



MINUTES OF THE SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2021, 5:00 PM
Virtual Meeting. Public may join via Zoom.

A. ZOOM MEETING INFORMATION.

I. This item contains documents which provide call in information and instructions for the Zoom meeting.

B. ROLL CALL.

I. Chair- Seth Hoffmeister; Vice Chair-Ned Dorff; Alder Randy Scannell; Prof. John Arendt; Stephanie Dodge; Kaurie Mihm-PRF; Julia Noordyk; Amy Kox; Mark Walter.

Present: Amy Kox, Ned Dorff, Randy Scannell, John Arendt, Mark Walter, Seth Hoffmeister, Julia Noordyk, Kaurie Mihm, Absent: Stephanie Dodge

C. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA.

I. Approval of the Sustainability Commission meeting agenda for October 20, 2021.

Moved by Ald. Randy Scannell, seconded by Mark Walter to Approve the agenda for October 20, 2021.

Motion Passed.

Yes- Randy Scannell, Ned Dorff, Seth Hoffmeister, Julia Noordyk, Mark Walter, John Arendt, Kaurie Mihm, Amy Kox, No- None, Abstain- None.

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES.

I. Approval of minutes from August 18, 2021.

Moved by Ald. Randy Scannell, seconded by Mark Walter to Approve the minutes from August 18, 2021.

Motion Passed.

Yes- Randy Scannell, Ned Dorff, Seth Hoffmeister, Julia Noordyk, Mark Walter, John Arendt, Kaurie Mihm, Amy Kox, No- None, Abstain- None.

E. REGULAR BUSINESS.

No action items. All items were informational.

F. INFORMATIONAL.

1. Welcome new commission member Amy Kox and introductions of all present board members.
2. Clean Energy work group update
3. Pollinator work group update
4. Resiliency Coordinator Updates

G. ADJOURNMENT.

Moved by Ald. Randy Scannell, seconded by John Arendt to Adjourn.
Motion Passed.

Yes- Randy Scannell, Ned Dorff, Seth Hoffmeister, Julia Noordyk, Mark Walter, John Arendt, Kaurie Mihm, Amy Kox, No- None, Abstain- None.

VERBATIM MINUTES

Zoom meeting information. Meeting is now recording. Wonderful. We'll move on to roll call.

- Present.

- Randy?

- I am here.

- John.

- Present.

- And Stephanie it looks like is not here. Kaurie it looks like is not here. Julia?

- Present.

- Amy?

- Present.

- Welcome, Amy. We'll do intros in second here, and Mark.
- Present. And it looks like a, welcome, Kaurie! We're just doing roll call. Thanks for joining us. Mark you down as here.
- Hi, great.
- And then onto approval of today's agenda, is there a motion to approve?
- Motion to approve!
- By Alburn. A second by John. All those in favor say aye.
- Aye.
- Aye.
- All those opposed say nay. All righty then. Onto approval of the minutes from August 18th, 2021. Our last meeting.
- Approved.
- By Randy. Second by Mark with the hand signal. All those in favor say aye.
- Aye.
- All those opposed say nay. Alright. And we will, we have pretty easy agenda tonight. Nothing on regular business, but we're going to go to informational. We have a new member of the sustainability commission. Amy, welcome! We're so happy to have you here. I think we can do an introduction. Just have a minute for everybody to go around and talk about their roles in the community, you know, other sustainability projects, things they're involved in, but Amy, would you like to start out by introducing yourself?
- Sure. My name is Amy Kox, I currently am the Dean for Trades and Engineering Technologies at NWTC. I, previous roles at NWTC included starting up their sustainable agriculture and energy program, solar energy management, some of those, previous to that, I was a lead certified architect, so have a passion for sustainability and energy conservation, and I'm really glad to be part of this committee. I also serve on the board for the Wisconsin Energy Workforce Consortium, so there's a nice tie there too to the energy work that goes on.
- Awesome. Well, looking forward to working with you. And I'll be reaching out to just have a one-on-one to talk about commission stuff in then next, I'll send an email tomorrow probably. I'm just going to call people out on the screen then to introduce themselves. Ned, you are next.
- Hi Amy, I'm Ned Dorff. I teach first and second grade at Aldo Leopold Community School in Green Bay, and I guess my kind of areas of passion regarding sustainability are around clean energy and pollinator, native plantings and pollinators, and yeah, I'm just excited to get things rolling again. And I think COVID down, but I think we're seeing the light at the end of the tunnel, so nice to meet you,

Amy.

- All right, Randy, you're next on screen.

- Randy, City Alder, I'm the city's, you know, representative here for the council. I helped get the floor, the committee, commission up and running with Seth, Joshua, and just, you know, glad to be a part of this, and you guys are really all the brains. I don't know anything, I'm here to help out with the council end if there's anything the council can do.

- Thanks, Randy, I'd add that you're one of the more courageous members of city council, especially after last night's end bridge discussion. Some really good leadership that you've embodied. So thank you for that. John, you're next.

- Hi, Amy. It's good to see you again. I'm John Arendt, I'm the director of the Environmental Management and Business Institute at UW Green Bay and also our Office of Sustainability. On campus, I sit on our Bee Campus USA committees, so there's a tie in to the pollinator group. I'm also on the clean energy work group for the sustainability commission and sit on the board of Steam Engine Green Bay.

- All right, Mark.

- Hey, Amy, nice to see you again. Been, wow, a long time. Anyway, yeah, I'm Mark Walter, I'm with Brown County. I'm in charge of a lot of our resource recovery programs. I mean, that's really what my focus is on, recycling and solid waste management. I also sit on the state council on recycling and I'm on the board of the Associated Recyclers of Wisconsin and beyond Ways to reduce waste and what we can do to stop landfilling things, even though a big part of my job is also to get people to become customers of our landfills, so I tend to do a lot of working against myself, but you know, nice to see you again.

- Kaurie?

- Hello, I'm Kaurie Mihm. I am the park planner with the city's parks department. I work basically in design and development of the parks' green ways and trails. I'm also a registered landscape architect, and I think for me, when I think sustainability, I think mainly what's important to me is connecting people to the outdoors and nature, and then really just kind of the conservation and preservation of natural areas.

- And Julia.

- H Amy, my name's Julia Noodyk, I worked for the University of Wisconsin's Bee Grants Institute, and I love all the things the sustainability commission really works on, and I tend though to bring more expertise to the water resources area, but yeah, that's kind of me.

- Thanks. Melissa, did you want to go too?

- Sure. Hi Amy. My name is Melissa Schmitz, I'm the staff liaison assigned to sustainability commission. I'm also the resiliency coordinator for the city. I joined the city about a year ago, it was actually a little, it was last week, October 12th. It was my work anniversary. And so primarily I'm working on

some of the items that are brought forward here by the sustainability commission, but really flood resilience, flood resiliency planning for the city of Green Bay, as well as climate action planning. So in two very broad categories. And my background is in environmental science and I spent the first half of my career in water resources management, and the second half of my career has been in energy management. And we have a great group of people. I don't want to, you know, like brag about everybody, but it's been a really good group of people, a very diverse set of expertise and skills. So it really makes it a well-rounded commission.

- Well, thanks, Melissa. It's incredible. It's been a year since you started. I feel like the time has gone so fast, but also just the amount of work that we've been able to do in the year with you on staff has been great. So thank you. It's also, I think it's exactly three years since we started meeting. October 2018 was our first meeting. So Amy, I'm Seth Hoffmeister, I'm our chair, and have been since Randy and I worked with the group Joshua, like he mentioned, and my, the organization in which I work as deputy director, Wisconsin Conservation Voters, to create this commission. We've been doing a lot of great work, it's a lot of fun, lots of really cool projects, great people, I guess the areas I'm most into are that of climate, addressing climate change at the local level. I think we see a lot of great opportunities for a city like Green Bay to really be a statewide and even a national leader on addressing climate change and making that transition to a hundred percent clean energy, carbon neutrality, and all of that. So very excited to continue that work with your expertise. Great. We'll move on to item two then. Am I leading this or am I giving the report on the clean energy work group update?

- It's up to you. I can give a play-by-play too if you'd prefer.

- Yeah, well I guess the, yeah, why don't you recap yesterday's presentation, John?

- Sure, I got the slide deck in front of me, so it's easy. We began, we met with the common council last night and Seth began by reiterating our commitment that the city and the community are looking to be a hundred percent on clean energy or carbon neutral by 2050 if not before. Also reminding the council that they had, that we had committed to joining the Wisconsin Local Government Climate Coalition, and that they had supported that, along with that commitment to a hundred percent clean energy. Seth also shared that citywide, we talked about the solar installation light stations and talked about that we had set up the clean energy working group that was focused on trying to get us closer to carbon neutrality. At that point I jumped in and told them, essentially laid out our process, where we as a clean energy working group began, brought in other volunteers, we brought in help from NWTC, particularly Jenny Brinker and her students to help bring some of our buildings into the energy star portfolio manager, as part of monitoring our progress towards carbon neutrality. Also shared with them that we had collected data from the city in a variety of areas, and that process did take a bit of time, but after gathering that we compiled that data and we began to into the EPA local, you know, school, which is helping us to determine our carbon footprint. We shared with the common council the emissions that we've tracked so far and where we're at, and that happens to be about at 31,293 metric tons of carbon that the city is generating, and this is city operations that we're talking about. After that, I compared our carbon emissions to a few other cities across the nation to see where we're at. I reminded them that we're a little bit late in the game of starting to track our carbon, so it's no surprise that of similar populations our carbon metric tons of carbon per person, per city resident tends to be a little higher in Green Bay than some of the other communities that I identified. I gave him a list of the data that we're still looking for, and we'll need help getting there, and that kind of segued into Melissa finishing it up, talking about some of the next steps that

we are going to need to do, and that is working with our utility provider to get additional data, we're going to need to seek funding as we move forward and try to develop a climate action plan, we're going to need to engage with more stakeholders as we want to advance this thing, this process, ultimately, we're going to need to develop mitigation strategies for our climate action plan, continue tracking our progress towards greenhouse gas reduction and ultimately zero, and in the process, maybe also partner with other local communities and even the county perhaps to assist in getting us ultimately, by or before 2050 to carbon neutral. And that's the short version.

- Awesome. I don't think I really have anything else to add. Melissa, did you, or Ned, do you?

- No, that was a very nice recap, John, of last night's presentation. The only other thing I would add as far as relating to this work group is, we discussed it during the last couple of meetings I believe, and that's starting to prepare language for an RFP for a climate action plan, so I've started doing that. I've set a goal for myself to get it to my director within the next two weeks, you know, just because I work well on timelines, and so that's, you know, from a staff perspective and what I'm working on, that's one of the, as it relates to the initiative.

- Just to piggyback on John's amazing rundown of that, that was really nice, John. He mentioned partnering with other local communities and governments, and so in between our last meeting and this one, we did, so I tend to try to interface with the city and the school district, the Green Bay public schools, and John and Jenny are kind of arranging some services to help the school district determine what our carbon output is at that level. So I think that working group is really serving as a resource for more than just city operations now at this point. And it's good to have John that we can turn to for things like that.

- And if, you know, if I can throw this at you guys, as well, since you're like work group, from my end of the world of recycling and waste disposal areas, two of the most problematic waste we're dealing with right now, one is solar panels. In spite of what Eland Electric said about being able to recycle solar panels, there's actually only one company in the state of Wisconsin that can actively recycle some solar panels, but the technology is being in development. The other one is actually wind turbine, you know, from a clean energy standpoint, wind turbine blades are a huge, huge disposal issue because their composite materials are not recyclable, and they also don't break break up very well when you try to landfill them. So as you go forward and look at clean energy issues, I look at the end of life of the products that are created and what are we going to do with them, and seeing if there are better solutions or better products that that should be put into play in the long run. Even though they may last 20 or 40 years, at the end of that time, someone who has to deal with that, and the best option is for the manufacturer to take responsibility for it. But nonetheless, that's not likely to happen still. Just something to throw out there to keep in the discussion.

- Awesome. Thanks everybody. We'll move on then to item three, pollinator work group updates. Ned, take it away.

- We're coming out of dormancy as suppose. We are looking at cities around the country that have requirements for their municipal operations to use native landscaping on like city owned land, and it kind of came to mind with an article about Newtown, Connecticut having an ordinance in place for that. So there's a few of us on the pollinator working group trying to comb through other cities and municipalities to see if anybody else has something like that on the books, so that we might discuss that hopefully next month and maybe come up with a resolution or some kind of ordinance language

in the following months. That's what I have for that.

- Cool. Any questions for Ned or anything to add re pollinators? Alrighty then, onto-

- Sorry, I just have a quick question for Ned regarding that. Ned, that ordinance information, is that for like new development typically or?

- So that would be like for municipally owned land, like if we have, you know, park land obviously, DPW land, things like that, and let's say that we're putting in new landscaping, you know, how do we create possibly a native Wisconsin's plants first model versus grabbing something that's exotic to put in or trees or ornamental grasses, things like that, you know, how can we encourage that within city operations? So I'm not sure about new development. Is that, are you thinking more for like private development?

- No, I was thinking, you know, on city owned land, I guess I was just curious if it would be kind of involving converting existing park land, if you're not really doing work already, you know, in that park or if it's more, okay, you know, we're doing a ball field here which didn't exist before and now we're going to put native plants around that, you know? Kind of, or is it both?

- Yeah, I mean, I think it's both. I think it's looking at the land we already own and use and, you know, possibly, you know, changing out what's there, but maybe waiting until it needs to be upgraded. I feel like maybe we can discuss that more discussion item, but I can see it encompassing new development and going back to kind of retro landscape old land as well.

- Good.

- Yeah, John?

- I just wanted to weigh in, since it relates to the pollinator group, we had a meeting in early October with some folks from NWTC, they toured UW Green Bay, they were looking at our pollinator gardens, and had interest in maybe doing something which really fits in with I think the idea that both UW Green Bay and NWTC slash The Green Bay Botanical Garden could be really kind of two hubs as we fill in the city of Green Bay as our pollinator corridor in between, so I'm glad to see that they were interested and that those talks continue.

- Yeah, I can add a little bit about that. I sit on the sustainability committee team for NWTC, and really there's a lot of support for creating a pollinator landscape starting, you know, with a, you know, a smaller footprint, but really commitment from the top, from the president of the college, and that group is really just trying to figure out what kind of, they've been tasked to figure out what the maintenance cost, what the, you know, to get something established. So really doing the research to make sure that whatever we do, we're able to sustain over time and really provide the right amount of care so that it develops into the habitat we want it to be, so.

- Alder Andy.

- Thanks, Mr. Chair! I was going to actually put this in as a communication, but maybe just talking about a little bit and then maybe communication if necessary or whatever, but why doesn't the city, when it needs to plant new grass, terraces, or whatever use no mow seed? Why don't we go with

more no mow grass areas. I mean, that would cut down, if we can get to the point where we're not mowing, that's a reduction of noise pollution, it's a reduction of carbon in the, you know, pollution. Why, is that something that would be, is there a reason why we're not doing that? Is there a reason that, you know, that's something to start looking into?

- Do you think we could roll that discussion into like a possible resolution or ordinance talk in the next couple of months? I feel like that's a great corollary.

- Right, well, and yeah, I think we could maybe do something with it. I don't know if we need an ordinance or something to change policies of public works park, you know, I think I'm going to start with what the city does and then hopefully we can encourage the citizenry, you know, to follow along, but, you know, and then we can start looking at ordinances and things after that, but Kaurie, you think, you see a problem with the, whenever the parks reseed to use no mow seed instead of seed that needs to be cut? I mean, it seems to be an easy, I don't know how much that seed costs, but maybe we could always partner with other communities too to, you know, buy in bulk, and reduce the price, or whatever. I don't know. I don't know how much seed we buy, how much we get a break on that or whatever, but-

- Yeah, I mean, I think there could be some kind of complications as far as maintenance, and people needing to learn how to maintain, because you still do need to maintain a no mow lawn.

- See, I know nothing about that. What do you gotta do?

- It does need to be trimmed. Typically, at least a couple of times a year. I'm not super familiar with maintaining it myself, but have also been told, like it can kind of, over the winter, like mat itself down if it hasn't been mowed before the winter, and then you kind of find areas and pockets where the grass dies out.

- So no mow is a misnomer.

- Yeah, there's still maintenance involved, less maintenance definitely. I think too, just the use areas. So would it, for instance, like along a sidewalk, what the flapping over of the grass cause concerns for pedestrians coming through or snowblowers and things like that, I don't know, but really, I think walkways, the use area, just considering those things and then just meaning to educate people and our staff or whoever on how to maintain it. But I definitely, we have been talking about it more throughout the parks in areas that we're reseeding and looking at it as an optional already. So we don't necessarily have like percentage numbers that we're trying to acquire or get to yet, but I think at some point it would be nice to have something like that in place, so.

- You burst my bubble. I thought no mow was no mow. That's false advertising! I want to sue!

- It's less mow.

- Less mow is perfect.

- Well, then they need to call it less mow then. Don't call it no mow. Now I feel stupid!

- Well, you learn something new.

- I did. That's what I love about this job! Always learning something new!
- Awesome. Thanks everybody for the updates. Randy. I was worried you hadn't made a pun yet at this meeting and I'm glad
- You missed them. They were a little earlier.
- Oh really? All right.
- You need to show up on time.
- I thought he was going to tell Kaurie to, she's probably parked the idea of no mow grass.
- Mark's on the board. Anybody else with any questions or clever remarks?
- I was gonna say, your comments are kind of seedy.
- There we go. Andy's hitting his stride. Cool. Well then we'll move on then to resiliency coordinator updates, Melissa.
- So the no mow discussion is a perfect segue to the update that I have on the No Mow May policy that was voted on. So the director of public works here in Green Bay and I have been having discussions on, you know, formalizing that policy, and so that it's ready for spring, and we've also been in talks with De Pere, city of De Pere, because they piloted their no more, not no more may, No Mow May last year, and they've learned, they have some lessons learned. I haven't had an in-depth discussion with De Pere yet, but Scott Thoreson, who is De Pere's public works director is actually, he's on our call right now. He's in the meeting and he's listening in, and Scott, I don't want to put you on the spot or anything, so don't, and he's here really because they also, De Pere also has a sustainability commission, and so he's interested in hearing what we talk about as well. So I let him know when our next few meetings are, so if Scott's here, he's here to learn, and then hopefully what our plan is is that Green Bay and De Pere will share ideas on their No Mow May policy to, because we don't believe in like reinventing the wheel if something's working someplace else, and collaborate with De Pere on their policy. So that's the update for No Mow May. The next update I have is for the green infrastructure initiative, and Amy, just for your knowledge, city of Green Bay has a green infrastructure initiative in place. It started, I think really mostly with Julia Noordyk's influence with the city, and so we're looking at, we recently completed an amendment or a code audit of our municipal code to incorporate green infrastructure language with our stormwater ordinance, as well as our landscaping standards, and the noxious weeds and native plantings codes. So where that sits right now is it's with, it's still in our law department, and they're reviewing it, we're through with all of our revisions, and so we're really just waiting on a redline version to come out so that we can start holding a public input session. So I don't have a timeline. I have what I hope it to be, but I don't have a specific timeline yet from the other department, so, and then I already talked about the climate action plan. What else? Ned, do you have any specific questions? You usually have very specific questions on my updates.
- [Julia] Melissa, do you want to talk about the workshop last week?

- Yeah, I can bring that up.

- [Julia] Or you want me too?

- Sure, no, I can bring that up. There was a, we held a staff workshop last week and we had, I don't know. How many participants did we have Julia? Was it around 22?

- [Julia] It was well, staff you said maybe 23. I think there was 30 people on the call, and there was the facilitators.

- With the facilitators. So we held a resiliency workshop for staff and we had about eight departments represented. It was a virtual workshop, and so UWC Grant and the Nature Conservancy, and basically it's the group of the East River Resiliency Collaborative that's formed. They've been holding these workshops in all of the communities that are along the East River. And so they approached city of Green Bay and we definitely wanted to participate in that, but we broadened it to the whole city, not just the East River. So we spent two hours last week identifying various flood hazards throughout the city, and then the level of concern of those impacts, and the types of impacts. So it was really a great exercise and it, you know, we know where a lot of the flooding happens, but to have representative staff from so many different departments, it really gave a different perspective to where some of the flooding happens and what some of the specific flood hazards are. So we're going to continue that with a questionnaire that goes out to all the participants, and then we'll have a workshop hopefully sometime in November to start talking about potential solutions. Julia, that's all I have, if you wanted to add anything else.

- [Julia] Nope. That was a really good summary.

- Well, Melissa, since you called me out, I don't have any pointed questions this month, but we do, you, it kind of dovetails into something you and I are doing in a couple of weeks, I think. We're doing a meeting with DNR, another school district kind of city interface for green infrastructure and looking at what we can do in kind of school district owned lawn area to boost flood resiliency in some of our neighborhoods. I am looking forward to that, hopefully maybe with that workshop, give us some good insight into what we should be looking at.

- Yeah, absolutely. I think it'll be good to meet the new DNR MS4 person that they recently hired for Green Bay, and he'll be in that meeting, and then to see where we could have potential partnerships with the school district on installing different types of green infrastructure in key areas that could potentially alleviate some of the flooding issues. So with that, those are my updates.

- [Julia] Sorry, just a comment regarding your meeting in the future for the school stuff. So if you get to the point where you need, you have questions about like what type would be good at a location to help, like in terms of, I don't know if you already have the resources or capacity even in staff, but to do some modeling or just some GIS modeling or mapping to figure out actually like how much green infrastructure would be wanted at the site and where to put it, just let me know, 'cause we could have a conversation about that in the future.

- Thank you. We could probably invite you if we see it works for the calendar. Thank you.

- Cool, any other questions for Melissa, or just anything else that folks wanted to update the group

on.

- I have something. Just wanted to let you know, we are getting close to hiring an AmeriCorps coordinator for the parks department where this person would help to write a grant for an AmeriCorps program where we would hopefully have three years of, at a minimum, of AmeriCorps members working throughout the parks and green ways, mainly working on conservation trail type projects, that sort of thing. So potentially by the next time we meet, we might have that person on board. So it's pretty exciting.

- [Julia] That's, congratulations, that is really exciting. What, how many, like when you write the grant, how many people are you, how many AmeriCorps people are you trying to bring for three years?

- We don't know yet. And this person is going to help us figure that out. But in discussions we've had with some of the AmeriCorps staff, it sounds like probably at least bringing in 10 people is a good program as far as they're concerned, and so our hope too though is that with this program, we'll be able to draw and bring in volunteers to help with these projects as well. So 10 staff members, you know, and then hopefully volunteers as well. It's kind of what we're looking at now, but it could vary depending on once that person gets here and we really start figuring out exactly kind of what our performance measures and things are going to be, so we'll see.

- Exciting. Thanks, Kaurie. Any other updates or do we have a motion to adjourn?

- Motion to adjourn!

- By Randy. Seconded by? John. All right. All those in favor to adjourn say aye.

- Aye. Aye.

- Welcome aboard, Amy!

- Thank you. Thanks everybody for the nice welcome, and I'll start working on my puns for the next meeting.