City of Ashland – Sustainability Committee Meeting

Thursday, December 11th, 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, Beth Gehred, Amy Amman, Meghan Salmon-Tumas, Rachel Myslivy, Steven Wiley (Planning and Development Director)

Absent: None

Agenda

1) Approval of Agenda
   Chair Ortman called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm and a quorum was declared present. Ortman asked for approval of the agenda. Tumas moved to approve the agenda, Amman seconded. Motion carried 5-0.
2) Introduction of new Committee Member Rachel Myslivy
   New Committee Member Myslivy introduced herself and provided some background information to the committee. Ortman and the rest of the committee introduced themselves and welcomed her.
3) Approval of minutes from the November 6th, 2025 meeting
   Ortman asked for approval of the previous meeting minutes. Tumas moved approval and Gehred seconded. Motion carried 5-0
4) Citizen Participation
   None
5) Projects/Discussions
   a) Municipal Code Section/Eco-Municipality Resolution – Discussion and Action
      Ortman asked Wiley if he took the guidelines from the Eco-municipality resolution and put those into the draft ordinance revisions. Wiley explained the changes and that he had done so. Tumas and Gehred were supportive of the revisions. Ortman asked for any additional input. Ortman stated that if anyone has any recommendations for changes to let us know. Ortman asked for a motion and second to send this to COW and Council. Gehred moved, Tumas seconded. Amman supports it. Motion carried 5-0.
   b) Communications – Discussion
      Ortman asked if this was to advertise ourselves better. Tumas remembered that it was to be a standing item on the agenda. It was suggested that she work with Jen Fanucci who is the City event planner and Ms. Fanucci could help get the word out too. Wiley stated that Ms. Fanucci was putting together a City newsletter and would be soliciting updates from department heads among others for publishing every month, quarterly, etc. Tumas believed that we could have a "Sustainability Corner" section which could fall under the Planning Department updates. Ortman asked if we could come up with snippets in a meeting and get them to Wiley. Wiley said this could work or if we

came up with snippets and a committee member could work on a write up. Ortman stated we could have a standing agenda item at the end of the next month's agenda to generate ideas. Amman is supportive of having updates that tie into things that our committee is working on. Maybe we have a recycling awareness month item. Wiley confirmed with the committee that we would have a standing item on future agendas.

c) Ashland County Comprehensive Plan Sustainability Chapter Discussion/Action if necessary

Tumas submitted a draft and asked if we could talk about it. Ashland County is working to update their Comp Plan as required every 10 years. There are 9 required distinct sections. Chair Ortman is involved. He asked how we could bring sustainability into this process. There was an article in the *Ashland Daily Press* about how the County is looking for community input. It is a good time for us to weigh in. Tumas is thinking about the Eco-Municipality guidelines, planetary boundaries, etc. Energy, PFAS, biodiversity, air quality, (she was involved in working groups last year to start thinking about the comprehensive plan). She threw down ideas and also combed through Bayfield County's plan they recently adopted that had some really inspiring ideas. She did not pull out social justice ideas which are not her area of expertise but she did pull out transportation stuff, etc. She is looking for ideas from the Committee on what is important for the county to provide messaging on and how to do it. Ortman suggested maybe inserting sustainability in the plan everywhere that it is as a hodgepodge or maybe you have an individual sustainability element. The County Board wants to vet things rather than produce them because they do not have the time or expertise. Sustainability is not the only thing plans are short on. There are a lot of departments that don't have a representative involved. Ortman suggests Tumas write what she sees fit and we can review it. He does not think Ashland is against being carbon-neutral. He suggests putting it in and letting them take it out. Write it up with everything as a wish list and we will look at it. We have a year before it needs to be published. The County has established a standing committee so we can look closely at things. Ortman and Gehred are supportive. Myslivy would be happy to look at Bayfield County and the justice and social justice elements. Ortman is supportive of examining justice elements. Myslivy asked someone to send the report. Ortman explained that Tumas referenced the elements of the Comp Plan in her statement. Amman mentioned the 2006 Comp Plan goals. She asked if those are from the current document. Tumas answered that the goals are from the 2006 plan but did not change in 2016. Amman is impressed with the way the goals are written. Ortman stated that the Comp Plan Committee would be happy to hear input from anyone. Ortman believes these plans should drive legislation, rather than a group. Gehred will leave Tumas notes. She agrees with other members. She sees some areas that would be good jumping off points for group. She prefers trying to integrate goals into sections rather than a separate chapter. Gehred provided some definitions of micromobility. Myslivy asked if we could share the materials. Wiley stated that he could. The committee discussed the potential of two members meeting to work on this. Wiley advised to be careful due to open records laws but that he could look into this. Tumas would be interested because this could help us for other things we might do. Tumas likes the idea of integrating sustainability in different areas. Ortman recommends getting it to something that is measurable and that identifies what we

want. Gehred asked if the ordinance gives us the authority to carry out items from the plan. Ortman stated that we only advise the decision makers.

d) Potential Grant/Funding Opportunities – Beth Gehred
Gehred has identified four opportunities and provided a handout. Wiley will scan and email it out. It is a richer time for grants. This could give us a budget. Opportunities include the Boreal Waters (used to be Duluth Superior Community Foundation), Kettering Foundation, Head of the Lakes United Way, and Waste Management. Her thinking is the communication around sustainability. We would need to do a working group to get a grant written for Boreal Waters. Ortman mentioned that the County has a grant writer. He asked Wiley if the City has a grant writer. Wiley stated that various staff write grants here. This would be soft money to help vestiges of Northland stay afloat. Ortman suggested that we make a strong connection to sustainability. Gehred suggested we partner with a nonprofit to manage a grant if we do not want the hassle. Ortman supports trying to get a grant for Sustainability education from Waste Management. Tumas asked if a $500-$1,000 grant could be to get a student on the committee. A technical college partnership could be welcomed. Tumas proposed that maybe AADC could be a location that would let things sit there and provide services to organizations trying to grow out of Northland. Wiley brought up the approval process through Council.

e) Downtown EV Chargers – Discussion
Gehred explained this item. She thinks it makes sense to get some use out of perfectly good infrastructure. She has talked with Bill Bailey and there are some ways we can use the chargers. We can own the equipment and lease the use to another agency. Jolma Electric would be a good idea. They could fix the chargers if anything went wrong. Ortman had brought up the Coop which was more mission aligned. We would need to work out in a contract the details of insurance, maintenance, etc. It is a very modest money maker. The City could lease them to the Coop for a dollar and put the maintenance on the Co-op or could make it more lucrative. The City would have to put up the amount of the grant which was about $38,000. Ortman asked if this would be ready to take to COW. Wiley explained that BART might be interested. Ortman thinks that this should be an action item on the next agenda. Tumas stated that the abandonment of EV charging infrastructure happens often. She had a Level II charger installed at her house and paid a monthly fee. Xcel is discontinuing the program so transferring ownership of the charger to her.

6) Staff Updates
Wiley mentioned the Beaser Avenue Apartment complex and strategic plan update.

7) Future agenda items
Ortman suggested finding a way to identify City lots that would be solar. He asked if Wiley could pull together a map of all City lots. What is the total electricity use for the City of Ashland? We should determine the total Ashland needs and total City needs. Then we can meet the City needs. Ortman stated that his mother's lot is the biggest City lot and the pines could be cut down because they are dying of root rust anyway. Energy Positive Ashland starting with Energy Positive City of Ashland is the major goal. The Committee should write an opinion on data centers. Ortman asked if anyone was comfortable coming up with a statement explaining what we would insist on if one came here. Myslivy has researched on how to advise congregations on AI so can look through

things she has. Ortman can also bring information in. Ortman suggests preparing a sample ordinance. Gehred suggests highlighting the work being done and the fact that we have updated our ordinance. We should add the newsletter update and advertise the Extension link. We took on the mission statement of the Eco-Municipality.

8) Adjournment
   Ortman asked for a motion and second to adjourn. Tumas moved and Amman seconded. The meeting adjourned at 7:32 pm.