

COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAM COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
DECEMBER 5, 2019  
4:00 P.M.  
THIRD FLOOR, PUBLIC WORKS CONFERENCE ROOM  
CITY HALL

**Committee Members Present:** Sara Pesek (Chair), Leah Lavin, Rajesh Kapileshwari, Dane Kuppinger, Stephanie Friede, Allison Bowling, Keyra Williams

**Committee Members Absent:** Angela Young, Amber Baker, Denise Terry, Lee Stackhouse

**Attendance of City Staff:** Council Member Larson, Director of Operations Johnnie Taylor, Jennifer Chrysson, Helen Peplowski, Deputy City Attorney Al Andrews

**MINUTES:**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Sara Pesek at 4:03 p.m.

Adoption of minutes – motioned by Rajesh Kapileshwari, seconded by Leah Lavin.

Roll call was taken.

Deputy City Attorney Al Andrews begins ethics presentation to committee with information about the open meeting policy and what that means in context of committee meetings as a public body. Public meeting details are available online, but members of the public who attend do not have an open comment period to be able to share information with the committee. He explains that when there is a request for information about the meetings to send those individuals to staff for a response. Additionally, email is considered a meeting when discussing official matters.

Leah asks about protocol for sub-committee meetings. Al clarifies that as long as the meeting has less than a quorum, it does not have to abide by the open meeting rules.

If the group is meeting to discuss committee information, it qualifies as an open meeting and needs to have a record.

Rajesh asks about whether the public members who attend meeting can give comments. Al clarifies that the public is not given a public comment period in this setting.

Al moves on to general ethics information, starting with the ethics policy and conflicts of interest. He emphasizes being aware of conflicts of interest particularly when it comes to money or contracts with the city. Al explains that while there may be members of boards or committees who contract with the city, as long as it doesn't relate to their position on the relevant board or

use the position as a member of the board as leverage, it is acceptable to hold a contract with the city.

Chair Sara Pesek moves to the next item on the agenda to discuss a work plan for the 2019-2020 fiscal year. She begins with examples of five areas as a starting point for the discussion with some background. Those areas include composting and how to bridge educational efforts between the county and the city.

Allison Bowling asks for clarification about the scale of the work, and whether they should be focusing on residents or on an institutional level, like schools, hospitals.

Sara moves on to explain the idea of supporting the STAR Communities to LEED for Cities and Communities transition the Office of Sustainability is working on.

Leah asks if the committee is allowed to work on goals that aren't strictly city-run or pertaining to work that the Office of Sustainability or other city groups are planning, for example working on the bus stop idea or working on composting in schools. Chief of Staff Helen Peplowski explains that the goals of the committee can do that as it would encourage further collaboration with those other groups.

Leah asks about other committee members' interests so we may add to the initial list provided by Sara. Director of Operations Johnnie Taylor mentions that assistance with the recycling education aspect of the sustainability program is an area where more immediate impacts can be made with assistance from the committee.

Stephanie Friede adds that she was unaware of the confusion and details around recycling until conversations with people at Wake Forest's campus. She asks if that information is something that might be helpful to share with the public. Helen shares details about the blog post she contributed to with the six more important rules for the recycling program.

Leah says that the committee should look at both issues and methods level of issues. Related to issues, Rajesh mentioned the book Drawdown as a way to perhaps guide the work of the committee since it goes into a lot of detail about specific strategies to address some of the bigger areas or issues mentioned. He gave examples of land use, food production, programs for women and girls, and environmental justice. Helen reminds members of the shorter timeline they are working with to accomplish some goals by the end of the fiscal year. Allison adds that members should look at goals with the idea of pragmatism in mind to look for a starting point in such a broad range of options out there. The five goals that ended up on the first list from Sara were chosen with realistic goals in mind where they could improve some challenges in the timeframe.

Dane Kuppinger adds that he noticed policies around planting in and around the city would be something he would like added to the initial list of things to add to the work plan.

Stephanie asks for clarification of the scale of the goals that are being set and thinking about how the members seem to be talking about projects on different scales. Specifically, is this a brainstorming session about sustainability, is it about connecting people, is it about providing research to the city council, and at what point should they think about scaling out rather than

down in setting goals? Johnnie says that the purpose is to have a committee to serve in an advisory capacity. He gives the example of how the recycling idea is a smart place to start now. The goal is to come up with feasible ideas, then set some measurable guidelines with a set beginning and end. He asks that the committee choose at least one idea they would be able to get started on today.

Stephanie asks as a follow-up to clarify the 'advisory' aspect of the committee duties. She asks if they are coming up with ideas that others would be implementing. Johnnie clarifies that there are ways in which the committee members would participate in the implementation, but ultimately council will be given ultimate say-so in bigger action like policy change and culture shifts. Stephanie then mentions that it seems as if the goal then is to work from very small to get larger.

Leah asks if creating a work plan can be a thing they work on outside of meeting time that can be worked on by members then brought to the next meeting and be voted on there.

Council Member Larson mentions that a work plan is especially important if the committee expects to utilize a budget in some capacity, especially as the topics the committee can expect to work with are bigger issues that will eventually need funds.

Allison says that she thinks it makes more sense for the committee to approach their work as using the actionable items as inputs for projects rather than coming up with new items. They should try to use current council issues or city projects as a guideline in what the committee should be creating work plans around and advises on.

Council Member Larson continues that the committee of course will still need to keep in mind any possible budget items when considering projects. Keyra Williams asks if specific data is available to the committee which Council Member Larson then says is perhaps part of their process that they will need a budget to allow for the gathering of the data if it doesn't exist. He says that the committee could look into things that other cities have done, the county or other agencies for ideas if needed.

Allison asks if the Bowman Gray Stadium upgrades are a good example where the committee is able to have impact or input. The committee could attach itself to specific projects in the future to provide recommendation rather than coming up with new projects.

Dane summarizes the conversations into three broad areas that could guide the work plan items. Those topics are carbon reduction, environmental quality improvement, and waste reduction. Within those broad categories, develop more specifics and the particular projects like recycling education are how those items become the work plan items and actual actions.

Sara asks if they actually need to vote on a work plan. Helen clarifies that it could be a combination of suggestions, but it is important having a document with goals so they are able to show progress by the end of the fiscal year when putting together the annual report to council.

Dane suggests that if the committee would like to set three larger buckets as the goal areas, committee members can then start creating a work plan related to more specific topics so they can put together a document that is voted on at the next meeting.

Sara and Leah volunteered for waste reduction, Raj volunteered for the carbon reduction team, Dane volunteered for environmental quality improvement, Allison volunteered for waste reduction to specifically work on recycling. Stephanie says she is interested in working on educational opportunities related to what the committee is doing perhaps. Keyra volunteered to work on the environmental quality improvement topic.

Allison moves to the next agenda item to open up a discussion for future meeting times. Most members agree that 5:00 p.m. or later would work best for them.

Meeting adjourns at 5:06 p.m.