

HOLLAND COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

October 20, 2018

Call to Order –

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Chair Jerry Tonini.

Roll Call –

Members Present: Jerry Tonini, Carolyn Ulstad, Jeff Raywood, Dan Robertson, Colleen Nagel, Jennie Thompson, Bob Johnston, City Council Representative Wayne Klomparens, Student Representative Josh Laux

Absent: Staff Liaisons Aaron Thelenwood and Andrew Reynolds, Holland-Hope College Sustainability Institute Representative Michelle Gibbs, HBPW Board Representative Diane Haworth, Student Representative Ethan Myers

Others Present: Ken Freestone (COH), Mark Vanderploeg (COH), Anne Saliers (HBPW)

Approval of Minutes –

The August meeting minutes were reviewed. A motion was made by Nagel, with support by Raywood, to approve the minutes. The motion passed 7-0.

Public Comment –

(None)

Open Discussion –

Tonini reported on his recent meeting with city manager, Keith Van Beek. Van Beek has been meeting with each commission and committee as part of his onboarding. The recommendation to Tonini was for SusCom to hold a retreat to develop more strategic direction. Tonini asked Klomparens about issues important to Council. Klomparens listed the refuse study, tree canopy and electric vehicles as important issues.

Vanderploeg elaborated that Van Beek has come to realize the city has an abundance of committees and boards, that its resources are limited, so he needs to sift through each to ensure they are each doing what they are tasked to do and that the city is getting good value. Vanderploeg suggested SusCom determine its one or two “big rocks” to push through the staff liaisons that align with things going on (e.g. CEP, refuse). He said Thelenwood’s workload will be tapering over the next month or two and he’ll have more time to dive into sustainability issues.

Johnston noted SusCom has intentionally been more tactical than strategic to help city staff become more sustainable, specifically in using the Framework, but that SusCom is charged with educating Council.

Newsletter Tip Schedule –

Robertson reported the November “tip” is a survey on recycling, in draft form. Using Survey Monkey, there will be a link inside the City Newsletter where he’s hoping subscribers will fill out and submit the survey as a way for SusCom to better understand residents’ knowledge and preferences on a topic. For example, one question is, “How many yellow bags does your household use for recycling each week?”

The monthly topic aligns with the subject of the Livings Sustainably Along the Lakeshore program topic for that month. Since there are no LSATL programs in December and January, the group brainstormed ideas. For

December, tree recycling, recyclable gift wrap, holiday recycling tips, and the HBPW holiday light exchange were recommended. For January, a resolution-themed “12 Things You Can Do This Year” was suggested. Johnston offered to write January’s. Climate change is the topic for February, and May will focus on transportation. Ulstad requested a tip be written on International Dark Sky Week (March 31- April 7, 2019).

Waste Characterization Audit Update –

Freestone and Vanderploeg reported that five days of auditing (Oct. 8-12) was done on Republic’s different collection routes by Sustainable Research Group (SRG), a third party contracted to collect data and report on a sampling of what’s in a load and what is and could be recycled. It is not a study on how well single-stream recycling is working. The last report, compiled by the contractor, turned out not to be accurate.

Republic’s (formerly Chef’s) system is all manual sorting, not mechanical, and considered outdated. Tonini said many are skeptical sorting and recycling is done at all and/or too much contamination of waste keeps material unrecyclable. Klomprens, who visited the recycling center with other council members recently, initially thought more community education would be needed, but was “impressed” by how much it had improved from five years ago.

When SRG’s report is presented to Council (SusCom will get a copy), Council will likely recommend an independent Material Management Taskforce be created, according to a memo from Thelenwood. The city media group is in process of creating a video to educate customers and staff on proper sorting of solid waste for recycling.

Committee Updates –

- Lighting – tabled
- Outreach & Education – covered under Newsletter Tip Schedule
- Transportation – no update per Ulstad. Tonini reported he presented the CNG concept and an idling policy in the meeting with Van Beek and that Lisa Hoekwater was selected as the new MAX executive director.
- LSATL – The next event is November 13, titled “Stump Our Recycling Chumps,” and will be live streamed on Facebook.
- Hope & City Research – SusCom is on board for the Hope College Tree Canopy Study, to help fund a Hope College intern. Holland in Bloom also plans to help fund the effort.
- Farmers Market – Johnston proposed tabling the committee to allow for the new MAX ED to settle in and because there is no incentive for farmers to not use plastic bags. Thompson suggested a discount on booth rental be awarded to farm stands that do not use plastic, or that Market Bucks be given to reward shoppers who bring and use their own bags.

Announcements –

Freestone announced Green Michigan received a grant from the City of Grand Rapids, through the National Science Institute, to fund an education event called “Fix It Fest” that will be held November 10.

Freestone said a formal announcement on the partnership with Goodwill Industries for the new office furniture disassembly and recycling facility in Muskegon will be made in two-three weeks. Replicable, this will be the first in the country.

Saliers announced:

- Holland Energy Fund has reached \$1 million in On-Bill loans to homeowners doing energy efficiency upgrades.
- HBPW will host a smart strip giveaway in the Service Center lobby on October 22 to educate

customers on “vampire” power.

- November 30 is the Holiday Light Exchange, whereby customer exchange a string of incandescent holiday lights to be recycled for a string of LED holiday lights, up to two strings per household.
- A new Energy Waste Reduction pilot program, called Energy Saving Trees, will be presented to the HBPW board in a study session on October 22. A strategic tree planting program from the Arbor Day Foundation, HBPW and the City will partner to provide 300 free trees. Homeowners use the same iTree software as is being used for the tree inventory to register, select, and determine a good placement for one of five species to plant in their yards. The program educates on proper tree placement, including calling MissDig before planting, and will help increase the urban tree canopy. The trees will be available for pick-up on April 27, the Saturday after Arbor Day.

Adjournment –

A motion was made by Robertson, with support from Raywood, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed 7-0. The meeting adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

The next meeting will be December 17 at 5:00 p.m.

Recorded by Anne Saliers

Community Energy Services Manager
Holland Board of Public Works