



MINUTES

City of Flagstaff Sustainability Commission

Thursday, February 28, 2019

4:30 – 6:30 pm

CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL

211 West Aspen Avenue, Flagstaff, Arizona

A quorum of the Flagstaff City Council may be in attendance of the Sustainability Commission meeting.



In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact 928-213-2100. Notification at least 48 hours in advance will enable the City to make reasonable arrangements.

CALL TO ORDER

COMMISSION MEMBERS:

Brian Petersen, Chair

David McCain, Vice Chair

Eli Chamberlain

Dara Marks Marino

Amanda Vigneau

Kevin White

STAFF LIAISON:

Nicole P. Antonopoulos

1. Call to Order

2. Roll Call

Chair Petersen

Vice Chair McCain

Commissioner Chamberlain

Commissioner Marks Marino (by phone)

Commissioner Vigneau

Commissioner White

3. Public Participation

At this time, any member of the public may address the Commission on any subject that is not scheduled before the Commission on that day. The Arizona Open Meeting Law prohibits the Commission from discussing or taking action on an item which is not listed on the prepared agenda. Commission members may, however, respond to criticism made by those addressing the Commission, ask staff to review a matter, or ask that a matter be placed on a future agenda. To address the Commission on an item that is on the agenda, please wait for the Chair to call for Public Comment at the time the item is heard.

No public participation.

4. Approval of Minutes

A. January 24, 2019

Commissioner Vigneau motioned to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair McCain. All voted in favor.

5. Business

A. Neighborhood Sustainability Grant Report Out (10 minutes) – TerraBirds

Requested Action: Informational

Robert Chambers, Program Director with TerraBIRDS, a local nonprofit, reported out on their Neighborhood Sustainability Grant project. The project aimed at working with a local landowner, Kwan Dixon, on Rose Street to create a garden with an emphasis on creating community and beauty in a low-income area in the Sunnyside Neighborhood. TerraBIRDS provides jobs program for at-risk youth to help prepare them as valuable employees.

The grant was used to create the Rose Street Community Garden. TerraBIRDS worked with 6 or 7 students from Ponderosa High as well as youth from the County Juvenile Detention Center and the Transition School. TerraBIRDS put together a design using raised beds. Students learned basic carpentry skills, mixed soils, installed a rainwater harvesting system, and grew plants for the garden at Ponderosa High School in an Elective Science class.

During the growing season, three families and students helped out at the garden on a regular basis. These families and students harvested the food. The landowner, Kwan, donates all the excess food to the People's Pantry.

TerraBIRDS also made concept designs for a food forest, polyculture, a pollinator garden, and fruit trees. TerraBirds believes that hand watering builds community and since irrigation systems can be expensive, they decided not to install an irrigation system.

Chair Peterson thought the project was emblematic of what the Commission wants to see happen with the grants program.

B. Neighborhood Sustainability Grant Application (10 minutes) – All

Requested Action: Discussion and Vote

Brooke Kahl, a service member at Killip Elementary with FoodCorps, presented on her grant proposal. FoodCorps works to connect healthy food to schools. Killip has a 4,800 acre garden that serves over 400 students, 100% of whom qualify for free and reduced meals.

The Killip garden was certified in May 2018 so that food grown in the garden can be served in the cafeteria. They have three gardens areas: a plant-part garden (for K-1), a learning garden, and a production garden (4th and 5th graders). Programs at the gardens include Garden Club, gardening during recess, gardening as part of lesson plans, and gardening after school (future opportunity).

The vision for the garden is threefold: to create a more established garden committee composed of a diverse group of stakeholders, to increase food production for the farm to food program, and to gather more information on ways to improve the

garden's sustainability. The garden was started in 1998 and they want to look at new ways to conserve water.

The first part of the grant proposal is to get their garden team to the Green Schools Conference in April 2019. Garden team members include representatives from the NAU Sustainable Communities program, Coconino County Cooperative Extension, Fit Kids, and Killip Elementary. The group was accepted to present on strengthening community based partnerships.

Second, the garden team hopes to buy three flow monitors for the Killip garden to track water consumption. The students would learn how to use the monitors and then track water consumption at different parts of the garden. Finally, the garden team wants to invest in native plants so they will look at creative ways to obtain these plants since they are expensive.

Commissioner McCain wanted clarification on the sustainability component of the project. Ms. Kahl clarified that there are both financial and environmental sustainability components of the project. The NAU Sustainable Communities program is losing funding that has been used at the Killip garden (financial) and the garden hopes to improve its water conservation (environmental).

The commission discussed whether or not the water conservation element in the proposal was strong enough to fall under the Water Conservation funding pool since the General Sustainability funding pool for the Neighborhood Sustainability Grants program had already been exhausted. Ms. Kahl mentioned that the conference had strong emphasis on green building with water conservation themes.

Chair Peterson mentioned that he was supportive because he feels that information sharing is very important. Ms. Kahl added that she would be happy to provide a summary of the information learned at the conference, especially as it relates to water conservation. She mentioned that the garden team hopes to engage other schools in the community as well as farmers and food service organizations in order to create an impact beyond the Killip.

Commissioner White motioned to approve the grant application. Vice Chair McCain seconded. All in favor.

C. City of Flagstaff Building Code Amendments (25 minutes) – Amy Palmer

Requested Action: Discussion and Vote

Amy Palmer, Building Official, and Victoria St. Clair, Building Plan Reviewer, led the presentation. Jesse Newton and Steve White, Coconino County, also attended since the code amendments are done in coordination with the county. Finally, Chief Bills and Kent Snide helped present on the fire code amendments.

Currently, the City of Flagstaff uses the 2012 code edition from the International Code Council (ICC) which a few exceptions. Staff are hoping to bring 2018 building codes up for adoption and amendments by City Council. The City opts to adopt ICC model codes on a 6-year basis although the ICC works on a 3-year basis. The hope is that new codes will become effective in May 2019 but there is a three month grace period.

Mrs. Palmer clarified that they use two separate code books for residential and commercial buildings.

Mrs. St. Clair mentioned several reasons for adopting the most recent codes including but not limited to: improving health, reducing emission, and creating jobs; protecting public health, safety, and welfare; cost savings on energy, among others.

Chair Peterson requested clarification on the cost of code updates. Mrs. Palmer mentioned that the code updates would, in some cases, result in significant cost and energy savings. She also mentioned that the code updates could help lower the cost of insurance premiums. The City will review its insurance rating with International Service Office (ISO) in the near future.

Mrs. Palmer provided an example of an update to the code where insulation and fenestration (i.e., the arrangement of windows and doors on the elevations of a building) would be improved for better insulation and energy conservation. Mrs. St. Clair then provided an example of an amendment to the code where the City amended water use per flush in urinals and water closets to be more conservative than the international code.

Mrs. Palmer shared that the City works closely with Coconino County to align code adoptions as much as possible, including any amendments that should be considered as per the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP). City and county staff also do joint trainings on code updates and amendments.

Mrs. St. Clair mentioned several code updates aimed specifically at addressing the CAAP goals. One is to require pre-wiring for solar in all new residential and commercial buildings. Another is to adopt electric vehicle (EV) ready building codes for residential buildings to ensure homes have sufficient capacity and wiring to accommodate EVs and avoid expensive retrofits. Staff also hope to update the building code to clarify steps for the installation of battery storage systems by residents and businesses although this is already included in the 2012 code used by the City currently.

The City hope to go a step further with some of these code adoptions to help meet the CAAP goals. These include amendments to the building code to require EV charging receptacle outlets at 5% of parking spaces for buildings with 20 or more parking spaces.

Chair Peterson asked about updating codes in the interim since the City only updates on a 6-year basis. Mrs. Palmer mentioned that the City can make amendments in the interim as needed. Mrs. Jenny Niemann, Sustainability Specialist, mentioned that Sustainability staff has been working closely with Building Department staff to align the CAAP goals with code updates and amendments into the future.

Commissioner McCain expressed gratitude and hope for the building updates.

Chief Bills added that the Fire Department follows the 2012 code and they will be going to the 2018 code. He feels it is very important that all divisions be in alignment on codes. He mentioned that a new chapter was added to the 2018 code that relates to the safety of alternative power systems in residential buildings.

Commissioner Vigneau motioned to have the Sustainability Commission express their support for the code updates and amendments. Vice Chair McCain seconded. All in favor.

D. Sustainability Commission Adopt an Avenue (5 minutes) – Maggie Twomey

Requested Action: Discussion and Vote

Maggie Twomey, Volunteer and Event Coordinator, provided an update on the Community Stewards program. She mentioned that there are 178 adoptable sections under the Adopt-a-FUTS and Adopt-an-Avenue programs. She added that 98% of these are adopted out. In addition, staff are working with a marketing firm and a consultant to increase litter awareness and awareness of their snow play stewards program.

Mrs. Twomey is doing a review of the groups that have adopted FUTS and Avenue sections to confirm whether or not they want to continue as stewards.

She shared that the Sustainability Commission has adopted Aspen Avenue from Humphreys to Elden since 2011. She asked if the Commission was still interested in being stewards of the street. If so, they would need to do three cleanups per year and report data. Ms. Antonopoulos mentioned that the last cleanup occurred in January 2016.

If interested, the Commission would need to email Maggie with the date and time of the cleanup and the number of people. She then puts together a cleanup kit that can be picked up ahead of time. After the cleanup is completed, the Commission reports on the number of hours, number of people, and number of bags of trash and recycling collected.

Commissioner Vigneau motioned to continue as stewards of the Aspen Avenue section. Vice Chair McCain seconded. All in favor.

E. Sinclair Wash Groundwater Recharge Project (10 minutes) – Paul Beier

Requested Action: Informational

Erin Young, Water Resources Manager, and Dr. Paul Beier, with NAU, presented on the community amenity and water management benefits of the Sinclair Wash Groundwater Recharge Project. Mrs. Young mentioned that the City has excess reclaimed water for most of the year with about one-third of reclaimed water flowing out of town to Doney Park. The recharge feasibility study is intended to better understand whether or not the City can recharge the aquifer with the excess reclaimed water through discharge into the Rio de Flag or other tributaries.

The goal of the feasibility study is to examine how to recharge 100% of excess reclaimed water to the C-aquifer. Recharge is limited to areas that are upstream of the City's recovery wells.

Other options for reclaimed water include purifying it to the point of drinking water or installing recharge wells to pump reclaimed water directly into the aquifer. This study does not focus on these options.

The City would need to pump water up gradient in order for this project to be successful. They will carry out a seepage study (or "recharge feasibility study") to determine where seepage rates are highest and therefore which areas are best for

recharge. The recharge feasibility study focuses on four sites within the City. Mrs. Young also mentioned the need to review cultural resources and land ownership to make sure that the project would not have unintended negative impacts.

Next, Dr. Paul Beier with NAU and Friends of the Rio de Flag, presented on the benefits of the project, namely, a year-round stream in Flagstaff. He described three discharge points that could add amenity value to the community.

Currently, reclaimed water is discharged at the Rio de Flag and Wildcat Hill WRPs. Recharge locations being considered under this project are restricted to areas where a reclaimed water line crosses a natural channel, and where the land is accessible. The locations are at Northern Arizona University (NAU), Frances Short Pond, Switzer Canyon, and Lone Tree Road.

Dr. Beier sees the most value along the Flagstaff Urban Trail System at Lone Tree Road where the area is publicly-owned and surrounded by low-income residents, NAU, the Flagstaff Community Labyrinth, a bus stop, Willow Bend Environmental Education Center, and Sawmill Park. He mentioned it would be a great place for picnic tables and an opportunity for an Arizona Game and Fish Department Urban Heritage Grant. Dr. Beier highlighted the rare birds and native plant species found along this stretch of the Rio de Flag.

Commissioner White asked whether or not this project could include a community garden component. Mrs. Young mentioned that staff follow a “One Water Paradigm” in which they seek to obtain the maximum benefit from all different qualities of water, including use for watering vegetation. They especially focus on projects that can benefit underserved communities.

Mrs. Young closed by saying that Water Services will begin a Water Resources Master Planning effort in July. The recharge feasibility study will help them make decisions about water allocation and recharge sites. Staff expect that they will carry out a public input process before taking the decision on a potential new recharge site to Council.

F. Climate Action and Adaptation Plan – Budget Sub-Committee Recommendations on City Budget (25 minutes) – All

Requested Action: Discussion and Vote

A Sub-Committee of the Commission was formed to look at the City Budget and analyze it in the context of the CAAP. The idea is to send a letter to City Council that provides recommendations for how to better align CAAP goals with the budget process.

The Sub-Committee reviewed the proposed budget items from all City Divisions to understand their alignment to the CAAP goals. Staff only get to pick one council goal when describing proposed budget items. Therefore, the Sub-Committee looked for budget items that specifically called out climate as well as budget items that were not identified by staff as aligning to climate specifically.

The letter will provide recommendations for how the climate-related goals get pushed forward in a more transparent way. In addition, the letter will include an education recommendation to help staff understand the co-benefits of the CAAP goals. Finally, the Sub-Committee will include recommendations for greenhouse gas

emission trainings by Sustainability staff in terms of return on investment. Sustainability staff want to engage other divisions in a positive way.

The Commission wants to make it easier and more clear for staff to determine if climate action is being addressed in the budget process. Commissioner Marks Marino thought it did not make sense to silo budget items since most things overlap or interrelate. Mrs. Niemann reminded the Commission that climate is already being integrated into the budgeting process.

Commissioner White motioned to authorize the Sub-Committee on writing and sending a letter to the City Manager about the budget process and integrating climate into the budget process. Commissioner Vigneau seconded. Commissioner Vigneau suggested inclusion of clear examples in the letter. All in favor.

G. Policy Incubation and Community Needs (20 minutes) – All

Requested Action: Discussion

Ms. Antonopoulos mentioned that this is a reoccurring Agenda Item intended as a brainstorming opportunity for the Commission on how to implement and achieve goals in the CAAP and the Sustainability program in general.

Commissioner Vigneau thought it would be helpful to only have up to seven items on the agenda at one time. Chair Peterson thought it was a fine line to walk but that they should keep it in mind.

Commissioner White felt it would be good to do research on the connections between climate, water issues, and economic growth. Commissioner White volunteered to look into the topic. Commissioner Vigneau thought it would be good to see how climate change is affecting our geriatric community. She suggested utilizing NAU Climate Sciences and Solutions students for these topics.

Chair Peterson mentioned he thought that a Sub-Committee should be formed to look at other U.S. cities and how they have addressed climate change. He added that undergraduates and graduates could look into this as well.

Chair Peterson assigned the Commission homework to identify good candidates for the open Sustainability Commission seat.

H. Sustainability Section Update (10 minutes) – Nicole Antonopoulos

Requested Action: Informational

City Council approved the pledge to join the Global Covenant of Mayors on February 5th. Flagstaff is one of three cities in Arizona and 178 in the nation.

Ms. Antonopoulos showed that March starts to ramp up for community events for all of the Sustainability Section's programs. On February 12th, staff launched an anti-littering campaign. The current focus is winter snow activities and "treating your outdoors like your indoors." The last Home Energy Efficiency workshop will be on March 6th at the Murdoch Center.

The Open Space program got a \$20,000 weed management grant. Staff hope to help create a regional network to address weeds. In addition, Open Space is looking at changing its name because the terminology lends itself to a lot of confusion. Finally,

there is an open house for the Schultz Creek Area at the Hal Jensen Recreation Center at 12pm-2pm on March 1st.

Ms. Antonopoulos mentioned that Sustainability staff would be presenting at City Council meetings in the coming months on sustainability-related issues. She mentioned the need for addressing electric bike and scooter use on the Flagstaff Urban Trail System.

Ms. Antonopoulos requested that commissioners take the Schultz Creel and Open Space Name surveys. She also requested volunteers to hang door hangers for Earth Day in April.

6. To and From (5 Minutes) – All

Jenny Niemann will be taking over as liaison for the Sustainability Commission. She is the point person moving forward.

Chair Peterson mentioned that he has not heard back from the library about sponsoring a book for the book club. He will look into it.

Mrs. Vigneau shared that she is helping to organize an Alzheimer’s walk and will share more information into the future.

Chair Peterson requested that the commission discuss setting up a cleanup in April. He added a few climate change talks will take place on campus soon.

7. Adjournment

Chair Petersen adjourned the meeting at 6:28pm.

CERTIFICATION OF POSTING OF NOTICE

The undersigned hereby certifies that a copy of the foregoing notice was duly posted at Flagstaff City Hall on _____, at _____ a.m./p.m. in accordance with the statement filed by the Disability Awareness Commission with the City Clerk.

Dated this _____ day of _____, 2019.
