



# SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION

City Hall—Shared Vision Room, 3989 Central Ave NE

Wednesday, August 14, 2024

6:00 PM

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## DRAFT MINUTES

### CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Ahmadvand at 6:01 p.m.

Members present: Commissioners Ahmadvand, Evenson, Finkelson, Groseth, Jensen Christen, Johnson, LaPlante, Leoni-Helbacka, Kurek

Members absent:

Staff present: Andrew Boucher, City Planner  
Liam Genter, Urban Forestry Specialist  
Sulmaan Khan, Assistant City Engineer

Staff absent: Corrine Hanson, Administrative Assistant

Council Liaison: Connie Buesgens

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Ahmadvand to approve the minutes of July 9, 2024 as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

### OLD BUSINESS

#### 1. Sustainable Purchasing Policy Update

- Put definition towards the top.
- Examples of how to apply policy language can be helpful for City staff to better understand how the policy can be implemented.
- Can there be an annual coordination meeting that is called by the Sustainability Coordinator with City staff who are responsible for purchasing?
- It would be beneficial to do a regular review of purchases to understand where improvements can be made related to Sustainable purchasing.
- A potential starting point to ensure the City is moving towards more sustainable purchases is to use Amazon filters to narrow down products that meet certain criteria.
- LaPlante volunteered to be champion of purchasing policy to help figure out next steps to move the policy forward.

## **2. Complete Streets Policy Update**

- Khan gave an update on the Complete Streets Policy. The policy was being put on hold indefinitely.
- Finkelson asked for an explanation why the policy was being put on hold.
- Khan stated that he and Boucher had met with city staff and concerns about the policy had been raised.
- Finkelson asked who Khan and Boucher had met with, asking them to name those they had met with.
- Khan stated that one of the individuals who they met with was Kevin Hansen.
- Khan stated that some of the concerns were that some aspects of the policy were only related to state-level activities and are not done at a local city level.
- Finkelson stated that it would be a mistake to put the policy on hold. We need to have this policy in place before the large projects that are coming begin work. And cited a construction project on 49th Avenue where the sidewalks were closed without a detour or other safe alternative as an example of the city failing to have complete streets.
- Other members of the commission agreed that we should continue to pursue the policy and asked if Finkelson and Councilmember Buesgens could meet with Hansen to better understand his concerns.

## **3. Partners in Energy Update**

- First workshop has been completed.
- Boucher would like a few more people to join. He would like 1-2 more people from the Commission to join the group. Boucher is planning to also reach out to the School District.
- Second and fourth workshop are anticipated to be held the same day as Sustainability Commission meetings in September and December.
- A mission statement has been created.

## **4. Sustainable Collaborations Sub-Committee Update**

- Planning to do a walking tour between parks as community engagement event. Details are still being worked out and a gameplan will be shared in October.
- Had a meeting in past month with Institute on Environment from the U of M.
- Climate Corp is something that is being looked into.
- SolSmart is another good program to look into.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **5. Commission Chair Position**

- Commissioner Ahmadvand has recently purchased a new home and will be moving out of Columbia Heights. Because of this, he is resigning from his Chair position with the group.
- Jensen Christen will move from Vice Chair to Chair of Commission.
- Evenson volunteered to be new Vice Chair for the group. All Commission members voted unanimously to have Evenson as the new Vice Chair.

### **6. Round Robin**

- A new newsletter article has been submitted.

- Invasive species subcommittee have done park walks. The next one will be on the 22<sup>nd</sup>.
- There will be a presentation from MWMO at the September 3<sup>rd</sup> Council work session.  
Please attend if you are able to.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Ahmadvand, seconded by LaPlante to adjourn the meeting at 7:48 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Sulmaan Khan  
Assistant City Engineer