

MINUTES OF THE MISSION SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION

Monday, September 13, 2021 - 6:30 P.M.
Held in person at the Powell Community Center

In attendance: John Arnett, Terri Baugh, David Greenlee, Andy Hyland, Lenny Lippert, Ellen Parker, Mike Patterson, Josh Thede

Council Liaisons present: Councilmember Sollie Flora, Councilmember Debbie Kring

Staff present: Emily Randel, Assistant to the City Administrator

I. Welcome and introductions

Josh Thede welcomed everyone to the meeting. Emily Randel reminded everyone that the City Council had approved masks during public meetings.

II. Public Comment

Emily Randel shared that Sumya Anani, the Mission business owner who has stated her concerns with the use of Glyphosate in the City's herbicide treatments at a previous meeting told staff about a meeting of volunteers in Kansas City, MO happening tonight. The group has permission from the KCMO Parks Department to use Hyde Park as a pilot project to plant native plants in areas currently sprayed for weeds. The volunteers will monitor the plantings and pull weeds by hand until they are established and the need for herbicides is eliminated.

John Arnett thanked the group for their cards and well wishes following his recent injury. He wanted to make public mention that this group isn't "just anyone" to him, and the messages from the Sustainability Commission and City staff mean a lot. The group applauded and welcomed John back to the meeting and gave their appreciation for all he contributes to the community.

III. Sustainability Moment

Emily Randel shared that City Hall's front garden space on 61st Street will be planted with native plants. City Roots Nursery, a vendor from the Mission Market, will be planting on September 20 and will provide monthly maintenance to make sure the plants are well-established. The goal would be to have the plot serve as a demonstration space, with information about the plants for people to view and get ideas for their own spaces. Emily also referenced a recent [article in the New York Times](#) that highlighted the benefits of fall planting. Lenny Lippert asked if there are volunteer opportunities for the planting. Emily answered that she thinks the City Roots Nursery staff will be working hard on the planting day, but that they are open to having others shadow their maintenance work, so that they can learn what is involved in caring for the plants once they are planted. Emily will try to coordinate that for anyone interested in future months. Josh Thede stated that there are many benefits to native plants and that this was an exciting development.

IV. Approval of the August 2, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Lenny Lippert moved to approve the August meeting minutes. Mike Patterson seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

V. DirectionFinder Survey Results

Josh Thede presented a few of the highlights related to the DirectionFinder survey results gathered earlier in 2021. The survey is statistically valid, and the research firm, ETC, performs the same survey in neighboring jurisdictions, so cities can compare results as well as to responses over time. There are several sustainability initiatives ranked highly in the survey responses. While it is difficult to know exactly what some of the responses mean entirely, there are several indicators that align with the goals of the Sustainability Commission. The group briefly discussed the responses to the feedback about the Powell Community Center.

VI. Strategic Plan Update and Discussion

The retreat will be held on Saturday, September 25 from 8:30 a.m.-noon at the Powell Community Center. Snacks and water and coffee will be provided. The same COVID-19 safety restrictions will be in place and attendees will wear masks during the meeting.

Ellen Parker presented updates on the Sustainability Commission vision.

Mission (Existing): The Sustainability Commission advises the Council on policies pertaining to sustainable practices impacting the natural environment, the economy and the community.

Vision (Proposed): A more prosperous, environmentally-friendly community for residents of all ages.

John Arnett asked how the sub-committee was considering to define “prosperous.” The group discussed it in relation to people, planet and prosperity that has guided the Sustainability Commission for many years. Andy Hyland stated that he considers “prosperous” to include financial prosperity, but also vitality.

Ellen reviewed that the goal of a vision statement is paint a idea of utopia. Where do we want to be?

Councilmember Sollie Flora suggested that the use of “friendly” in the vision statement may be a little “squishy” for this group’s purposes. Maybe the vision statement could set some targets. Emily Randel mentioned that the concept of future may be missing. Lenny Lippert echoed this. Councilmember Kring said that the concept of sustainability does include the concept of the future.

Andy Hyland shared thoughts around goals vs. tactics. A goal is an umbrella that many things can be included. The retreat aims to target a few large goals that would be used to organize future activities of the group. A tactic is a way that we’re accomplishing the goal. Andy has observed many small projects and ideas that come up. The goal of the retreat is not to stifle those ideas, but want to make sure that they serve the larger goals set in the strategic planning efforts.

Councilmember Kring said she would like to see marketing successes. The group can highlight the work of the private sector businesses that are doing a good job of using sustainable projects in a way that can invite the average resident to engage in similar practices.

Mike Patterson asked if the group expects to come out of the retreat would be to have action steps established. The meeting following the retreat will be the right time to discuss the action steps that serve the goals set at the retreat. Emily Randel stated that the energy of the group members is the most precious resource, and so using that energy to spark more activity could be a guide. There is a lot that can be done by broadening participation, connecting people to existing resources, and educating people about actions they can take.

Josh Thede distributed copies of the Climate Action KC Playbook to the group members as additional preparation for the retreat. The [Regional Climate Action Plan](#) is also available online.

VII. Standing Items

○ Recycling Sub-Committee Update

Recycling Handout - Terri Baugh shared that WCA/GFL has created a new handout of what will be accepted at the material recovery facility. The recycling subcommittee will review the handout that has two discrepancies from the S.C. doorhanger and will make a recommendation on how to handle that.

Environmental Fair - Lenny Lippert reported that the committee met on their first meeting on Zoom. COVID-19 is still putting some doubt into what might be possible to be planned. The group is thinking of hosting 30-40 vendors if possible, and therefore thinking that the event be held out of doors. The recommendation feels that pushing the event to the fall of 2022. Lenny will share the list of people who attended the Zoom meeting.

Adopt a Street – Terri Baugh confirmed that the clean-up was very successful with just two bags collected.

Curbside Composting - Josh Thede mentioned that Compost Collective did attend the Mission Market and is taking sign ups for their service.

○ Comprehensive Plan Update

Josh Thede provided an update on the Comprehensive Plan. He emailed via Emily Randel's meeting update the draft chapter on Natural Resources and Environment. There will be public comment sessions in October and November ahead of a draft coming out in late 2021. Feedback of all kinds will be welcome. The group discussed some of the leading issues being discussed within the steering committee including density and housing issues.

○ Council Liaison Update

Councilmember Flora shared an update on the street sales tax mail ballot election. Ballots are due back on September 21 and there is a town hall meeting on September 15 at 6 p.m.

Councilmember Kring shared she will be out of town during the retreat, but will complete the homework. She wants to remind the group ahead of the retreat that not everyone is coming to sustainability from the same place, but there is usually something that can get people there.

The Shawnee Mission Post Mission Candidate Forum is September 21st.

Councilmember Kring knows there are EPA grants and other resources available. She has experience in reviewing grant applications and is willing to review any grant applications for opportunities if the group is interested in submitting anything. She reiterated that bringing in additional resources is always welcome.

VIII. Spending Proposals

Josh Thede introduced an idea of purchasing snacks for the retreat in an amount of \$10 per person. Andy Hyland moved to spend up to \$140 for snacks for the retreat. Terri Baugh seconded the motion. Terri Baugh requested decaffeinated coffee. The motion passed.

Terri Baugh shared that the first 55-gallon drum of batteries is ready to recycle. The cost to ship and process the batteries and return the drum to Public Works is \$649.30. Terri Baugh made the motion to approve that cost. Lenny Lippert seconded the motion. The motion passed. If the company will accept any 55-gallon DOT approved drum, then Mike Patterson can provide one to save the \$55 charge.

Terri Baugh compared the costs of using the Big Green Box that the Sustainability Commission used to use and the 55-gallon drum recycling method with Battery Solutions. The costs are nearly the same. Emily Randel said that there seems to be less work involved with Battery Solutions. It avoids the use of the one-time use of the cardboard boxes and the scheduling of the FedEx pickups and the additional trips for shipping.

IX. Reminders and Announcements

Andy Hyland shared again how good it is to have John Arnett back in the group.

X. Review of Action Items

XI. Adjourn

Andy Hyland moved to adjourn the meeting. Terri Baugh seconded the motion. The motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

The next regular meeting of the Sustainability Commission will be in person on Monday, October 4, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.