

City of Ashland – Sustainability Committee Meeting

Thursday, June 26th, 2025

6:00 pm – 7:00 pm HYBRID MEETING:

**Meeting Link: <https://meet.goto.com/740241965> | Access Code:
740-241-965 – 2nd Floor Conference Room (601 Main Street W)**

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

Agenda

- 1) Approval of Agenda
- 2) Approval of minutes from the March 27th, 2025 meeting
- 3) Citizen Comments
- 4) Projects/Discussions
 - a) Sustainability Committee Mission Statement and Committee Membership – Discussion and Action if necessary
 - b) Discussion on Communications
 - c) Discussion on Northland College Energy Star Portfolio Manager – Meghan Salmon-Tumas
 - d) Discussion on Native Plantings on Vacant Lots
- 5) Staff Updates
- 6) Future agenda items
- 7) Adjournment

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

It is possible that members of and a possible quorum of members of other governmental bodies of the municipality may be in attendance at the above stated meeting to gather information or speak about a subject, over which they have decision-making responsibility. Any governmental body at the above stated meeting will take no action other than the governmental body specifically referred to above in this notice.

NOTE: Upon reasonable notice, the City of Ashland will accommodate the needs of disabled individuals through auxiliary aids or services. For additional information or to request this service, contact the Planning & Zoning Department at (715) 682-7041.

City of Ashland – Sustainability Committee Meeting

Thursday, March 27th, 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)

Present: Mayor Matt MacKenzie, Amy Amman, Meghan Salmon-Tumas, Beth Gehred, Steven Wiley (Planning and Development Director)

Absent: Charlie Ortman (Excused), Kelly Westlund (Excused)

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

Agenda

- 1) Approval of Agenda
Mayor Mackenzie called the meeting to order at 6:03 pm and asked for approval of the agenda. Gehred moved, Tumas seconded. Motion carried 4-0.
- 2) Approval of minutes from the January 23rd, 2025 meeting
Mayor Mackenzie asked for approval of the minutes. Tumas moved and Amman seconded. Gehred stated that she would prefer minutes that are more succinct and less verbose. Wiley stated that it was possible for minutes to be too long but that the opposite was also true. She would like Wiley's input. Amman sees Gehred's point. Mayor Mackenzie stated that sometimes it is good to have too much rather than not enough info. We do capture the recordings also.
- 3) Citizen Comments
None
- 4) Projects/Discussions
 - a) Sustainability Committee Mission Statement and Committee Membership – Discussion and Action if necessary
Mayor Mackenzie reviewed the previous meeting minutes. Westlund had brought up the eco-municipality ordinance at the last meeting. It was approved in July 2008 but not acted on. Mayor Mackenzie said we could start a discussion. Gehred stated we could have an abbreviated discussion on this to focus on Northland more. Under MC section 49.01 purpose Gehred was fine with the Purpose. She stated that we need to know Ashland's sustainability goals. Are we completing annual reviews or is the City? Any action we organize would ideally hit all goals. Social media tools could help us. Could we help promote good ideas and work coming out of the City? Mayor Mackenzie stated that one goal was to have material on the City website on recycling for example, etc. The Mayor's understanding of the annual review is of the programs in the City in regards to sustainability. Many things the Committee is responsible for don't have to go to Council. Recycled paper, recycling, and clean-ups are examples. The group could look at these things. Staff would be the ones to provide information to the Committee. Gehred stated that the Mayor or Administrator could also ask the Committee to look at an item. The Mayor clarified that some items such as assigning work require Council approval and some can go through the staff. He explained the

process for going to Council. Items generally went to the Committee of the Whole first and then Council.

Gehred read the ordinance stating that the Committee would study sustainability issues affecting Ashland community members. She supported reminding the City of its Eco-Municipality ordinance. The Committee can make recommendations to the Planning Department and Council. There was an issue with Number 1 in membership and organization. Mayor Mackenzie stated we could change “Northland Student” to “student” to open it up. The Mayor stated that the ordinance was not changed since it was acted on. It is a good time to look at the ordinance. Tumas wondered about rephrasing it a bit (checking in on projects that were started and finding out if they were moving forward or not). Mayor Mackenzie suggested that maybe we could incorporate Sustainability into the City’s upcoming Strategic Planning. Tumas stated that we would not have to start from scratch. We can use existing plans and documents. There is benefit in looking at and tracking things that we might not be able to work on right now. Mayor Mackenzie supports having the Committee involved in many areas and keeping the Committee broad. He asked Amman and Tumas to provide any input to Wiley on the ordinance.

b) Discussion on Northland College Closure

Mayor Mackenzie stated that the College needs to approach the City on what they want to do. We need to leave them as much room as they need to take care of everything. Students are a priority. There will be an alumni gathering after graduation. The number 2 goal is faculty and staff. Afterwards they will look at the campus. The City offered Mr. Wiley to the College for assistance. The City talked to representatives from Northland on March 14th. Tumas stated that we did not want to see the property empty. There would be economic impacts including job and student losses. Gehred mentioned the resources (buildings). These lose value if they are not used. Having them sit vacant is a waste of resources. The Mayor thinks the biggest loss will be cultural. Tumas is a faculty member there and would like to stay here. The Burke Center is reimagining itself as a 501c3. Faculty are working on helping students with their plans. Faculty with grants are having to transfer their grants or close them out.

5) Staff Updates

Wiley updated the Committee on the Beaser housing development and TID # 11. He provided updates on the solar assessment, Green Tier annual report. Mayor Mackenzie mentioned the intake pipe, EPA recommendations on fluoride in water, and the weed program at Bay City Creek. Wiley provided the Committee on the Bay City Creek Estuary. Mayor Mackenzie mentioned the cattail project in Prentice Park. Tumas mentioned that social media is needed. What are the social media channels? Gehred mentioned if there was a Friends of Ashland group that would help. Mayor Mackenzie explained that the City is creating working committees that would involve the Department Heads, staff, and Council.

6) Future agenda items

Amman asked about the City lights, what type they were and an inventory. There are opportunities to retrofit existing City lights. Wiley stated that he can follow up with

Public Works. Future agenda items include the ordinance discussion, communications, and City lights.

7) Adjournment

Mayor Mackenzie adjourned the meeting at 7:09 pm.

Recorded by:

Steven D. Wiley
Planning and Development Director

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.