projects. They provided examples of educational materials they have created thus far around water quality topics including I & I, the importance of picking up pet waste, what people should and shouldn't flush, and information on upcoming volunteer opportunities for people interested in promoting green infrastructure on

their own properties. They will continue to work with the Public Works, Parks & Recreation and Planning Departments to create additional materials and engage the public in education and volunteer activities.

b) Updates on rain barrel and compost bin sale

The City will be partnering with Ashland County to host another sale of rain barrels at a subsidized cost. The City will be working with Enviro World Corp, located in Canada, for this sale. The cost of the barrels will be the same to residents, but the company will also administer the pre-order sale for the City online and create all marketing materials related to the sale. It is for these reasons that the City decided to use a different company than last year, and is very much looking forward to being able to offer online purchase rather than collecting all orders via paper as was done in 2019. The AmeriCorps service members and Parks & Rec Department will be assisting with the distribution of the barrels in May.

6) Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by Kate Ullman. Seconded by Dale Kupczyk. Unanimously approved.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:10 pm. Minutes done by Megan McBride.