

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>

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

Absent: Kelly Westlund

Agenda

1) Approval of Agenda

Chair Ortman called the meeting to order at 6:12 pm and a quorum was declared present. Ortman asked for agenda approval. Tumas moved, Amman seconded. Motion carried 4-0.

2) Approval of minutes from the March 27th, 2025 meeting

Chair Ortman asked for a motion and a second to approve the March 27th, 2025 meeting minutes. Gehred moved approval, Tumas seconded. Motion carried 4-0. Ortman mentioned that we should take the goals of the Eco-municipality resolution and identify obstacles to being an energy-positive city. A community out west actually succeeded. We can mirror some of that. He asked if we were ok with this. Gehred is supportive.

3) Citizen Comments

None

4) Projects/Discussions

a) Sustainability Committee Mission Statement and Committee Membership – Discussion and Action if necessary

Ortman recalled that we pulled up the current ordinance and liked it. Tumas mentioned revising the ordinance from requiring a Northland student to requiring a young person/student in general. Gehred has someone she thinks would be a good candidate. Ortman asked about the process. Wiley explained. Amman suggested that maybe we define “young person.”

b) Discussion on Communications

Tumas stated that communications is part 1 in the mission statement. Green Tier reporting has been on her mind. We could communicate this to the community via a number of avenues. Tumas wanted to find our most recent report and could not find it so brought that up but we can also pull out some material from there and put it into a format for the public. We can highlight what we are doing and what Green Tier is and maybe we do a letter to the editor. Gehred would like to learn what initiatives the City has come up with. Are we giving lip service to sustainability or are we committed? Ortman mentioned the 25x25 Plan. Gehred wants to know whether or not we have lost steam, etc. Maybe we are not formulated correctly as a committee. Ortman would

bring Bill Bailey back in because he has ideas. Maybe we can offer property tax breaks to citizens who do solar. Amman suggested going through the 25x25 Plan. Tumas asked if the 25x25 plan was superseded by the Energy Action Plan from 2021. We should review the Energy Action Plan. Amman stated that the Energy Action Plan is broader than the 25x25 Plan. Amman asked if Northwood Tech has an environmental program that could help us. Tumas may be able to dig into these things. Nicole Foster also likely could. Amman suggested featuring an example of a visible house in town that uses solar. Testimonials would be beneficial. Gehred stated she would be interested in whether the County solar is performing as expected. Ortman asked Wiley to reach out to Dan Grady. Amman asked about the charging stations across Main Street. Wiley explained that the stations went in prior to the cutoff in state law so the City cannot charge the public for electricity use. Gehred asked if the committee could form a 501c3 and the City turn over the stations to the committee. Tumas stated that this would fall under communications. Gehred wants to make a motion that we create an education campaign to communicate why the charging stations are not in use. If it is too political we can get citizen involvement. Ortman asked Wiley to talk to Mr. Kucera. He is trying to break down how we break down the 25x25 plan and Energy Action Plan into small bites. Gehred stated we can use the 4 tenets of the Eco-Municipality Resolution. All the activities we are doing could be listed for each tenet. Gehred and Ortman asked for paper copies of the 2 plans. Ortman-what does the group want everyone to do prior to the next meeting? Amman suggested going through and highlight action items and ask ourselves whether we got there. Tumas stated that we could identify information needs. Gehred will start with the newer plan. Amman stated that we can figure out things that have been done to communicate to the public. Tumas stated that we can also communicate why things have not been done.

c) Discussion on Northland College Energy Star Portfolio Manager – Meghan Salmon-Tumas

Tumas presented the Energy Star Portfolio Manager and explained that it is a federal program. Once you get it set up it is hands free. It probably took a week to set up for Northland. Xcel Energy has a web services program. You set up the details (square footage, room count, age, etc.) of a building. Tell Xcel to connect the bills with the buildings in there and they will automatically associate with the buildings going forward. It pulls in data for the past 3 years. There is a three-month lag time so the newest data is three months old. They automatically do weather normalization so you can see if you are becoming more efficient with the weather. There are different views you can create. One view looks at GHG emissions. There is one for Energy Use Intensity. This allows you to compare building to building. Ortman asked if it costs anything. Tumas answered no. You can see how much you are spending each year per building. It saves a lot of time versus looking at bills. You collect all of the data on each building. Tumas and Wiley can work together on this. Gehred moved and Tumas seconded having Wiley and Tumas work together on this. Motion carried 4-0. *Gehred left at 7:05 pm.*

d) Discussion on Native Plantings on Vacant Lots

Wiley explained that the City was razing some houses on lots where repairs would be unreasonable. Some of these lots would then become vacant and potentially taken to

the City. Committee members mentioned that Sara Hudson had an idea of potentially putting a yurt by the lake. Ortman mentioned a property on Sanborn Avenue that is fire damaged. The Building Inspector needs to go over and look at it. It probably needs to come down. It is on Golf Course Road, right on the corner and is a large property. Ortman mentioned that we are a Monarch City. Amman suggested talking to the Beautification Committee. Tumas supports having this item come here. It is a bigger picture issue.

5) Staff Updates

Wiley explained that the City continues to work with Jolma Electric and muGrid on the City solar and micro-grid assessment. Jolma has installed eGauge data loggers at 5 main City sites (WWTP, Main Lift Station, Public Works, Police Department, and Fire Department) and are now capturing data and setting up meetings between the City, Jolma, and muGrid to better understand the energy needs relative to the operations of each facility.

6) Future agenda items

Ortman asked to have the four tenets of the Eco-municipality resolution. The committee should review the 25x25 Plan and Energy Action Plan and come up with a list of questions. Communications, looking at the Green Tier Report. Native Plantings on vacant lots. Gehred mentioned the foundation funding options. Amman asked for a list of lights. The next meeting will be Wednesday, July 23rd. Amman asked if we can follow up on the recycling info we touched on when the Mayor was here. Tumas stated that recycling was incredibly dynamic. Todd Pydo had looked into this. Some weeks Republic can take it somewhere, others they cannot.

7) Adjournment

Tumas moved, Amman seconded. Meeting adjourned at 7:32 pm.

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