

STERLING HEIGHTS SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
January 19, 2022

LOCATION: City Hall Room 106, 40555 Utica Road, Sterling Heights MI

SUBJECT: Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Sustainability Commission held January 19, 2022

Meeting was called to order by Chairperson Inks at 6:02 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance is recited.

Roll Call: Farooqi, Graf, Inks, Matthews, Tabbert

Also in Attendance: Allison Bittner, Planning Coordinator

Approval of Agenda

Motion: Matthews

Second: Inks

Ayes: Matthews, Inks, Farooqi, Graf, Tabbert

Considerations:

A. STRATEGIC PLANNING PREPARATION AND DISCUSSION

The Office of Planning goes over the outline of the Strategic Planning meeting, held on January 25, 2022. Notes that the presentations will be held from 2:00 to 3:00 pm with feedback from 3:00 to 3:45 pm. The Sustainability Commission would be part of a group that includes Community Alliance, the African American Coalition, Youth Advisory, and then the Sustainability Commission. Ms. Bittner notes that the presentation will be for approximately ten (10) minutes and states that all members are able to attend. Mr. Inks asks questions about the presentation and materials. He notes that if possible, we should add in the timeline slide the creation of the priority rankings for action items.

Mr. Matthews asks if the public can weigh in during strategic planning. Ms. Bittner at first is unsure, but then later clarifies that there is time for public comment.

Mr. Inks notes that the Strategic Planning agenda will be posted that Friday on the City website.

Mr. Matthews asks if the Strategic Planning meeting is held at the Community Center. Ms. Bittner responds that it is.

There are no other comments regarding the proposed PowerPoint and discussion.

B. PARKS, RECREATION, AND NON-MOTORIZED MASTER PLAN DISCUSSION

Mr. Inks notes that Council has adopted a new Parks, Recreation, and Non-Motorized Plan on January 4th, 2022 for the Parks and Recreation Department. He notes that some of the items contained within this plan, potentially overlap with the various action items contained within the Sustainability Plan. One of the items is the purchasing of additional vacant properties within the City to develop into a park and/or nature preserve.

Mr. Inks notes that he wanted to mention the plan as for Sustainability Commission members to read through on occasion and members can discuss overlap at future meetings. Mr. Inks also notes that the plan is qualified to receive grant money through the state. Notes that some items may be completed via grant funds or through ARPA monies. Mr. Inks also provides a background as to why the plan exists.

Mr. Graf notes that for the next revision of the Sustainability Plan, the commission may want to take references from the non-motorized plan and note the various overlap between the two plans. He also notes that the plan can be updated with the new images from the Parks and Recreation updated plan.

Mr. Matthews asks how often the Sustainability Commission wishes to revise the Sustainability Plan. Mr. Inks notes that he would have to go back and read the ordinance to see if there is anything that would require the Commission to go back and edit it. Mr. Inks notes that editing it this year may be too soon. He states that the Commission can edit again in 2023, and then afterwards continue to review it as necessary. Mr. Inks states the Sustainability Commission can discuss this around the summer after the one year anniversary of the plan being adopted. Mr. Inks notes that there is nothing in the ordinance that would require the Sustainability Commission to make revisions frequently. Mr. Graf states that the only consideration to review the Sustainability Plan yearly is that there are new members that were not involved in the initial plan, and it made be important to add their opinions. The Sustainability Commission agrees that this topic can be revisited in February, and take some time to see if a revision in necessary. If the Commission does decide to review, it would most likely be in June.

C. REVIEW OF DRAIN STENCIL SUBMISSIONS

The Sustainability Commission reviews the student entrees for the Drain Stencil project. Each member picks their top three favorite submissions. Then, we compare the Sustainability Commission selections to the Arts Commission selections. The top three are discussed. The Office of Planning will inform the Community Relations Department of the top three stencils.

Mr. Graf asks about if there would be only one stencil throughout the City, and if all stencils can be done throughout the entire City itself. The Office of Planning notes they will inquire about having multiple stencils and report back. The Office of Planning also notes that the Department of Public Works has noted a few sections that they have thought was the most important to do currently. Mr. Graf asks we should inquire as to why these sections were deemed important, and why the entire City could not be completed, with the help of volunteers. The Sustainability Commission will discuss at the next meeting the various sections and why ones were selected as priority level areas.

Approval of Minutes

November 17, 2021

Motion: Matthews

Second: Inks

Ayes: Matthews, Inks, Farooqi, Graf, Tabbert

Correspondence

None

Old Business

A. TREE INVENTORY UPDATE/GREEN MACOMB- TREE SURVEY UPDATE

Ms. Bittner discusses the prior training material and the guidelines that were created for ranking the trees.

Ms. Bittner notes that there has been a request put in for the Davvy group for more training/information on how the trees got their scores/rank.

Ms. Bittner notes they can schedule training for next month to run through more specific stats.

B. TREE REMOVAL ORDINANCE UPDATES

There is no formal update from the City. As of current, they are waiting from the output of a discussion with the Michigan Planning Association on January 25th from 5:30pm to 7:00 p.m. If interested, Sustainability Commission members can attend. Mr. Graf and Mr. Tabbert indicate that they would like to attend.

Mr. Inks provides a background of the issue, revolving around Canton Township and a lawsuit within the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals. The case was filed at the end of November and it may be reconsidered. Mr. Matthews asks Mr. Inks if he knows how long it would take. Mr. Inks says that he isn't sure, but if it was not rejected by now, it might be considered. It is unknown how long it will take before they schedule oral arguments on the topic.

Mr. Inks asks if the City Attorney's office will have any updates to the ordinance. Ms. Bittner states that they may have more information after Tuesday night, and they are waiting to see the results of that meeting.

Mr. Graf inquires what the meeting is about, Mr. Ink provides that overview. Mr. Inks says we can keep this item under old business for another month to discuss the webinar, but if nothing happens it can be removed.

New Business

Ms. Bittner discusses the APA and MAP website for award submissions. Notes that as of date nothing has been posted.

Ms. Farooqi notes that she will be moving at the end of March, which will be her last meeting.

Mr. Inks asks about the potential for remote attendance in February. Ms. Bittner notes that we will get back to him on that possibility.

Citizen Participation

One resident, Eric, attended. He states that he has an interest in Sustainability and wanted to check out what happened at the meeting. The Sustainability Commission members greet him as the first member of the public to attend, and indicate that they are glad he attended.

Adjournment of Meeting

Motion: Matthews

Second: Inks

Ayes: Matthews, Inks, Farooqi, Graf, Tabbert

Meeting adjourned at 6:53 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Chris McLeod, City Planner
Office of Planning