



CITY OF NOVI
Environmental Sustainability Committee Meeting
February 3, 2025, 6:00 p.m.
Mayor's Conference Room | Novi Civic Center | 45175 Ten Mile Road
(248) 347-0445

CALL TO ORDER: 6:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Council Members Gurumurthy, Heintz, and Smith

STAFF LIAISON: Danielle Mahoney, Assistant City Manager

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion: Gurumurthy; Seconded: Heintz; 3:0

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – January 15, 2025 Minutes

Motion: Heintz; Seconded: Gurumurthy; 3:0

REMARKS FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

Chairperson Smith noted that he likes the use of Microsoft Teams and encourages that it be continued to keep up between meetings.

He also asked that Matters for Committee discussion items 1 “Roles and Responsibilities of the Committee” and 4 “New Member Recruitment” be combined for discussion purposes.

MATTERS FOR COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

1. Roles and Responsibilities of the Committee & New Member Recruitment

Councilmember Heintz stated that he like the City of Southfield's approach, they had an advisory board made up of various individuals in lieu of a consultant. He thinks that this is a useful alternative framework as it allows sharing of knowledge based on different areas of expertise. He also noted how Northville, who previously spoke with the Committee, did everything on their own. We could use volunteer resources to a similar effect.

Councilmember Gurumurthy wants the purpose of the committee to be clearly laid out so that interested individuals can see what the committee is about and where their own skills and knowledge are needed and could fit in. Assistant City Manager Mahoney talked briefly about how a consultant lays out an initial “plan for a plan” which lays groundwork, learns the interest and knowledge in the community and what there might be motion/impetus behind. Councilmember Gurumurthy thinks that we need a committee in order to home in on the plan. She ruminated on the order of operations: do we start with a consultant on this high-level framework, when do we start recruiting, etc. Chairperson Smith agreed that additional members could help make the decision to go with a consultant or otherwise. Ms. Mahoney reminded

the Committee that they would need to get the support of Mayor Fischer and the rest of City Council to add any additional members. They can make a recommendation at a City Council meeting regarding additional committee members, a dedicated staff person, a consultant, etc. Councilmember Heintz stated that he is unsure as to if it makes fiscal sense to hire AECOM or another consultant at this phase. Ms. Mahoney noted that the Committee will need to make sure to clarify what committee members can do versus what staff needs to do. Such as work (staff and consultant) versus deliverables (to committee/council).

The committee then went over the "recruitment process" in the draft discussion points. Ms. Mahoney confirmed that it is fully within the scope of the Committee to make recommendations on policies, ordinances, events, initiatives, etc. Chairperson Smith thinks that they should consider the means of communication with residents, he was impressed with the sustainability dashboards he saw from other communities. The Committee further agreed that they would be speaking with Mayor Fischer to get his support for the recruitment of other committee members. Councilmember Gurumurthy wants to be sure that, when we advertise the committee member position, we consider all avenues, the city website, eNewsletter(s), podcast, library, etc.

2. Review of AECOM materials & Consultant Direction

Assistant City Manager Mahoney shared that the baseline "scope of a scope" was received today, shortly before the meeting. The document is intended as a potential presentation to educate on the need for and offerings available from a consultant such as themselves. She then went over the document with the committee. The consultant would narrow in on what the scope/scale for Novi would be and offer a more targeted approach to the Environmental Action Plan.

Chairperson Smith stated that he thinks it is a high cost for a plan to get results rather than just results, Councilmembers Heintz and Gurumurthy concurred. Chairperson Smith further noted that there are a lot of Environmental Action Plans out there and that they are largely quite similar. He thinks we need to determine our baseline data as there are a lot of ideas, many of which we can borrow from other communities. Councilmember Heintz agrees that there are a lot of resources that we can use to create our plan without such a large price tag. Councilmember Gurumurthy agreed that we need to better establish our base data and "where we are today".

3. Sustainability Staff Position

Councilmember Heintz asked that we look at the potential Price range for a part-time or full-time city staff sustainability role. Councilmember Gurumurthy agreed, noting that once we have the Environmental Action Plan there is no question that we will need such a person. She suggested we should formulate a "business plan" as to why we would need them early on. Councilmember Heintz further opined that he thinks we can pursue both resident committee members and a staff member dedicated to sustainability concurrently/in-parallel, thereby having everyone working together on the final Environmental Action Plan.

4. Environmental Action Plan Approach

Item removed for discussion at a future meeting due to time.

5. Ideas from Peer Communities

Councilmember Heintz brought information from the City of Southfield, including their "Make Food Not Waste" partnership to share with the other Committee members. As time remaining in the meeting was limited, Recording Secretary Oppermann affirmed that she would scan the materials provided and upload them for reference on the Microsoft Teams channel.

REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMS

PUBLIC COMMENT

A resident suggested education be provided to the community regarding single-use plastics. She thinks that many other residents would be interested in the Committee and new sustainability efforts to improve and protect the community. She also suggested that advertising efforts through the Library would reach more residents.

ADJOURNMENT: 7:00 p.m.

Motion: Smith; Seconded: Heintz; 3:0