

**Minnetonka Sustainability Commission
Virtual Meeting
Minutes**

March 15, 2022

1. Call to Order

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

2. Roll Call

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

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

Megan Wick and Marisa Bayer from the Center for Energy and the Environment and Minnesota Representative Patty Acomb were present.

3. Approval of the Agenda

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

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

4. Approval of Sustainability Commission Jan. 18, 2021 Meeting Minutes

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

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

5. Report from Staff

Gordon gave the staff report. He stated that:

- The next sustainability commission meeting is scheduled to be held in person on May 17, 2022.
- He welcomed new commissioner Elizabeth Boor. Boor introduced herself. She is a graduate student at the UMN Water Resources Masters of Science program focusing on researching septic waste and toxins traveling into soils and groundwater. She is also an intern at the Nine-Mile Creek Watershed District.

6. Report from Sustainability Commission Members

Chair Golob stated that the farmer's market at the community center was well attended. There was a steady flow of visitors to the sustainability table. Many LED bulbs were given out.

7. Agenda Items

A. Energy Action Plan Update

Gordon introduced Megan Wick and Marisa Bayer from the Center for Energy and the Environment.

Ms. Wick gave a presentation.

Henry asked if any steps have been decided on to help reduce the 20-year commitment required for an entity or individual to adopt a solar garden subscription since it may be preventing some from entering into the agreement. Ms. Wick explained that there would be three workshops. The first workshop will focus on strategies to make renewable energy affordable. The second and third workshops will focus on E.V.s and business outreach. The first workshop could look at reducing the required 20-year commitment and mark it as a priority for Minnetonka.

Henry suggested that Minnetonka take some of the responsibility. Gordon stated that research, a capital improvement process and an arrangement with a provider would need to be done before the implementation of an initiative. Staff will continue to look at all of the options.

Chair Golob asked if some of the previous energy-action-team members would be on the new committee or if all of the members would be new. Gordon stated that there might be some overlap, but it will be made up of mostly new members.

Chair Golob thanked Ms. Wick and Ms. Bayer for attending the meeting.

The public hearing was opened. No testimony was submitted. The public hearing was closed.

Boor moved, second by Henry, to recommend that the city council approve the Minnetonka Energy Action Plan. Beck, Boor, Henry, Ingraham, Pattain and Golob voted yes. Anderson, Avalos and Muralidhara were absent. Motion carried.

B. Reflections on the 2021 Glasgow UN Climate Change Conference

MN State House Representative Patty Acomb gave a presentation.

Representative Acomb stated that she loves how Minnetonka supports regional and national groups. Sharing knowledge and learning from others is powerful. Talking about

good and progressive initiatives gives other cities' staff and elected officials the idea to do the same. It is helpful to brag and share stories at League of M.N. conferences and work regionally with neighboring communities.

Beck asked what Representative Acomb has seen that could help break down partisan walls and encourage a focus on sustainable initiatives. Representative Acomb agreed that is key. In order to promote community solar energy in Minnetonka, Representative Acomb found that it is beneficial to show its multiple benefits. As well as decreasing the climate and environmental impact by reducing greenhouse-gas emissions, utilizing solar energy saves the city money, which, when made known, helped make it more of a priority for more people.

Boor asked how U.S. states that have different issues and climates were studied at the climate change conference. Representative Acomb explained that there were many presentations on the impact of climate change on different regions including fire, water quality issues and transportation. One presentation noted how China is the country with the most and the U.S. is the country with the second-highest amount of greenhouse-gas emissions. The mid-west area of the U.S. has the sixth-highest amount of greenhouse-gas emissions in the world. That shows how important the issue is and how we need to be leaders to work to decrease the amount of emissions.

Henry asked what initiatives Representative Acomb has seen used to decrease the amount of salt in groundwater. Representative Acomb answered that there had been a group working at the capital on this issue for a long time. They walk around with teaspoons on a necklace to remind people that a teaspoon of salt will contaminate five gallons of water and that salt is very difficult to get out of water. It is understandable that a salt applicator would oversalt a parking lot to prevent being sued due to a slip-and-fall injury. There is a bill being presented in Minnesota that would prevent a salt applicator from being able to be sued if they would attend a smart salt application training program.

Henry noted that Eden Prairie utilizes a centralized water-softener system for city water to decrease each residences' use of salt to soften water. Representative Acomb agreed that might be the next step, but it would be very expensive and require a monumental change to a city's infrastructure.

Henry appreciated Representative Acomb's work. Representative Acomb noted that Minnetonka has been doing great work and is using best practices by using liquid brine on streets and parking lots to cut down on its use of sodium chloride.

Boor noted that the MN Pollution Control Agency has a template city ordinance that requires all salt applicators to get the MN PCA's smart salting training. That is something the sustainability commission could look at. Representative Acomb liked that idea.

Chair Golob asked how long the conference lasted. Representative Acomb answered that 40,000 people from around the world attended the conference. It was the largest conference to date. It lasted two weeks. An agreement was made with goals that include

phasing down the use of coal and slashing methane emissions by 45 percent by 2030. Minnesota has not been meeting its emission goals.

Representative Acomb thanked commissioners for serving on the sustainability commission. Chair Golob thanked her for the presentation and for attending the meeting.

C. Climate Emergency Declaration

Gordon reported. Staff recommends commissioners review the proposed resolution and make a recommendation to the city council.

Ingraham asked if the city would do anything differently if the resolution was not under consideration. Gordon acknowledged that Minnetonka is already committed to taking action. Adopting the resolution approving the climate-action-emergency plan is symbolic by joining with other communities to commit to the efforts in place.

Chair Golob supports the formal declaration and feels it is important for Minnetonka to set an example for others. Minnetonka may still act independently with its own initiatives.

Henry thanked staff for their work and supported the proposal to highlight Minnetonka's resolve to the issue.

The public hearing was opened. No testimony was submitted. The public hearing was closed.

Henry moved, second by Ingraham, to recommend that the city council adopt the resolution approving the Minnetonka Climate Action Emergency Plan. Beck, Boor, Henry, Ingraham, Pattain and Golob voted yes. Anderson, Avalos and Muralidhara were absent. Motion carried.

This item is scheduled to be reviewed by the city council at its meeting on April 11, 2022.

D. Approval of Bylaws

Beck moved, second by Pattain, to approve the Minnetonka Sustainability Commission Bylaws as submitted. Beck, Boor, Henry, Ingraham, Pattain and Golob voted yes. Anderson, Avalos and Muralidhara were absent. Motion carried.

E. Election of Commission Chair and Vice-Chair

Ingraham moved, second by Beck, to elect Golob to serve as the Minnetonka Sustainability Commission Chair for 2022. Beck, Boor, Henry, Ingraham, Pattain and Golob voted yes. Anderson, Avalos and Muralidhara were absent. Motion carried.

Ingraham moved, second by Beck, to elect Pattain to serve as the Minnetonka Sustainability Commission Vice-Chair for 2022. Beck, Boor, Henry, Ingraham, Pattain and Golob voted yes. Anderson, Avalos and Muralidhara were absent. Motion carried.

8. Other Business

Chair Golob thanked Henry for attending the meeting virtually from Belgium at 2:15 a.m.

9. Adjournment

Henry moved, second by Pattain, to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

By:

Lois T. Mason
Planning Secretary