



Sustainability Committee Meeting
Thursday, March 27, 2025
City Hall – 2nd Floor Conference Room – 601 Main St W. Ashland, WI 54806
6:00 PM

Take notice that a meeting of the Sustainability Committee will be held in- person in the City Hall Council Chambers, with the availability to attend virtually.

To join the meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone: <https://meet.goto.com/740241965>. Or dial in using your phone. United States (Toll Free): 1 866 899 4679 Access Code: 740-241-965

The following items will be considered:

1. Approval of Agenda

2. Approval of Minutes

- a. Approval of minutes from the January 23rd, 2025 Meeting

3. Citizen Participation Period

4. Projects/Discussions

- a. Sustainability Committee Mission Statement and Committee Membership - Discussion and Action as necessary
- b. Discussion on Northland College Closure

5. Staff Updates

6. Items of Interest for Future Meetings

7. Adjournment

The City of Ashland does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, creed, color, national origin, sexual orientation, age or disability in employment or provision of services, programs or activities.

NOTE: Upon reasonable notice, the City of Ashland will accommodate the needs of disabled individuals or individuals with limited English proficiency through auxiliary aids or services. For additional information or to request this service, contact the Planning & Zoning Department at 715-682-7041 (not a TDD telephone number)

City of Ashland – Sustainability Committee Meeting

Thursday, January 23rd, 2025

6:00 pm – 7:00 pm HYBRID MEETING:

Meeting Link: <https://meet.goto.com/740241965> | **Access Code:**
740-241-965 - CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS (601 Main Street W)

Energy Action Plan, 25x25 Plan, Sourcewater Protection Plan linked here:
<https://sites.google.com/view/ashland-sustainability/themes>

Present: Charlie Ortman, Amy Amman, Kelly Westlund, Meghan Salmon-Tumas, Beth Gehred, Steven Wiley (Planning and Development Director),

Agenda

- 1) Approval of Agenda
Ortman called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm and asked for approval of the agenda. Gehred moved to approve the agenda and Tumas seconded. Motion carried 5-0.
- 2) Approval of minutes from the December 19th, 2024 meeting
Ortman asked for approval of the December 19th, 2024 meeting minutes. Amman moved to approve the minutes and Tumas seconded. Motion carried 5-0.
- 3) Citizen Comments
None
- 4) Projects/Discussions
 - a) Great Lakes Friendly Restaurant Certification – Update and Action if necessary
Amman stated she is still trying to set up a final meeting with a couple of restaurant owners and Bob from Duluth to make sure everyone is on board and finalize the paperwork to move forward. Ortman asked if it was still in the administrative phase. Amman stated that this was correct. She met with Honore and Katie and provided them the information. Westlund asked and stated that she is on the board for the BRICK and is going to go back and do outreach for restaurants all around the bay. This could be another opportunity to provide them information. The event is March 1st. She will go back and try to reconfirm everyone this week. If they get the information at the event this could help too. Amman can get Westlund literature to distribute to restaurants doing Taste of the Bay (fundraiser for the Brick).
 - b) Mission Statement – Discussion and Action if necessary
Ortman asked if anyone has a proposed mission statement different than what he put out. Gehred asked for a reread of this. Ortman explained. He thinks research, discover, evaluate, and assist implementation of sustainable practices for the City of Ashland. Westlund stated that we do not have power of budget so the implementation piece caught her. Gehred appreciates this and thinks it is good. Pointed out that in some ways the purpose has been spelled out in the ordinance. Section 49.01 Purpose. She read this for the committee. In a way this is what she has been seeking. What is the purpose of the committee? We can agree or disagree. Ortman will try to merge this and the ordinance purpose. Westlund likes it and thinks the recommendations piece is important. She asked when the last time we gave a presentation to Council or made a recommendation that Council acted upon. Wiley did not remember a

presentation since he has been here. Ortman will try to merge those in a way we find adequate. Gehred asked if we would adjust the ordinance to add this or would this just be a statement to guide us. Westlund stated that maybe it is a recommendation to Council to amend the ordinance. Ortman agreed that we could make a recommendation to Council to amend the ordinance. Gehred feels personally the purpose statement is adequate. Westlund stated that it does outline the goal. Ortman stated we can beat up the ordinance as much as we want or leave as is. Westlund asked about discussing the ordinance at a future meeting. Gehred suggested making an agenda item to go over the ordinance as a group. Westlund agreed. Ortman stated that we should put this on the agenda as the only item for the next meeting.

c) Committee Membership – Discussion and Action if necessary

Wiley explained this item to the committee. Gehred stated that she had been in touch with someone from Northland who was involved with their sustainability committee. She thought it might be beneficial to meet with the Northland committee and have a conversation. A co-meeting with a student organization could be beneficial. Tumas stated that due to changes in the student body a lot of sustainability activities have not been able to run this year. The student government has an environmental council and they make a lot of decisions about what are the important topics they want to focus on. Students have a student funded led and run grant program linked to sustainability initiatives on campus. Every student pays a fee in addition to tuition that goes to this. Another group is the food recovery network that diverts food from the waste stream. There was a time when they donated to the Brick. Many other efforts are paused for this year. Many leaders also serve on the College of Sustainability workgroup. Ortman asked if there is a definition of sustainability that they operate by. Tumas stated that they have done a lot of looking at themselves and reflecting because they have defined sustainability a few times. The last one was approved by the board Feb 2022. It is a paragraph that is about overall framing. It points to the fact that we are from the stars and interrelated so need to act as such. There are 10 goals or focal areas. Some are related to inclusion, some to energy. We have to define what are the aspects of it we can do something with at the College. She can send it to Wiley.

Westlund stated that the City has an Eco-Municipality Ordinance that focuses on the three-legged stool and addresses this. She stated that the ordinance focuses on the Natural step. One focuses on not releasing chemicals into the environment. Another on earth-moving, one on human and social interaction, and restorative agriculture. Ortman asked her to bring this. He welcomed inviting Northland students. Gehred thinks maybe bringing them when we are more clear about who we are would be a better time to partner. Ortman stated that he would like have the students see how the sausage gets made. He would like to see anyone that is interested. Westlund thinks anything that builds a relationship between campus and the broader community is beneficial. Ortman asked how many young people Tumas is talking about. Tumas stated that in a typical year she could list off three or so students heavily involved and maybe a few more involved in the environmental council. Kelby has been involved but will be stepping down. Ortman stated that he wanted to make sure we do not have too many sticks in the fire. For example, focus on energy independence. No reason why the community cannot become energy independent. He is open and will take

direction from the committee. Tumas stated that the student government had a break so is selecting new leadership. Maybe we can go to the Environmental Council in a month. Looking at the ordinance it states we are supposed to do annual reviews for this body so maybe that is a good opportunity to meet with another body. Ortman asked if we would have an annual review meeting. Wiley stated that the committee could do that. Ortman stated that if we are documenting we can list our successes and our roadblocks. Gehred asked how we want to handle the annual review. Is it just looking at the big ones like the solar assessment and parks plan or would we invite every department? The Committee asked Wiley for his input. Wiley explained the Green Tier Legacy Communities annual report and how this worked. The committee could collate its report and the Green Tier one all together.

Gehred stated that the Sustainability Committee could be a 5-9 person committee. Should we let people with capacity know about the committee and would whomever appoints people be open to appointing more people? Wiley explained the process and that the Mayor appoints and Council confirms or not. Tumas stated that it would be nice to have representation from the College, hospital, and Bretting Manufacturing. If we could have one representative from each of these three pillars maybe this would bring one big circle. Gehred suggested the school district too. Ortman stated it has been hard to get membership sometimes. He supported having a heads up and discussion on any potential new members. Gehred stated that a quick letter to the big organizations stating we are looking for members could help. Westlund stated that perhaps 4H kids might have a different lens. Maybe younger ones would be beneficial. WEDC is hiring a rural sustainability specialist for the region. Bayfield County is hiring a renewable energy person. Maybe bring in Jolma Electric. Bayfield County is doing 22 micro-grids and energy efficiency upgrades. Ortman asked how involved Bill Bailey was in this. Westlund stated that Mr. Bailey is very involved. Ortman asked if he would be willing to speak with the committee. Westlund and Wiley stated that he has been to committee meetings. She mentioned the Eco-Municipality resolution passed in 2005 and she shared this with Wiley. 4H kids have to come up with projects to share. Ortman asked Wiley and Westlund to get Bayfield County's information. Gehred suggested bringing BART to the table. Gehred stated that energy upgrades sound great but it is hard bringing them to market, scale, etc. She cautioned against jumping on hydrogen for example because she has been down this road with many technologies. Tumas stated that at the college they have had success with geothermal. There is a lot to be said for piloting something, trying it out but also a lot to be said for knowledge sharing. Westlund asked if Tumas heard how the geothermal fared during the super cold snap. Tumas stated that she did not hear any concerns. Westlund stated that they are looking at heat pumps for the new housing development but several have gone out at others so idea is to have a backup heat option.

d) Potential Grant Opportunities – Beth Gehred

Gehred stated that March 3rd is the date for the Duluth Superior Community Foundation. Any grant would have to run through the City. We should talk about a project. \$2,000-\$5,000 might work for a planning group facilitation. We should have conversations. Westlund stated that if capacity becomes an issue note that Ashland

County has a paid grant writer, Erica Hannikel. Her role is to chase dollars for every community in the county. Bill Bailey is a good person to ask.

5) Staff Updates

Wiley provided updates on the solar assessment and Bay City Creek estuary project.

6) Future agenda items

Next meeting we will focus on the ordinance. Ortman would like to have a sheet of macro and micro goals for us to refer to going forward. Westlund asked Wiley to include the Natural Step resolution in with the ordinance along with the Northland College Sustainability definition with the packet for the upcoming meeting.

7) Adjournment

Ortman asked for a motion to adjourn. Tumas moved and Westlund seconded. Meeting adjourned at 7:04 pm.

RESOLUTION TO ADOPT ECO-MUNICIPALITY DESIGNATION FOR THE CITY OF ASHLAND, WISCONSIN

Adoption of Sustainable Community Development Policy

WHEREAS, the City of Ashland has adopted a Comprehensive Plan (2004 – 2024) that calls for “The Making of an Exceptional City”, and includes dozens of references to sustainable practices; and

WHEREAS, the adoption of the four systems conditions of the Natural Step can provide a framework that will assist city employees and elected officials in moving in a more sustainable direction; and

WHEREAS, the willingness of the city to move in the direction of becoming an eco-municipality can serve as a model for others and encourage economic development along similar lines in our city and region; and,

WHEREAS, the City of Ashland has a pledge of support through mentorship and consulting from The National Association of Swedish Eco-Municipalities; and

WHEREAS, the following four guidelines were developed by the American Planning Association to help communities implement sustainable practices:

1. Reduce dependence upon fossil fuels, and extracted underground metals and minerals.
2. Reduce dependence on chemicals and other manufactured substances that can accumulate in Nature.
3. Reduce dependence on activities that harm life-sustaining ecosystems.
4. Meet the hierarchy of present and future human needs fairly and efficiently.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City of Ashland hereby endorses the principles of sustainable community development described herein, and agrees to apply these principles whenever possible in its planning, policy making, and municipal practices.

Councilperson

PASSED:

ATTEST: _____
Rae M. Buckwheat, City Clerk

Fred P. Schnook, Mayor

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Scott W. Clark, City Attorney

reso542

49 (1906) Sustainability Committee

49.01 Purpose

49.02 Membership And Organization

49.03 Duties

49.04 Meetings And Public Notice

49.05 Quorum

49.06 Reports And Record Keeping

49.07 Referrals To The Committee

49.08 Miscellaneous Provisions

HISTORY

Adopted by Ord. [2018-1906](#) Adopts Chapter 49. Sustainability Committee. on 6/26/2018

Amended by Ord. [2022-1955](#) Amends Chapter 49 (2018-1906). Sustainability Committee Ordinance. Section 49.02(a). Membership and Organization. on 1/11/2022

49.01 Purpose

The Sustainability Committee was created to advise the City of Ashland's Planning and Development Department, Ashland Common Council and other City of Ashland Departments to provide and improve the sustainability resources (including environmental, economic, and social) of the City for the enhancement of the quality of life for residents, the larger regional community, and visitors. The goals of this ordinance will be accomplished through prioritizing Ashland's sustainability goals, completing annual reviews, organizing sustainability improvement projects pertaining to natural resources, economic efficiency, and social interaction, and enhancing communication within and between the City of Ashland and residents. The Sustainability Committee will study and make recommendations regarding sustainability issues affecting Ashland community members and undertake such projects and requested by the City's governing body. The Committee shall, from time to time as it deems desirable:

1. Present or discuss policies and programs affecting all aspects of City sustainability.
2. Recommend cooperation with all agencies, groups, clubs, and individuals concerned with environmental conservation, economic efficiency, and social organization in the City.
3. Make recommendations to both the Planning and Development Department and Common Council for maintaining and improving overall quality program/service deliveries.

HISTORY

Adopted by Ord. [2018-1906](#) on 6/26/2018

49.02 Membership And Organization

1. The Sustainability Committee shall be composed of 5-9 members appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the Common Council to serve staggered two year terms commencing July 1st.

Where possible, one member should be a member of City Council, and at least one member should be a Northland College student.

2. At the first meeting of the committee and the first meeting after July 1 of any given year, the committee shall elect a chairperson and vice-chairperson.
3. If any committee member has three unexcused absences or resigns, the Committee may declare the position vacant and request the Mayor to fill the vacancy (for the remainder of the term) pursuant to the provisions of this section.

HISTORY

Adopted by Ord. [2018-1906](#) on 6/26/2018

Amended by Ord. [2022-1959](#) Amends Section 49.02(a). Membership and Organization. on 3/29/2022

49.03 Duties

Unless otherwise expressly provided, the Committee may perform its duties without first obtaining the consent of the Common Council but in no event is the committee empowered to financially obligate the City of Ashland in any manner without the consent of the Common Council.

1. Prioritize City sustainability initiatives
2. Promote/disperse sustainability information to local area of influence
3. Serve as contact for sustainability issues and questions
4. Organize/Plan sustainability events and programs
5. Conduct annual evaluations and monitoring of city sustainability goals and projects
6. Encourage citizen participation.

HISTORY

Adopted by Ord. [2018-1906](#) on 6/26/2018

49.04 Meetings And Public Notice

1. The Committee shall meet as determined by the Committee.
2. All agenda items will be reviewed by the Committee Chair for validity and urgency of the request and determine when and if that item should be placed on a Committee agenda.
3. The Committee shall operate under Robert's Rules of Order.
4. All regular and special meetings of the Committee shall comply with the public meeting requirements of Wisconsin Statutes.
5. All meeting notices shall comply with the public meeting notice requirements of Wisconsin Statutes.
6. All meeting notices and agendas shall be issued by the Planning and Development Department.

HISTORY

Adopted by Ord. [2018-1906](#) on 6/26/2018

49.05 Quorum

A quorum shall be a majority of the full Committee.

HISTORY

Adopted by Ord. [2018-1906](#) on 6/26/2018

49.06 Reports And Record Keeping

1. Committee members shall select one among themselves, or the Planning and Development Department will designate a staff member, to record the minutes of each meeting of the Committee. A written record of all meetings shall be kept and approved at the next subsequent meeting of the Committee.
2. Committee reports and recommendations shall be reduced to writing and shall not be included on a Council agenda until reduced to writing and submitted by the Committee to the City Clerk.
3. The City Clerk is the record custodian for the City. All committee minutes and records shall be filed with the City Clerk.

HISTORY

Adopted by Ord. [2018-1906](#) on 6/26/2018

49.07 Referrals To The Committee

The Common Council of the City of Ashland may refer any matter pertaining to City sustainability programs and projects to the Sustainability Committee for review, study, and reports.

HISTORY

Adopted by Ord. [2018-1906](#) on 6/26/2018

49.08 Miscellaneous Provisions

If any section, subsection, sentence, clause or phrase of this ordinance is for any reason held to be invalid, unconstitutional by reason of any decision of any court of competent jurisdiction, such decision shall not affect the validity of any other section, subsection, sentence, or clause or phrase or portion thereof.

HISTORY

Adopted by Ord. [2018-1906](#) on 6/26/2018

Northland College Commitments to Sustainability

Northland College's commitments to sustainability are premised on the understanding that Earth is our home and all beings on Earth are interconnected and interdependent.

We further recognize that Earth is part of an unfolding universe, that the universe is beautiful and mysterious, and that it is worthy of reverence.¹

As an educational institution, we are devoted to exploring the mystery and beauty of the unfolding universe, and we believe our exploration must be conducted in a manner that preserves and enhances opportunities for all beings, present and future, to sustain themselves on Earth.

We appreciate that the College is located on the shore of Gichigami, the largest body of freshwater in the world, and within sight of Mooningwanekaaning, a place of spiritual significance for the Anishinaabeg. We acknowledge that the land on which the College is located was ceded in the 1842 Treaty of La Pointe and wish to be partners with all peoples in restoring and sustaining the ecological and cultural prosperity of the region.

Given these understandings and acknowledgements, the College defines "sustainability" as the proactive and ethical practice of cultivating community through social, economic, and environmental approaches. The College seeks to create equitable relationships between nature, place, and people that ensure the viability of future generations and has embraced the following commitments. We will . . .

- 1) Collaborate within and across communities, recognizing interconnections and honoring interdependence;
- 2) Learn with openness and humility from diverse ways of knowing and in forums that are inclusive and respectful;
- 3) Infuse opportunities to explore and address sustainability throughout our academic curriculum;
- 4) Employ systems and practices that protect the quality and quantity of water in our watershed;
- 5) Produce and procure food in a manner that is regenerative and non-exploitive;
- 6) Adopt technologies and practices that minimize and ultimately neutralize the College's climate footprint;
- 7) Reduce substantively the volume of waste generated by the College;
- 8) Minimize the use of substances known to disrupt or harm organic processes or living beings in cleaning and maintenance activities;
- 9) Ensure that compensation for employees is sufficient to meet basic life needs and commensurate with skills, credentials, and responsibilities;
- 10) Promote and facilitate daily engagement with the natural world and creative, artistic endeavors to foster the physical and emotional wellbeing of individuals in the community;
- 11) Retrofit, construct, and maintain buildings and other forms of infrastructure in a manner that maximizes the use of sustainable principles, practices, and technologies.

¹ The first two paragraphs of this statement draw on ideas and language from the Blue River Declaration, which was composed by the Blue River Quorum convened by the Spring Creek Project for Ideas, Nature, and the Written Word in November of 2011.