



SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION

City Hall—Shared Vision Room, 3989 Central Ave NE

Wednesday, August 14, 2024

6:00 PM

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

- Some concerns have been raised by the City about applicability of language in the policy as it relates to City processes.
- Complete Streets policy was asked to be put on hold. Commission members had concerns about putting the policy on hold and would like to figure out a way to move it forward, especially considering the redevelopment projects that will be coming in the near future.
- Finkelson is going to reach out to City staff to set up a time to meet and discuss 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 22nd.
- There will be a presentation from MWMO at the September 3rd 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