

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