

**Minnetonka Sustainability Commission
Minutes**

July 11, 2023

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, Molly Birr, Brian Golob, Matt Henry, David Ingraham and Ashley Pattain were present.

Staff present: City Planner Loren Gordon, Sustainability Coordinator Drew Ingvalson and Communications Coordinator Jon Lyksett.

3. Approval of the Agenda

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

Anderson, Avalos, Birr, Golob, Henry, Ingraham and Pattain voted yes. Motion carried.

4. Approval of Sustainability Commission May 16, 2023 Meeting Minutes

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

Anderson, Avalos, Birr, Golob, Henry and Ingraham voted yes. Pattain abstained. Motion carried.

5. Report from Staff

Ingvalson reported that:

- A public workshop and three focus-group workshops will be held this fall to discuss the climate action and adaptation plan.
- Commissioners are invited to sign up to reach out to 72 remaining restaurants. Commissioners may assist business managers and owners with signing up online to receive an invitation to make an appointment for an energy-smart consultation.

Anderson found that many restaurants do not post their email address on the business' website. Many restaurants have automated phone-answering systems that do not have the option to leave a voicemail. A hotel worker told him that their corporate office handles everything related to the building and its operations.

Ingraham stated that he has been receiving responses after leaving a message at the restaurants requesting a name and email address where he could email the information.

Chair Golob visited seven restaurants between 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. and was able to provide and explain the materials to the owner or manager. He found them cordial and receptive to the information. He provided them with his contact information. One manager of a corporate-owned restaurant stated that the information would be passed on to the decision-makers at the corporate office.

- The deadline to submit applications to be considered for a Sustainable Minnetonka Award is Sept. 8. Four entries have been received. No entries have been received for the water, waste and youth categories. Commissioners are welcome to encourage the public to apply.
- The everything-electric event is scheduled to take place at the Ridgedale Commons Park during the farmers market on Sept. 5, 2023 from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. All commissioners are invited to attend.
- Two new sustainability commissioners are scheduled to be appointed to the commission at the city council meeting on July 17, 2023.

6. Report from Sustainability Commission Members

Avalos noted that Tonkadale Nursery has a link on its website to Minnetonka's pollinator resource webpage. He hopes more businesses will do the same.

Chair Golob enjoyed attending the farmer's market. The Ridgedale Commons Park site is beautiful.

Anderson toured the UMN's reduce and reuse recycling operation. The sorting is done by hand. It is interesting to see which plastic is sold to which place. It varies between recycling centers.

Birr stated that she knows of volunteers who would like to participate in events such as the everything-electric event and farmer's market. Ingvalson will research the possibility of utilizing additional volunteers.

Chair Golob requested staff provide an update on the quantity of plastics being collected by the city at a future meeting. He asked if the amount of cardboard dropped off at public works for recycling is tracked. Ingvalson answered that 3,018 pounds of plastic film had been collected by the city since January 2023. Ingvalson will check with public works staff for the cardboard total.

7. Agenda Items

A. Sustainability Communications Presentation

Ingvolson introduced Minnetonka Communications Coordinator Jon Lyksett.

Lyksett gave a presentation on sustainability communications. Staff recommends commissioners discuss and provide comments on the sustainability communications presentation.

Avalos appreciated seeing the numbers related to how many views each post receives. He asked if short-form videos could be utilized on the social media platforms. Lyksett answered affirmatively. Avalos thought creating a short-form video promoting sustainable practices would be beneficial. One example would be a commissioner discussing sustainable practices with a business owner.

Lyksett found that the most successful videos are no longer than 30 seconds to a minute in length.

Pattain suggested doing a video of the sustainable award winners' projects. Lyksett agreed that it is a perfect example and is included on a list of to-do items.

The public input portion of the meeting was opened. No testimony was submitted. The public input portion of the meeting was closed.

B. Sustainable Minnetonka Webpage Update

Lyksett reported. Staff recommended commissioners discuss and provide comments on the sustainable Minnetonka webpage update.

In response to Henry's question, Lyksett stated that visits to the sustainability page have not been real high. The design is not user friendly. The speed it takes to load the webpage is slow since it holds a lot of information. The new design would move toward being more mobile friendly. He is optimistic that the changes will increase traffic. Similar changes were made to The Marsh and Williston Center's web pages and resulted in an increase of traffic.

Ingraham likes the tiles instead of the accordion-style format. He asked how it is determined if clicking a link would open a new tab in a new window or bring up the new page in the same tab. Lyksett explained that sometimes the software is restricted to doing one or the other. Ingraham prefers a new tab opening since it can be difficult to return to the original webpage. Lyksett stated that he could set all of the external links to open in a new tab when clicked.

Ingraham suggested making "energy smart" searchable in **minnetonkamn.gov** to make it easier to find. He searched for it when meeting with a restaurant representative and the site did not come up. Lyksett said that could be done. He noted that there is a page with similar energy programs.

Lyksett reviewed the **minnetonkamatters.com** webpage.

Pattain confirmed with Lyksett that the **minnetonkamatters.com** webpage is designed to be more interactive and gather input from the public.

In response to Avalos' question, Lyksett explained that communications staff monitor social media comments and distribute them to the appropriate city staff to make them aware of the comments.

The public input portion of the meeting was opened. No testimony was submitted. The public input portion of the meeting was closed.

C. Future Business Outreach

Ingvalson reported. Staff recommends that commissioners recommend that staff move forward with creating a new business outreach program.

Anderson likes the idea of the blitz campaign and going to a business with the auditor to see how the auditor analyzes a building for ways to improve it. Visiting a site in person is the best way to make a connection.

Henry has talked to people who were not aware that a homeowner may utilize solar power to power their residence without installing solar panels. He supports advertising Xcel's program to allow residents to utilize solar power. Ingvalson explained that there is an issue with identifying community solar gardens with the capacity to handle additional residences. The Green Corp volunteer will be compiling a list of community solar gardens able to accommodate new accounts. Ingvalson likes the idea of providing outreach for the program.

Henry is glad that the links on the website will be updated.

Pattain likes the idea of a blitz and meeting with residents in person to continue with the next steps if warranted.

Chair Golob agreed wholeheartedly. A blitz approach may be more effective.

Henry suggested promoting a reduction in salt usage on parking lots to businesses. Ingvalson said that appropriate salt use is on a list for the commission's discussion topics. Ingvalson explained that a new ordinance requires salt to be stored in a manner that prevents it from leaking into the ground. Restricting the amount of salt usage would be hard to enforce. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) provides training to promote proper salt storage and a reduction in the amount used which may be part of the natural resources staff's presentation to the commission.

Ingvalson heard interest from commissioners to do a blitz campaign for the partners in the energy program. Handouts will be reviewed in September and a date will be chosen after learning the availability of commissioners.

Avalos confirmed with Ingvalson that Xcel's partners in the energy program provided the light bulbs and free energy audit.

Anderson suggested a future program focus on grocery stores that use single-use plastic; have compostable dishware but no composting service; and use a large amount of energy. Ingvalson will add that to the list.

The public input portion of the meeting was opened. No testimony was submitted. The public input portion of the meeting was closed.

Avalos moved, second by Anderson, to recommend that staff move forward with creating a new business outreach program. Anderson, Avalos, Birr, Golob, Henry, Ingraham and Pattain voted yes. Motion carried.

Chair Golob thanked Lyksett for presenting the much improved web pages.

8. **Adjournment**

Anderson moved, second by Pattain, to adjourn the meeting at 8:13 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

By: _____
Lois T. Mason
Planning Secretary