

**Minnetonka Sustainability Commission
Virtual Meeting
Minutes**

Sept. 14, 2021

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. Roll Call

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

Staff present: Community Development Director Julie Wischnack, Staff Liaison Drew Ingvalson and IT Assistant Joona Sundstrom.

3. Approval of the Agenda

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

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

4. Approval of Sustainability Commission Meeting Minutes

Pattain moved, second by Avalos, to approve the July 13, 2021 sustainability commission minutes as submitted with a modification to reflect that an “update” to the existing Energy Action Plan is being worked on rather than the “creation” of a new Energy Action Plan.

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

5. Report from Staff

Ingvalson reported that:

- Megan Park is moving out of Minnetonka, so she will no longer be able to serve on the sustainability commission.
- He appreciated commissioners' comments provided at the last meeting on the tree preservation ordinance amendment. The city council has directed the tree preservation ordinance amendment to be sent to the planning commission to review and provide a recommendation to the city council.
- Ingvalson encouraged commissioners to email him ideas for the sustainability commission's 2022-work plan before Nov. 9, 2021.

- The next sustainability commission meeting is scheduled to be held on Nov. 9, 2021.
- The next ambassador event will be the Minnetonka Open House, scheduled to be held on Oct. 5, 2021.
- The commission's remaining goals for 2021 include assisting the action-energy team with adding long-term goals to the energy-action plan; discussing ways to support Hennepin County's solid-waste-master plan and climate-action plan; drafting the 2021 annual report; and discussing ideas for the 2022-work plan.

6. Report from Sustainability Commission Members

Avalos stated that Target, Inc. announced that it is working to be a market leader in creating inclusive and sustainable brands and experiences by 2030; utilizing highly recyclable and compostable packaging by 2040; and committing to being a net-zero enterprise by 2040.

Pattain, Avalos and Chair Golob attended the boards and commissions' dinner. Pattain found it informative to learn what other commissions are doing.

Chair Golob attended the electric-vehicle event called Plug It In at Wayzata City Hall. It was well attended and the speakers, J. Drake Hamilton and Yuka Kookanen, were knowledgeable. Everyone had the opportunity to enter their name for a chance to win a certificate for a 24-hour test drive of a Tesla.

7. Agenda Items

A. Bee Lab Presentation

Ingvanson reported on Minnetonka's pollinator efforts. He noted that the city requires 25 percent of each new development to contain pollinator-friendly vegetation. Minnetonka is recognized as a Monarch Champion by the National Wildlife Federation's Mayor's Monarch Pledge Program.

Jennifer Warner from the University of Minnesota Bee Lab provided a presentation on the best practices to help bees. She was excited about the work being done in Minnetonka. She stated that:

- Honey bees are needed to pollinate 40 percent of the food supply, including meat and dairy products.
- Eighty percent of flowering plants rely on honey bees.
- There are 425 bee species in Minnesota.
- The bee population is declining because of the loss of habitat.
- The Rusty Patch Bumble Bee is the Minnesota State Bee. Its amount of habitat has shrunk and is endangered.
- The number of Monarch Butterflies is also in decline.

- The UMN website has a lot of information on how to create a habitat for pollinators.
- Bees need nectar and pollen for energy and growth.
- Large stands of the same plant are more attractive to bees.
- Tulips, marigolds, petunias, daylilies and daisies have little value to pollinators.
- The fab five flowers for bees are bee balm, anise hyssop, willows, New England aster, and azaleas. Non-native bee flowers include clovers, dandelions, azaleas, zinnias, squill, sedum and raspberry.
- Responsible pesticide use would help bees.
- Systemic insecticides remain in a plant for its entire life.
- Most bees prefer flowers close to their nest.
- People are encouraged to submit a photo of a bumblebee sighting at www.bumblebeewatch.org. That information will be used by scientists.

In response to Avalos' question, Ms. Warner explained that the more hybridized a plant, the less likely it will be a good pollen and nectar source. A plant resource guide on the UMN website provides the best pollinator plants for sun and shade. The Xerces Society also has a good plant list online.

Ms. Warner stated that bees and wasps respond to movement, so the more still a person stays the better. A yellow jacket and wasp can sting repeatedly and are more easily provoked to sting. A honeybee can only sting once and then dies. Honeybees do not sting unless provoked or squished.

In response to Avalos' question, Ms. Warner explained that there are two million honeybee hives in the U.S. managed by beekeepers. About 1.7 million bees end up in northern California every February for the almond crop pollination. Most of the honeybees in the U.S. are kept by migratory beekeepers. The bees summer in North Dakota and Minnesota and migrate to Florida, Texas and California in the winter. Most beekeepers and honeybees are in pollination services.

Golob noted that there are only two honeybee species in the world. He suggested more focus should be placed on the other 423 types of bees. Ms. Warner agreed. The honeybees are a superorganism and have been used as an ambassador. What is good for honeybees is good for all of the other bees. Some species of bees need specific plants to live.

Ingraham confirmed with Ms. Warner that commercial produce is dependent on honey bees for pollination. Ms. Warner explained how four colonies are kept on a pallet facing four different directions and moved with a forklift. Hundreds of colonies are driven around at a time to pollinate the country's food supply. It is a big business and hard on the bees. The commercial beekeepers know what they are doing. There is a huge learning curve to raise honey bees successfully.

Beck asked for the typical lifespan of a honeybee and the queen. Ms. Warner stated that queens used to live three to five years, but now, typically, only two years. Once a queen has mated, she spends the rest of her life laying eggs in the summer months. The workers are all female and do all the work in the hive. The bees who forage in the summer live three to six weeks. There is a small winter population of bees that will live until March. Drones, the males, do not work but hope to mate with the queen.

Commissioners thanked Ms. Warner for her time. Ms. Warner appreciated the opportunity.

B. Sustainability Recognition Award

Chair Golob introduced the proposal and called for the staff report.

Ingvalson reported. He recommended that commissioners approve the proposed sustainability recognition award parameters for 2022.

Henry suggested that the winners be recognized by the major and city council. Ingvalson liked that idea.

Pattain asked if there would be one resident winner and one business winner for each category. Ingvalson explained that the proposal currently would allow only one winner for each category, either a person who lives in Minnetonka or a business that is located in Minnetonka, but that could be modified.

Avalos suggested adding a youth category to encourage young people. Ingvalson liked that idea.

Ingraham confirmed with Ingvalson that dates to receive nominations would be determined and advertised before the recognition date.

Chair Golob suggested changing the category title from “waste” to “waste management.” Ingvalson agreed.

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

Chair Golob felt Ingvalson did an excellent job researching options done by similar cities. He likes the idea of the winner receiving recognition from the mayor and city council and having a young-person category.

Anderson confirmed with Ingvalson that this would be an annual event.

Ingraham moved, second by Beck, to approve the proposed sustainability recognition award parameters for 2022.

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

Muralidhara exited the meeting.

C. Partners in Energy Extension

Chair Golob introduced the proposal and called for the staff report.

Ingvalson reported. He recommended that commissioners approve moving the initiative to assist the energy-action team in creating long-term goals for Minnetonka's energy-action plan and the sustainability commission's 2022-work plan.

Chair Golob invited commissioners to comment. No one chose to speak. Chair Golob appreciated the presentation.

The public hearing was opened. No testimony was submitted, and the hearing was closed.

Henry moved, second by Avalos, to approve moving the initiative to assist the energy-action team with creating medium-term and long-term goals for Minnetonka's energy-action plan to the sustainability commission's 2022-work plan.

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

D. 2022 Everything-Electric Event

Chair Golob introduced the proposal and called for the staff report.

Ingvalson reported. He recommended that commissioners approve adding an everything-electric event to the sustainability commission's 2022-work plan.

Avalos suggested requesting a company called Smart Things provide a demonstration of automated home appliances and high-energy-saving-lighting options that could be controlled by software. Ingvalson appreciated the suggestion and will look into the possibility.

Anderson suggested adding a presentation on home solar panels and selling power to the grid to the 2022 work plan. Ingvalson was aware of a virtual event that will be held by MN Grow Solar in October. He will add that to the work plan.

Henry suggested a demonstration of geothermal options. Ingvalson will add that to the list.

Chair Golob suggested including electric bicycles. Ingvalson will add that to the list.

Ingraham noted that, depending on its use, an electric bicycle may cause more energy use if it replaces a human-only powered bicycle but would decrease energy use if replacing the use of a gas-powered vehicle.

The public hearing was opened. No testimony was submitted, and the hearing was closed.

Pattain moved, second by Avalos, to approve adding an everything-electric event to the sustainability commission's 2022-work plan.

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

8. Other Business: None

9. Adjournment

Henry moved, second by Ingraham, to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

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

By: _____
Lois T. Mason
Planning Secretary