



ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE AGENDA

CITY OF NOVI

September 26, 2024 | 5:30 PM

Mayor's Conference Room
Novi Civic Center | 45175 Ten Mile Road
(248) 347-0445

CALL TO ORDER

ROLL CALL - Council Members Heintz, Gurumurthy, and Smith

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

[August](#) 19, 2024 Minutes

REMARKS FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

PRESENTATIONS

MATTERS FOR COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

MSU Tollgate Pumpkinfest 2024

[Pillars](#) and Goals

Implementing Ann Arbor Solarize program in Novi - Next Steps

[Schedule](#) Upcoming Meetings

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMS

PUBLIC COMMENT

ADJOURNMENT

NOTICE: People with disabilities needing accommodations for effective participation in this meeting should contact the City Clerk (248) 347-0456 at least two working days in advance of the meeting. An attempt will be made to make reasonable accommodations.



CITY OF NOVI
Environmental Sustainability Committee Meeting
August 19, 2024, 5:30 p.m.
Mayor's Conference Room | Novi Civic Center | 45175 Ten Mile Road
(248) 347-0445

CALL TO ORDER 5:35 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Council Members Heintz, Gurumurthy, and Smith

STAFF LIAISON: Danielle Mahoney, Assistant City Manager

ALSO PRESENT: Katherine Oppermann, Recording Secretary
Ezekiel Chojnacki, Graduate Management Analyst

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Amend the agenda to allow the Novi High School (NHS) Student presentation regarding replacing gasoline powered lawn equipment to be the first Committee matter, in respect of their time.

Motion: Heintz; Seconded: Gurumurthy; Approved 3:0

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – July 8, 2024

Motion: Gurumurthy; Seconded: Heintz; Approved 3:0

REMARKS FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

Chairperson Smith briefly touched on a Ted Talk he had recently watched and been inspired by regarding dinosaurs/the 5th period of extinction. He spoke of how the dinosaurs were ignorant of the changes around them but as humans we can work to protect the environment and world around us. "You know what you know, you protect what you love, and we're smarter than the dinosaurs...".

He then discussed some of what he views as pillars of the committee including: knowledge, community, "making it fun", reducing friction, etc.

He then directed to the Committee to the Matters for Discussion and welcomed the Novi High School students who were presenting to the group.

MATTERS FOR COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

1. Replacing Gasoline Powered Lawn Equipment - NHS students, Rushil and Rujula Yeole

The NHS students, Rushil and Rujula Yeole, thanked the Committee for the opportunity to present before them. They spoke of their concern about the negative effects that effects gas-powered lawn tools have on the environment and their wish for the City to implement an incentive program for residents to switch to Battery-powered tools. Their presentation went into detail on the negatives of gas-powered tools to the atmosphere, local wildlife and water sources, as well as human health. Likewise, they spoke of the benefit that switching to battery-powered tools instead on all of these as well as the overall cost efficiency. They hope that that the implementation of rebates and options for the return/recycling of old tools will encourage residents to make the switch and make Novi cleaner and greener.

Following the presentation, the Committee had a brief questions and answer session. Councilmember Heintz confirmed with the students that they envision the City of Novi itself as the source of the rebates. Chairperson Smith noted that a scrapyard or recycling center (such as Haggerty Metals) could process the old materials. He then asked the students if they had further information on the impact of operating a gas tool. The students replied that while they did not have comparisons for all tools, they had found data that suggested operating a gas-powered lawn mower for one hour has about the same environmental impact as running a car for 45 minutes. Councilmember Gurumurthy stated that she was impressed by the students bringing this presentation before the Committee, she also asked if other cities have rebate-programs like the one they've proposed. The students noted a few other cities in the state and across the nation that have implemented similar programs. Councilmember Heintz asked, in regard to other city programs, if there were outside sources of funding or if the cities took on the full cost themselves. The students were uncertain but fairly sure that the cost was taken on entirely from City expenditure. They also noted a program in California where rebates were offered to commercial lawn care companies to make the switch. Councilmember Heintz then further inquired as to what prompted the students to want to present to the Committee today. The students answer that it was largely driven by their own initiative and interest. After their own family switched to battery-powered tools and they saw the benefits directly they felt compelled to promote it further within the City.

All Committee members congratulated the students on a great job with their presentation, they hope to see them continue to be active and are always welcome to the Committee.

The Committee then briefly discussed seeking grants that might help fund such a program or working with local businesses to offer reduced pricing/rebates for battery-operated lawn tools to residents.

2. Implementing Solarize Program in Novi

Graduate Management Analyst Chojnacki informed the Committee that he had created a shortlist of Novi residents that had recently installed solar collectors on their property. These residents could be reached out to as potential hosts for a Solarize

Session under the Ann Arbor model. He had also collected billing information from DTE regarding surplus power/solar production revenue received by the City (this revenue is applied towards our facilities bill). Unfortunately, he has not yet been able to determine our total solar generation from the small (26-panel) roof-mounted unit on the ITC Park maintenance building. Mr. Chojnacki hopes to receive more information regarding our return-on-investment, as well as other suggestions for additional buildings that could be solarized, soon.

The branding and formal name will still need to be finalized, with assistance from the Community Relations team. Additionally, Mr. Chojnacki suggested that a position to manage the program and other possible environmental initiatives should be considered. In Ann Arbor the position was established within the City Manager's office.

Ms. Mahoney requested that, in order to direct staff, the Committee determine the order of business for the program, I.E. should this small project be developed on it's own as a "quick win" first, developed after/as a component of the creation of the City of Novi Environmental Plan (EP), or developed concurrent to the aforementioned plan. Councilmember Heintz remarked that there are several necessary actions before we move on with the final product. Councilmember Gurumurthy thinks that we should take a balanced, phased approach. Many "quick wins" can be done in parallel to the EP but she thinks the Solar Project could and should be done as one of the Pillars of the EP itself and/or included in the Committee's Final Report.

The Committee then briefly discussed how the process of developing the EP should progress, that which would come from them/City Council and that which would be done by a potential consultant. Chairperson Smith stated that the Committee/Councilmembers would set high-level policy, with metrics for goals, and then could bring in a consultant to formalize the plan.

3. Revisit Goals from Brainstorming Session

Ms. Mahoney suggested that the Committee could take their existing goals (those written individually on June 17th) and use them to guide larger goals for the Committee/Council. Some broad strokes framework for the plan would be a good starting point.

Both Chairperson Smith and Councilmember Heintz noted that connecting/working across boundaries/creating synergy with other organizations (Oakland Country, SEMCOG communities, etc.) was important to them. Councilmember Gurumurthy suggested that the final report should have a section both on the current state of the City as well as pillars/goals. She also noted that "Education" could be a pillar, which Chairperson Smith agreed with. Councilmember Heintz suggest "Three Es": Energy (clean energy and reducing consumption), Educate, and Environment.

Ms. Mahoney suggested that the Committee could consider coming up with a short mission statement.

Mr. Chojnacki noted that when he was a resident in Ann Arbor they ran surveys where they started out with large pillars/goals and then asked residents to select their own prioritization to guide funding for these ideas. Chairperson Smith thought that utilizing FlashVote would be a great avenue for a similar survey. Ms. Mahoney said that we can start formulating questions even just to gauge general interest/sentiment towards sustainability. Councilmember Gurumurthy suggested holding a designated public input session to solicit resident thoughts and options on the matter.

Councilmember Heintz talked about some of his ideas for quick wins including a property swap event, a city event to feature activities built around energy efficient suggestions, park clean-up events, etc. Mr. Chojnacki updated the Committee on some existing modules and initiatives that would address or be similar to said suggestions.

The Committee also discussed adding information to resident's water bills that could include trend data on their usage vs. average usage, though it was noted that due to the large variance in home sizes a true usable "average" metric could be difficult to produce.

Additionally, Councilmember Gurumurthy stressed that being present and educating the community was important. She suggested that the Committee could have a booth at Earth Day, Arbor Day and other such events. The group decided they would like to have a table at the upcoming MSU Tollgate Pumpkinfest and will determine additional details for that at their next meeting.

REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMS

1. To arrange for a Pumpkinfest Booth
2. For each Committee member to continue brainstorming their "Pillars"
3. For Staff and Committee members to determine the next meetings dates
4. Create a high-level framework to facilitate public input

PUBLIC COMMENT – none

ADJOURNMENT 6:52 p.m.

Environmental Sustainability Committee

Goal Brainstorming 6/17/24

- Light Pollution Reduction (BS)
- Plastic Bag Ban/Incentives to Reduce (BS)
- Greenhouse Gas Inventory (BS)
- REDUCE – Inventory consumables and look for ways to reduce waste. Reduce, Reuse, Recycle has an order of importance (MH)
- Food Waste Compost - especially restaurants & grocery stores (BS)
- REDUCE – Encourage residents to use reusable bags and for stores to increase “friction” to use plastic bags (MH)
- Compost Pilot Program to reduce food and yard waste in landfill (BS)
- Small Composting Initiative – sharing or giving away kits so households can do it (PG)
- Implement reusable water fountains with bottle at City facilities (PG)
- Podcast on Environmental Sustainability series – so residents can learn how to save energy, water, recycle, etc. (PG)
- Green Initiatives Program that provides incentives for sustainable buildings (PG)
- Evaluate Current Electric Vehicle (EV) infrastructure and create a plan for additions over the next 10 years (PG)
- Community Solar (BS)
- Lecture Series – Take advantage of MSU/UofM being neighbors to have public talks and get people excited (MH)
- Rainwater Collection for irrigation
- Understand all statewide opportunities/grants to see where it matches and work towards top 1 or 2 (PG)
- Flyer education residents about recycling (PG)
- Do a City Council volunteer water cleanup/related activity to promote sustainability (PG)
- New Construction rooftop solar ordinance/incentive (MH)
- EV/Hybrid Fleet (noted as currently in progress)
- Invasive Species elimination
- Connect in Nature – make effort to host meetings in green spaces such as Fuerst Park or Lakeshore Park
- Road Salt use reduction
- Minimize hard surface run-off
- Host a Novi Earth Day event for residents to connect, share ideas, and get involved
- Schedule energy audits at buildings
- Create KPIs that we measure ourselves in this area
- Set a goal for achieving net zero emissions by 2050/2040 and create a progress report
- City CO2 offsets
- Turn Lawns into meadows and/or rain gardens
- Provide opportunities for residents to use wood chips from trees removed (originally suggested by City Forester, K. Salowich)
- Reduce fertilizer and biosolid (PFAS?) use
- Build to last, avoid specific single use buildings (IE Carvana)
- eBike Charging stations
- woodland/wetland inventory updates

- deer population control
- traffic flow, reduce idling
- Community Heat Exchanges (?)

Environmental Sustainability

OPTION 1

Pillar 1: Waste Minimization and Resource Efficiency

This pillar focuses on reducing waste, promoting recycling, and encouraging responsible resource use.

- Plastic Bag Ban/Incentives to Reduce
- REDUCE – Inventory consumables and look for ways to reduce waste.
- Food Waste Compost - especially restaurants & grocery stores
- Compost Pilot Program to reduce food and yard waste in landfill.
- Small Composting Initiative – sharing or giving away kits so households can do it
- Provide opportunities for residents to use wood chips from trees removed.
- Reduce fertilizer and biosolid (PFAS?) use.
- Build to last, avoid specific single-use buildings (IE Carvana)
- City CO2 offsets
- Turn Lawns into meadows and/or rain gardens.

Pillar 2: Clean Energy and Emission Reduction

This pillar emphasizes transitioning to clean energy, reducing greenhouse gases, and promoting energy efficiency.

- Greenhouse Gas Inventory
- Evaluate Current Electric Vehicle (EV) infrastructure and create a plan for additions.
- EV/Hybrid Fleet
- Schedule energy audits at buildings
- Set a goal for achieving net zero emissions by 2050/2040 and create a progress report.
- Community Solar
- New Construction rooftop solar ordinance/incentive
- eBike Charging stations.
- Community Heat Exchanges (?)

Pillar 3: Sustainable Infrastructure and Natural Environment Preservation

This pillar is centered on sustainable building practices, maintaining biodiversity, and protecting natural resources.

- Green Initiatives Program that provides incentives for sustainable buildings
- Rainwater Collection for irrigation
- Road Salt use reduction
- Minimize hard surface run-off.
- Woodland/wetland inventory updates
- Invasive Species elimination
- Deer population control
- Traffic flow, reduce idling.

Pillar 4: Community Engagement and Education

This pillar focuses on educating the community and fostering collaboration to promote sustainability.

- Podcast on Environmental Sustainability series.
- Lecture Series – Take advantage of MSU/UofM being neighbors to have public talks.
- Flyer education for residents about recycling
- Do a City Council volunteer water cleanup/related activity to promote sustainability.
- Host a Novi Earth Day event for residents.
- Connect in Nature – try to host meetings in green spaces.
- Create KPIs that measure progress in sustainability.

These pillars not only organize the goals effectively but also create distinct focuses for action and engagement.

Oppermann, Katherine

From: Oppermann, Katherine
Sent: Monday, September 16, 2024 12:47 PM
To: Smith, Brian; Gurumurthy, Priya; Heintz, Matt
Cc: Mahoney, Danielle
Subject: Prospective Environmental Sustainability Committee Meetings

Good Morning Councilmembers,
I hope you are enjoying your trip to Kansas so far!

I will be sending out a calendar request for a meeting on Thursday, September 26th at 5:30p.m. Please reach out should that date/time not be conducive for your schedule.

Additionally, we'd like to check which of the following dates might work best for the Committee as October meeting dates:

Tuesday, October 1st
Friday, October 4th
Thursday, October 10th
Tuesday, October 15th
Monday, October 21st
Tuesday, October 22nd
Thursday, October 24th

Best regards,



Katherine Oppermann | Executive Assistant
City Manager's Office
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