

**Minnetonka Sustainability Commission
Virtual Meeting
Minutes**

Jan. 18, 2022

1. Call to Order

Chair Golob called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Sustainability Commissioners Justin Anderson, Edwin Avalos, Greta Beck, Brian Golob, Matt Henry, David Ingraham and Ashley Pattain were present. Harapanahalli Muralidhara was absent.

Staff present: Community Development Director Julie Wischnack and City Planner Loren Gordon.

3. Approval of the Agenda

Henry moved, second by Ingraham, to approve the agenda as submitted.

Anderson, Avalos, Beck, Henry, Ingraham, Pattain and Golob voted yes. Muralidhara was absent. Motion carried.

4. Approval of Sustainability Commission Nov. 9, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Avalos moved, second by Beck, to approve the minutes as submitted.

Anderson, Avalos, Beck, Henry, Ingraham, Pattain and Golob voted yes. Muralidhara was absent. Motion carried.

5. Report from Staff

Gordon gave the staff report. He stated that:

- Organic recycling facilities are currently restricting tours to four people at a time. Staff will schedule a tour in the spring or early summer of 2022 when all commissioners and staff are able to attend at the same time.
- Commissioner Anderson volunteered to represent the sustainability commission at the Winter's Farmer's Market on Feb. 12, 2022. Chair Golob volunteered to represent the sustainability commission at the Winter's Farmer's Market on March 12, 2022.
- The next regular sustainability commission meeting is scheduled to be held March 15, 2022.

6. Report from Sustainability Commission Members

Anderson stated that he is excited for curbside organics recycling to be provided to residents. It will significantly reduce the amount of waste put into landfills.

7. Agenda Items

A. 2021 Work Plan Summary

Gordon reported. Staff recommended that commissioners review, discuss and submit the 2021 work plan update to the city council for approval.

Chair Gobob noted that the commission accomplished quite a bit the first year.

Anderson was curious what the GreenCorp employee is working on. Gordon explained that the GreenCorp employee began working with staff in September of 2021 and will continue until October of 2022 with the primary goal of reducing greenhouse-gas emissions. She has been providing outreach to residents and managers of multifamily-residential buildings to educate them on and promote energy efficiency. She has attended city events to meet residents and promote and identify the best candidates to utilize solar power.

Ingraham complemented staff for keeping the momentum going to help the sustainability efforts move forward in 2021.

Chair Golob suggested scheduling the electric-vehicle event for when the weather is warmer to promote higher attendance.

Ingraham moved, second by Avalos, to recommend that the city council approve the Minnetonka Sustainability Commission 2021 Work Plan Summary. Anderson, Avalos, Beck, Henry, Ingraham, Pattain and Golob voted yes. Muralidhara was absent. Motion carried.

B. 2022 Sustainable Minnetonka Awards Recommendation

Gordon reported. Staff recommended commissioners review and finalize eligibility rules, select parameters and create a timeline.

Chair Golob thanked Gordon for the report and invited commissioners to provide comments.

Avalos suggested that staff create a post to advertise the Sustainable Minnetonka Awards contest that he and other commissioners could post to their personal social media sites and staff could post on Minnetonka's Nextdoor and other media sites that would include a link to the application. He supports posting all of the entries on the city's website to share the ideas and recognize each person's achievement. Avalos was slightly disappointed that he would not be eligible to enter the competition since he serves as a commissioner.

Anderson asked if the number of winners would be restricted to one each year. Gordon responded that that has not yet been decided. Commissioners could discuss the options.

Anderson suggested having a winner once every six months or four months to keep momentum going.

Avalos liked that idea. He thought having as many winners as possible would be best.

Ingraham thought there may be some projects that would not impact the property owner and may not need property owner approval.

Anderson thought six months would be a good time interval if there would be a winner for each category. He noted that a project being done entirely indoors would not require approval from the property owner and may need to be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Wischnack suggested that commissioners recommend adding "if applicable" to the application in reference to the property owner's approval and staff could make that determination during the initial review of the application.

Wischnack suggested completing one cycle of accepting applications and granting awards before deciding whether to make the process occur more often than once a year.

Gordon asked commissioners if they would prefer to have one all-encompassing winner or a winner for each category.

Avalos supports the young-person category having its own separate winner. Chair Golob agreed.

Anderson noted that it would be possible for a category to not receive an application.

Ingraham agreed with the young-adult category distinction. He liked the idea of having the flexibility to potentially have more than one winner if more than one outstanding project would be submitted at the same time. He would like to reward all of the great efforts being made and motivate other people by them seeing the activities done by the applicants.

Chair Golob agreed.

Pattain agreed with Ingraham. She likes the idea of multiple winners since it can be difficult to compare very different projects. She understands that a lot will be learned from going through the first cycle and discovering how many and what types of projects apply for the award.

Avalos suggested having a winner and a runner up who could be from two different categories along with a third winner from the young person category.

Beck suggested giving awards to the top three overall projects. The categories could be used to provide guidance to what would be applicable projects. She also favored having a winner for each category that received an application.

Chair Golob agreed with commissioners. He hoped there would be quite a few submissions.

Henry suggested not limiting the number of winners. The rules could state that winners would be chosen from among the categories. He liked the idea of highlighting as many good projects as possible.

Gordon appreciated the discussion. He liked the idea of having more opportunities for multiple winners and runner ups. He agreed with completing one cycle of applications and awards before establishing a rolling schedule. Posting information on different social media platforms makes sense.

Wischnack liked the idea of posting sustainable projects being done on the city's website which could highlight projects commissioners are working on.

Chair Golob was excited to see the proposal come to fruition.

Avalos moved, second by Pattain, to recommend that the city council approve the rules and timeline for the 2022 Sustainable Minnetonka Awards. Anderson, Avalos, Beck, Henry, Ingraham, Pattain and Golob voted yes. Muralidhara as absent. Motion carried.

C. Organics Recycling Promotion Recommendation

Gordon reported. Staff recommended commissioners review staff's recommendation on how the city can promote organics recycling and provide additional promotion ideas.

Gordon clarified that residents are not required to participate in compost recycling and each refuse hauler establishes its own fee and method of collection.

Wischnack and Pattain currently use organic recycling from Randy's Sanitation. Pattain stated that her hauler offered the service free for one year and charges \$75 per year after that first year. Her hauler provides the organic bags.

Pattain suggested looking into grants to cover the cost for residents to pay for curbside-organic recycling.

Henry and Chair Golob agreed. Henry thought finding out what each hauler charges for curbside-organic recycling would be beneficial. Wischnack explained that a range of the costs charged by refuse haulers may be provided to residents, but city representatives must not appear to be promoting a particular company. Staff is looking for ideas on how the city may promote organic recycling.

Henry likes Avalos' idea and would like staff to provide information regarding organic recycling that he could post to his social media accounts.

Beck assumed the cost for curbside organic recycling would be higher than what Pattain's refuse hauler charges. She thought a statement that said that some providers charge less than \$10 a month for curbside-organic recycling would be beneficial. Beck supports encouraging businesses such as Williston Center and breweries to advertise on their social media sites that they participate in organic recycling.

Ingraham thought it would be good to let the refuse haulers know that the city will be promoting curbside organic recycling to allow them to prepare for a surge in interest. He suggested removing the statement from the city's website regarding the one year free offer that is no longer being provided. Wischnack appreciated the correction.

Avalos suggested posting a video regarding creating an at-home composting bin and explaining what items can be organically recycled. He has videos that could be used. He thought listing the ways that haulers collect organic recycling could be included in a brochure.

Anderson suggested providing large compost bins at the Winter's Farmer's Market for visitors to use and introduce them to what can and cannot be composted.

Henry suggested utilizing social media, the Minnetonka Memo and creating a fun video to demonstrate organics recycling.

Chair Golob suggested putting an article in the Sun Sailor and Minneapolis Star Tribune focusing on organic recycling.

Beck suggested providing a visual illustration or interactive activity for kids where one would separate items into garbage, recycling and organics-recycling bins at the Winter Farmer's Markets.

Chair Golob liked that idea.

Gordon appreciated the suggestions.

8. Other Business

9. Adjournment

Henry moved, second by Pattain, to adjourn the meeting at 8:07 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

By: _____
Lois T. Mason
Planning Secretary