

1. Sustainability Commission Agenda

Documents:

[AGENDA - NOVEMBER 16, 2022.PDF](#)

2. Sustainability Commission Packet

Documents:

[MINUTES - OCTOBER 19, 2022.PDF](#)

Members:

Mark Graf
Nathan Inks
Jonathan Matthews
Kelley Skillin
Michael Tabbert

Meeting Location:
Sterling Heights City Hall
40555 Utica Road
6:00 p.m.

AGENDA ITEMS:

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
3. ROLL CALL
4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA
5. GUEST DISCUSSION: YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD
 - A. DRAIN STENCILING PROJECT
 - B. YOUTH SUSTAINABILITY GOALS
 - C. FUTURE COLLABORATION
6. CONSIDERATIONS
 - A. SUSTAINABILITY PLAN- ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP ACTION ITEM REVIEW
7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
 - A. October 19, 2022
8. CORRESPONDENCE
9. OLD BUSINESS
 - A. TREE SURVEY UPDATE
 - B. TREE CANOPY STUDY
 - C. IMPERVIOUS SURFACE ORDINANCE UPDATE
 - D. SOCIAL MEDIA UPDATE
 - E. ELECTRIC VEHICLE STUDY
 - F. PROPOSED CITY LAND PURCHASES
10. NEW BUSINESS
 - A. SUSTAINABILITY CONFERENCE
 - B. CARBON EMISSIONS RESEARCH
11. CITIZEN PARTICIPATION
12. ADJOURNMENT

NEXT MEETING DATE: December 21, 2022

Alexis Richards, Planner II
On behalf of the City of Sterling Heights Sustainability Commission

STERLING HEIGHTS SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
OCTOBER 19, 2022

LOCATION: City Council Conference Room #106, 40555 Utica Road, Sterling Heights MI

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

Meeting was called to order by Chairperson Inks at 6:00p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance is recited.

Roll Call: Inks, Tabbert, Matthews, Skillin

Also in Attendance: Alexis Richards, Planner II
Ryan Fox, Planner I

Approval of Agenda *as amended*

Motion: Matthews

Support: Inks

Ayes: Inks, Tabbert, Matthews, Skillin

Considerations

5A. TREE CANOPY STUDY RESOLUTION

The Office of Planning introduced a draft resolution at the request of the Sustainability Commission which voices the Sustainability Commissions support for conducting a tree canopy study in 2023. The intent of the tree canopy study would be to compare the tree cover of the City of Sterling Heights to the tree canopy study conducted in 2016 by Macomb County. This resolution was created as a follow up to ideas expressed by former City Planner Chris McLeod in the July meeting of the Sustainability Commission.

Mr. Inks and Mr. Fox discussed the need to have the City Attorney's Office review the resolution. While the conversation is happening, the City Attorney's Office indicated via email that it was comfortable with the resolution.

Dr. Skillin asked if the City set a timeline for reaching a 30% tree canopy level. Mr. Inks indicated that it was in the Sustainability Plan. Mr. Fox answered that he is unaware of a timeline, but he would assume as soon as possible.

Mr. Inks asked if it is possible to link parcels to landscape plans and tree surveys in BS&A. Mr. Fox indicated that efforts have been taken to ensure compliance with tree planting and preservation through the institution of landscape inspections. These inspections take place before businesses are given Certificates of Occupancy.

Motion to approve Resolution to support the City of Sterling Heights allocating funds to conduct a tree canopy study with a similar methodology to the tree canopy study conducted by Macomb County in 2016 during the 2023/2024 Fiscal Year.

Motion: Tabbert

Support: Skillin

Ayes: Inks, Tabbert, Matthews, Skillin

5B. SUSTAINABILITY PLAN – SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ACTION ITEMS

Mr. Fox presents documents to the Commission to continue the review of the Sustainability Plans action items. Discussion is had on each item in the chapter, giving an analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats for each action item. The first item discussed was related to amending the ordinance and City policies to allow alternative energy sources.

Mr. Inks asked what type of solar energy the Office of Planning was considering allowing in the zoning ordinance. Mr. Fox explained that roof mounted solar is the priority, but accessory solar is not off the table. Roof mounted solar would be the immediate priority.

The Commission discussed that one of the weaknesses to allowing alternative energy sources in the zoning ordinance is resident resistance, generated from two different sources. One is scientific illiteracy, where some believe that alternative energy sources can cause negative health related externalities. The second source being residents who assume the aesthetics of alternative energy sources could negatively impact property values due to their unappealing appearance.

Discussion is had about the possibility of a universal development ordinance, and how Sustainability could be incorporated into a potential ordinance like that.

Mr. Fox updated the Commission that the Office of Engineering is reforming their engineering standards to make drainage requirements more stringent, as directed by Macomb County. The City Council had not yet considered the changes, however they were required to adopt more stringent requirements by law and the changes will take place.

Mr. Inks asked about the avenue the Commission would take to initiate action items in the future. Ms. Richards indicated that working through the Office of Planning would be the direct avenue.

Discussion was had about the implementation of a stormwater utility. Practical challenges, such as the ownership of drains within the City, were discussed.

City landscaping requirements were discussed. Mr. Fox conducted a comparison of Sterling Heights landscaping requirements compared to other cities back in April.

Ms. Richards expressed that the Office of Planning is interested in potentially incorporating a climate action plan into the cities Master Land Use Plan. Mr. Inks agreed that the idea may have potential, as well as incorporating the Sustainability Plan. Mr. Fox indicated that many other communities integrate these respective plans into the Master Land Use Plan.

Approval of Minutes *as amended*

Motion: Matthews

Support: Inks
Ayes: Inks, Tabbert, Matthews, Skillin

Correspondence

There were no correspondence presented to the Office of Planning to be presented to the Sustainability Commission.

Old Business

8A. TREE SURVEY UPDATE

The Office of Planning updated the Sustainability Commission to inform them that the tree survey will be conducted through November and December. A kick-off date for the survey is to be determined, but will be held in mid-November.

8B. YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD UPDATE

The Office of Planning updated the Commission to inform them that the Youth Advisory Board will attend the November Meeting of the Sustainability Commission. The Sustainability Commission shall have a conversation with the Board in order to get feedback on the Commissions priorities going forward.

New Business

9A. CITY OF ROCKFORD SUSTAINABILITY EFFORTS

The Sustainability Commission discussed the efforts undertaken by the Sustainability Commission (SUSCOM) of the City of Rockford Michigan. The Commission highlighted efforts undertaken by the SUSCOM, such as the alternative energy show house. The show house being a joint effort between the City of Rockford and DTE Energy in order to convince residences to adopt alternative energy sources for their home.

Citizen Participation

There was no citizen participation.

Motion to Adjourn

Motion: Matthews

Support: Skillin

Ayes: Inks, Tabbert, Matthews, Skillin

Meeting adjourns at 8:17pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Alexis Richards, Planner II
Office of Planning