



SHAKER HEIGHTS

Sustainability Committee Minutes

Thursday, February 9, 2023

8:00 A.M.

VIA ZOOM PURSUANT TO CHAPTERS 113 AND 115 OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES (AS AMENDED IN ORDINANCE 22-28), AND RESOLUTION 22-29, ENACTED ON MARCH 22, 2022

Members Present: Nancy Moore, Council Member
Sean P. Malone, Council Member
Shanna Keown, Citizen Member
Norman Robbins, Citizen Member

Others Present: David Weiss, Mayor
Jeff Isaacs, Shaker Heights School District Board Member
Michael Peters, Sustainability Coordinator

The meeting was called to order by Committee Chair Nancy Moore at 8:04 A.M.

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Approval of the January 12, 2023 Meeting Minutes

It was moved by Sean Malone and seconded by Shanna Keown that the minutes of the January 12, 2023 meeting be approved as recorded; unanimously passed.

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Recommendation on Contract with Coventry Land Co for Sustainability Consulting Services

The current contract for sustainability consulting services with Coventry Land Company LLC (Coventry) is expiring at the end of February. This role assists the City in prioritizing its sustainability efforts and supports the work of the Sustainability Committee. The Administration is recommending a renewal of the contract, for a fifth term, from March 1, 2023 through February 28, 2024 for a not to exceed amount of \$52,658.

In 2019, City Council allocated funds to support the sustainability efforts of the City. Coventry was selected through a competitive request for proposals in 2018 to manage the agenda and meetings of the Sustainability Committee and support the City’s sustainability efforts.

Recent accomplishments in which Coventry has played a part include the promotion of sustainability initiatives through social media and *Shaker Life* magazine, maintaining LEED for Cities certification, working with the Administration and Law Department on the creation of the Community Choice Aggregation program for 100 percent renewable electricity, a review of the Cuyahoga County Toolkit over multiple sessions, supporting the work and managing the budgets for the three subcommittees of the Sustainability Committee and various ad hoc working groups, coordinating activities for the Grow Not Mow sites, working with the subcommittees and Shaker Heights City Schools District on

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composting efforts, assisting in the design and implementation of the Electric Lawn Mower Rebate program, and promoting rooftop solar installations.

The initial contract with Coventry in 2018 was for \$50,000. This was increased in the last renewal to \$51,500, and the renewal is proposed at a 2.24 percent increase, in line with the non-bargaining increase for City staff. Based on the accomplishments and leadership provided by Coventry, the Administration is recommending an extension to the contract.

Comments included Sean Malone expressing that in his opinion this is the best value the City receives from a vendor or consultant, Norman Robbins shared how he is aware of other cities' efforts and how having a paid consultant makes a big difference in the success of these efforts and furthermore he felt we couldn't get one-third as much accomplished otherwise, and Jeff Isaacs indicated that from the Shaker Heights City Schools perspective he believes there has been a real benefit from the collaboration and having Coventry as a resource. Nancy Moore finished the comments by saying that it has been a privilege to work with Coventry and so many projects would not be achievable without this work and the energetic community of Shaker Heights. She also shared how many other communities have commented on the Sustainability Committee meetings and actions and look to them as a model.

The motion to recommend the contract extension to City Council was made by Sean Malone and seconded by Norman Robbins and passed unanimously.

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Recap of 2022 Committee Goals and 2023

A short presentation was made recapping the goals the Sustainability Committee and subcommittees made in 2022 along with an update of progress and plans to continue this work in 2023. It was presented for the Sustainability Committee and each of the three subcommittees.

Highlights for the Sustainability Committee include completing the 2022 goal of creating a Community Choice Aggregation program for renewable electricity. Ongoing goals include rooftop solar on City buildings, transitioning to electric vehicles, continuing the internal green team, investigating LED streetlights, tracking waste diversion, converting to electric landscape equipment, and encouraging non-car mobility options.

For the Stormwater & Green Space subcommittee, the revisions to the stormwater code were completed while ongoing initiatives include the Grow Not Mow sites, the Certified Yard Habitat program, continued positive education and messaging, and composting.

The Energy subcommittee completed its goal of promoting energy conservation through the Dominion energy audit program and continues this work while promoting energy conservation, suggesting social media posts on these topics, increasing solar education and awareness, and promoting electric vehicle charging.

The Shaker Youth LEEDs subcommittee successfully completed the 2022 EcoChallenge and its review and suggestions on Horseshoe Lake Park. Ongoing goals include the 2023 EcoChallenge, supporting the Sustainability Committee, and recruiting new members.

Comments included Sean Malone’s reminder on the waste goal of emphasizing reduce, reuse, and recycle with the prospect of having a subcommittee focus on waste reduction. Norman Robbins suggested a new goal for the Energy subcommittee is to maximize the provisions of the Inflation Reduction Act to encourage the electrification of homes. Shanna Keown suggested that the students are interested in waste diversion and may expand their scope especially if there is additional faculty guidance available beyond Hathaway Brown. Jeff Isaacs offered to pick up on this conversation with Shanna Keown to engage the Shaker Heights City Schools and also suggested outreach to Ruffing School where many Shaker Heights residents attend high school.

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Presentation and Discussion on Natural Gas

Over the past several weeks there have been resident communications to City Council members regarding their concerns over the use of natural gas for cooking in homes and the impacts to public health. A presentation was provided that provided background and context to this topic.

Several recent news articles and academic studies elevated this issue with the public. This included articles in local and national news outlets, and highlighted the health impacts of using and combusting natural gas inside of a home. Academic studies have shown that exposure to natural gas increases the likelihood of asthma, and lower income residents are more likely to be impacted by asthma.

Some efforts have been made to increase awareness around this topic and some states have taken actions related to it. At one end are states that have allowed local municipalities to restrict the installation of new natural gas lines in residential settings, while others have pre-emptively prohibited municipalities from doing this.

The presentation also highlighted the accepted science around this topic. This includes that gas stoves emit nitrogen dioxide, carbon monoxide, and fine particulate matter when burning gas. They also emit methane even when off and methane is a potent greenhouse gas. It was also noted that electric induction cooktops and ranges are priced competitively with gas stoves and can be operated with renewably-sourced electricity.

Finally it was noted that Ohio, which has one of the highest uses of natural gas in the nation, is one of the states that pre-emptively prohibited municipalities from restricting gas service (HB 201). However, the City can create programming and education around the issue, publicize the incentives in the Inflation Reduction Act that lower the cost to electrify, and encourage (but not require) electrification in development agreements.

Questions and comments included Nancy Moore suggesting this information be included in social media posts and Norman Robbins sharing that the American Public Health Association, in a November 2022 report, included ideas for replacing gas stoves and increasing kitchen ventilation. He also noted that induction cooktops can be reasonably priced and that a future (income-related?) rebate program for them may be considered. Prioritization should be directed at families where childhood asthma is present, including by public health officials. He also suggested that this should be addressed aggressively and soon especially for those most impacted, noting that the Environmental Protection Agency does not have the authority to set indoor air quality standards.

Jeff Isaacs suggested that school nurses would be a good collaborator on public education efforts and Sean Malone agreed that this could be a great educational opportunity. He also suggested in the future

considering how we heat our homes, as the vast majority of the City uses natural gas for heating. Resident Peter Chengelis added that his family recently updated their kitchen and used an inexpensive air quality monitor to measure the affects of a gas stove and it convinced them to go with electric induction. The conversation wrapped up with a suggestion that perhaps the Library could loan out air quality monitors to residents.

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Subcommittee Updates

Stormwater & Greenspace (presented by Nancy Moore and Michael Peters)

- The composting programs at Onaway School and Fernway School have been well received and successful, with Onaway diverting 2,324.5 pounds and Fernway 2,019 pounds of food waste from September 30, 2022 through February 1, 2024. Discussions continue on expanding and institutionalizing the programs.
- A proposed pesticide/herbicide policy is on the agenda for the subcommittee at its next meeting on February 21st. This is planned to be a suggested and updated public lands policy that would be presented to the Sustainability Committee and then routed through the Administration. A final version would be presented to the Committee and City Council.
- The electric lawn mower rebate program is progressing with a target date of April 29th and 30th to coincide with the hazardous waste roundup weekend. There are 40 rebates for \$100 each available when residents bring in a working gasoline-powered mower and provides proof of purchase of a new electric lawn mower (including the serial number). Discussions with Burgers Ace Hardware have been very productive and an expected memorandum of understanding would assist with this economic development effort.
- It was also noted that the City of Cleveland has also announced its electric lawn mower rebate program. Residents could apply for either, but the recycling arrangement for the Shaker Heights program is not one of the approved scrapyards for the Cleveland program, so residents could not get both.
- The Cuyahoga Water and Sewer District “nuts” program encourages schoolchildren to raise seedlings from tree nuts. Students at Hathaway Brown will be donating their seedlings to the Grown Not Mow sites for planting. Work days are scheduled for April 15th and May 13th, from 10am until 1pm and more information is available through the Doan Brook Watershed Partnership.
- The Tree Advisory Board and Neighborhood and Economic Development committees will look at ordinances related to private property tree removal.

Renewable Energy (Norman Robbins)

- The subcommittee continues to monitor progress in the City on the installation of rooftop solar and at the next meeting will begin to discuss parking lot solar programs.
- A discussion is continuing on a brief introduction to the Inflation Reduction Act to make residents aware of the programs and tax credits available. Outreach to other organizations has begun and the subcommittee is looking for partners. One area of focus will be how to include low and moderate income residents, who may not have the tax liability to take advantage of federal tax credits, and it was noted that the rebates through the state are not yet ready. The group is also discussing how to identify good contractors.

Shaker Youth LEEDs / High School Advisory Group (Shanna Keown)

- The group is finalizing events for the 2023 EcoChallenge; please send Shanna Keown any items you think would be a good inclusion in the program.

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Chair's Remarks/Old Business/New Business

- No additional remarks or business.

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There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:12 A.M. The next meeting is scheduled for March 9, 2023 at 8:00am.



Michael Peters
Sustainability Coordinator