

CITY OF MONONA
Sustainability Committee
Thursday, October 14, 2021
Meeting Minutes – FINAL

1. Call to Order

6:32 PM – Meeting called to order by Alder Molly Grupe

2. Roll Call

Members Present: Alder Molly Grupe, Sue Vogt, Dan Costello, Chris Conrad, Sarah Smith

Absent: Alder Nancy Moore, Teresa Radermacher, Ken Walz

Staff Present: Elisa Guerrero

3. Approval of Minutes from the August 12, 2021 Sustainability Committee Meeting

No motion was made to approve the minutes because of lack of quorum.

4. Appearances

None

5. Unfinished Business

A. Outreach Efforts

Molly reminded the Committee that the Fall Festival was on Saturday, October 16 and volunteers were still needed to help at the Committee's table.

B. Energy Roadmap

Elisa summarized the staff memo included in the packet that outlined existing clean energy goals and the energy data that staff already collect and analyze annually. Sue asked for more visual representations of the City's clean energy goals and renewable energy use. Chris suggested that the roadmap focus on a few things that could be done well, instead of trying to address everything all at once.

The committee discussed which City facilities, like the Community Center, have the most opportunity for energy efficiency improvement. Molly mentioned that City Council had discussed possible improvements to the Community Center through a building envelope study, and that the Sustainability Committee might be able to provide input about those building improvements.

C. 2022 Operating Budget

Sarah joined the meeting.

Elisa gave an overview of the proposed budget, which included funds for marketing and the Earth Day e-cycling event. Professional development funds had been moved to the Administrative budget.

A motion was made by Chris, seconded by Sarah, to approve the proposed 2022 Sustainability Budget.

The motion carried.

6. New Business

A. Eco-Action Tuesdays

Penny DePaola, from Monona Public Library shared information about Eco-Action Tuesdays and said that they were planning topics for the 2022 sessions. For 2022, she was pulling inspiration for the topics from a presentation about the MIT Enroads climate data simulator.

Sue spoke to some of her own ideas for Eco-Action Tuesday sessions, including showing the urgency of climate action and having local residents talk about the sustainability efforts they are taking on. She stressed that people should be informed but not overwhelmed about climate change and that the Eco-action Tuesday program would ideally encourage attendees to make whatever changes they can to mitigate climate change effects. She felt that the Committee could likely find creative ways to support the program.

Molly agreed and felt that encouraging collaboration between neighbors was important. The committee then discussed the community water challenge that happened a few years ago and how something similar might be implemented again with the City's new water meters.

B. Department of Energy SolarAPP+ (Solar Permitting)

Elisa explained that the SolarAPP+ was a new platform from the Department of Energy designed to facilitate permitting for solar panels by expediting the review process. She said that, while the program is great, it might not make sense for Monona until there is a larger volume of building permit applications for solar panels. In 2021 so far, there had been 11 applications for solar panels and the permit review process was not very long.

7. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Discussion Items – Projects, Programs, Policies, or Budget Considerations for Council Advisement

No updates.

8. Important Updates from Committee Members or Items to Consider for Future Agendas

Chris presented the idea of smart zoning codes, like the code revisions that Fitchburg had implemented, and other tools that allowed for smaller lot sizes and other tactics for improving single-family home affordability in Monona. Molly and Sue were supportive of discussing issues like that at future meetings. Elisa mentioned that these kinds of ideas had come up in discussion at Plan Commission meetings and among City staff, and that it would be great to have support from the Sustainability Committee should code revisions be brought before Plan Commission.

9. Actionable Items

None

10. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn: First – Molly, second – Sarah. Passed at 7:20pm.