

City of Ashland – Sustainability Committee Meeting Minutes

Thursday, March 23, 2023

6:00 pm – 7:00 pm HYBRID MEETING

Energy Action Plan, 25x25 Plan, Sourcewater Protection Plan linked here:

<https://sites.google.com/view/ashland-sustainability/themes>

Agenda

Present: Axel Peterman, Dale Kupczyk, Adam Zais, Amy Amman, Kate Ullman, Mayor Matt Mac Kenzie, Steven Wiley

Absent: Zach Jurewicz, Lissa Radke (Excused), Laura Graf

1) Approval of Agenda

Peterman called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm. Ullman motioned and Zais seconded. The motion carried to approve the agenda as proposed.

2) Election of Chairperson

Peterman explained that he does not have time to commit to all the duties required of the Chairperson so would like to turn it over to someone else. Mac Kenzie said if Mr. Peterman is willing to serve to not be discouraged about not being able to handle all duties. Ullman suggested reaching out to Radke to see if she could take on duties. Peterman agreed to stay on as Chairperson in the meantime until a new Chairperson is decided. No action was taken.

3) Approval of minutes from the January 26, 2023 meeting

Kupczyk motioned and Zais seconded to approve the minutes as written. The motion carried.

4) Citizen Comments

No one had any citizen comments.

5) Projects/Discussions

a) Waste and Recycling -

i. Recycling guidelines flyer – Update

Wiley updated the Committee and explained that he had sent the flyer out as it was due to having to meet the deadline to get it out with the February water bills but that he had some contact with Jim Whittinghill at Republic regarding potential updates. Amman asked for clarification on whether egg cartons on the list included all egg cartons or just some. Kupczyk is working on a list of items that can be recycled. Amman had a brochure with information on what was recyclable and an example of something the Committee can work towards with a flyer. Zais explained that he lives downtown and that the cost of garbage pickup was high so he canceled his service. He would like to look into recycling and waste more. Residential apartments in the commercial district do not get the residential rate. They pay the commercial rate. Mayor Mac Kenzie asked how many apartments were in the building Zais was in. Zais answered just one. Mac Kenzie said he would look into it. For condominiums he believed there was a clause in the contract with Republic

that eliminates them from picking up in commercial districts. Zais suggested looking at this when the contract gets renegotiated.

- ii. Draft Demolition Recycling Ordinance – Discussion
Wiley provided an update and an overview of the draft ordinance as written. Mayor Mac Kenzie explained that he wanted a list that could go on the City’s website indicating where people can take demolition waste. He supported incentivizing rather than penalizing people for not complying with the ordinance. When a demolition occurs, if material goes to the landfill it does get “picked” for salvage. There are some obstacles in the draft ordinance such as three step penalties, etc. that we need to address. First, we need to direct where things can go and put the list on the website. Mayor Mac Kenzie wanted input from the Committee. Kupczyk commented and said for many people they may wait until the home is decrepit and then the home just gets torn down. Mayor Mac Kenzie explained that it becomes a demolition by neglect and wanted to close that loophole. There are a number of homes that are vacant and in poor shape. Zais agreed that making this a carrot instead of a stick makes sense. For example, there is not much value in cast iron and people may not want old windows unless they are architecturally stunning. A suggestion was to let Habitat for Humanity go through and waive the normal demolition fee. Ullman stated that there are reasons to stay away from violation/fining initially and liked the idea of a report. She suggested salvaging wood and chipping it up and burning it. A weight receipt could serve as a piece of evidence. Mayor Mac Kenzie suggested perhaps raising the cost of demolition permits and reducing/waiving the permit fees if people comply. Ullman asked why the ordinance applies only to older buildings. Wiley answered that it may have been because the ordinance originated with the Historic Preservation Commission. Ullman supported increasing the permit fees a little and waiving them. Zais said that Habitat for Humanity is not up here but there are volunteer groups that deconstruct buildings. He supported raising the fee too because otherwise it is not worth going through the process for contractors. Mayor Mac Kenzie asked for thoughts from the Committee over the next month. He would like to have material on the website. Ullman sent Wiley a resource to look at.
- b) Climate Change
 - i. 25x25 Plan further discussion –
Ullman sent some graphs tracking some City usage over time. She had Wiley display these on the screen and explained them to the Committee. She and staff had asked Xcel for energy data over time. She explained that we have not had a way to track conservation efforts so the data and graphs could help with this. She asked if it was worth moving forward and could explore working with and intern at Northland College or Michigan Tech. Kupczyk supported examining the data so the Committee could have the data for Council. Zais was supportive of working with an intern. Ullman stated that she would proceed.
 - ii. Police Department Solar – Update

Wiley explained that he had talked to City staff and the inverter was not up. Staff was still waiting for the snow to melt to get the system back online. This was required before NES was willing to service it. Wiley explained that staff involved Bill Bailey who provided some input and was willing to look at energy data for the Police Department.

c) Water

- i. Develop Sourcewater Protection Plan initial Recommendations

This item was tabled due to time constraints.

d) Annual Report for City Council

This item was tabled due to time constraints.

e) Solar Incentives Proposal

This item was tabled due to time constraints.

f) Complete Streets

- i. Discussion

This item was tabled due to time constraints.

g) Green Tier Legacy Communities

- i. Update and Annual Report Discussion

This item was tabled due to time constraints.

6) **Future agenda items**

Amman explained that she heard at Northland College about a Lake Friendly Certified Restaurants process that would be easy to use. Restaurants would not use plastic straws, etc. and obtain a sticker they could put up in a window. Mayor Mac Kenzie suggested finding seed money and having something with a logo that the City could provide to the restaurants. He said that he would not mind seeing a tax on take out food. Ullman suggested a tax on non-recyclable takeout containers. Ullman supported the idea of an incentive program. Peterman asked to include an update on the Beaser Avenue Community Garden on the next agenda.

7) **Adjournment**

Amman motioned and Kupczyk seconded. The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 7:05 pm.