

City of Ashland – Sustainability Committee Meeting

Thursday, December 19th, 2024

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, Meghan Salmon-Tumas, Amy Amman, Brant Kucera (City Administrator), Steven Wiley (Planning and Development Director)

Absent: Beth Gehred, Kelly Westlund

Agenda

1) Approval of Agenda

Ortman called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm. Ortman asked for approval of the agenda. Amman moved to approve and Salmon-Tumas seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

2) Approval of minutes from the October 24th and November 21st, 2024 meetings

Ortman asked for approval of the October 24th and November 21st meeting minutes. Amman moved to approve the minutes and Salmon-Tumas seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

3) Citizen Comments
None

4) Projects/Discussions

a) Great Lakes Friendly Restaurant Certification – Update and Action if necessary
Amman provided an update. She had met with Honore and Katie Gellatly (owner of the Sandbar) this week to show them the program and asked for their thoughts. Both felt they were most of the way there already which is good. There was some hesitation to dive right in until some questions are answered. Bob will be able to clarify some criteria for the lids. This seems to be the hang-up. Katie Gellatly will get back to Amman and let her know if she wants to move forward. Honore is already interested. There is a little more to be done before we start. It should move forward and once it does the question is what is our role. Is this a question for now or for when we have a commitment/sign-ups? Ortman thanked Amman. He paraphrased that Amman had talked to Honore and Katie. Honore was on board, Katie was a bit more hesitant. In Amman's conversation with Katie Gellatly Ms. Gellatly brought up Travel Green WI where all they got was a sticker in their window and nothing else back for them as a business. The City promoting this would be a benefit and Amman tried to make this connection when explaining the program. The perks excited the business owners. They believe in the mission and the perks were nice. Ortman thanked Amman. Amman stated that if both these folks get on board and City promotes it maybe it will spread. Salmon-Tumas had many of the same questions that Amman brought up such as what our role is, when to look at this, etc. Amman has not talked to the Chamber. Ortman asked what the City can do to generate buzz. Kucera mentioned our social media, public service announcements, work with the Chamber,

there is a Main Street program. Ortman stated that maybe at the next meeting we can talk about some spots we can market this. Salmon-Tumas stated that partnering her students in classes up with City departments to create social media posts has been helpful in the past. They use Canva, etc. Kucera stated that we have had very good luck working with Northland College students on stormwater two or three years ago. Amman likes Salmon-Tumas' suggestion. She asked about the coordination of murals by the drains. Kucera stated that the City got the grant and Sara Hudson coordinated this with Charmaine Swan from the American Lung Association. Ortman asked about the murals. Kucera explained that they consist of artwork at the storm drains conveying that whatever you throw in the drain eventually reaches the lake. Amman believes that the storm drain project might connect with this. She is not advocating painting on the sidewalks but somehow marrying these two things together. Amman asked if she or the City should have a conversation with the Chamber. Ortman stated that Amman should and would be effective.

b) Mission Statement – Discussion and Action if necessary

Ortman asked about tabling this item. He was looking forward to seeing what Gehred had written. Amman thinks we should wait. Salmon-Tumas had thoughts but believes we should also include Gehred in this. We could start now and finish at the next meeting. Ortman asked Salmon-Tumas to share her thoughts. Salmon-Tumas mentioned that there was supposed to be a student from Northland College on the committee originally. It is worth revisiting because if we are supposed to have a Northland student we should ensure we are maintaining this or maybe we revise our membership criteria. Salmon-Tumas noticed this in the Municipal Code section. It stated that one member should be a City Council member and one should be a Northland College student. Salmon-Tumas stated that the Council can refer a matter to the Sustainability Committee. Has this happened often or recently? Ortman is not sure if anything has been referred to the committee or not. Kucera stated that the only thing he could think of was No Mow May but was not sure on this. Ortman stated that we can get things referred to us from the Council. Salmon-Tumas is supportive of this. Her other notes are around some areas where we might be able to fill the roles of making recommendations to the City or conducting annual evaluations of progress towards fulfilling sustainable goals. A goal could be looking at policies on night lighting/dark skies. Mellon and the Copper Falls park are working together on implementing a night lighting policy for that town. The action plan is an area where she would be interested in being more up to date on the City's Energy Action Plan. There is supposed to be a mid-point where the plan would be evaluated and refined. There is supposed to be a task force also. She would be interested in seeing if that is still going on or if the Committee would need to implement more of these goals. On urban wood use she has talked with Ms. Hudson on what the City does with the trees they need to cut down. They are doing fantastic things like chipping it up and using it in our electricity production by Xcel, turning it into wood products. She is not sure what the Committee can do to help but the workforce development piece is missing and important. We need to be able to increase the number of businesses that can operate around the use of wood products. Electricity use and work surrounding this is another area and there is good work going on in Washburn on this. Matt Danielson is involved with this. Ortman paraphrased Salmon-Tumas's thoughts. We can add these

to the list of things we can weigh in on. Ortman asked if part of the mission statement was that we wanted to start tracking our progress on implementation of sustainable initiatives. Salmon-Tumas answered that Ortman's summary of her thoughts was accurate. Ortman will modify his version of the mission statement to include this. Amman wants to add the night sky lighting also from Salmon-Tumas's list. There are opportunities for municipalities to work with that organization. The new lights in Washburn are nice lights compliant with the dark skies initiative. She recommended looking at these when driving through.

- 5) Potential Grant Opportunities – Beth Gehred
Tabled until future meeting.
- 6) Update – City Solar Assessment
Wiley updated the committee. Ortman asked for a refresher and Wiley explained what the project is. It is an assessment to determine which five of the 10 main City facilities would be the best candidates for solar and micro-grid infrastructure.
- 7) Update – Parks Master Plan
Wiley provided an update on the plan and recapped the joint Parks/Sustainability meeting and that MSA presented the draft plan to the COW this month.
- 8) Future agenda items
Ortman mentioned the Great Lakes Friendly Restaurant Certification and Dark Skies, Sourcewater Protection Plan, Implementation of perennials, stormwater runoff, and rain barrels, and mission statement. The Great Lakes Friendly certification, dark skies, grant opportunities, reaching out to Northland, and mission statement can be on the next agenda. Amman said she can provide an update for the next meeting. Amman asked how the Northland student representation came up. Kucera stated that it might have come out of the 25x25 plan. The Great Lakes certification, mission statement, grant opportunities, and Northland student membership will be on the January agenda along with any updates staff wants to provide. Kucera asked if Amman was aware of what the City of Duluth is doing for the Great Lakes initiative. Amman stated that she did not think the City was involved at all. She has eaten at one of the restaurants participating but did not see anything on the tables, menus, etc.
- 9) Adjournment
The meeting adjourned at 6:51 pm.

Recorded by:

Steven D. Wiley, AICP
Planning and Development Director