



SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION AGENDA

Thursday, May 16, 2024

6:30 p.m.

Coon Rapids City Center

Civic B

Call to Order

Roll Call

Adopt Agenda

1. Approval of Minutes

New Business

2. Active Transportation Plan - Focus Group

Old Business

3. Water Use Reduction Education - Next Steps
4. Sustainable Garden Tour - Next Steps
5. Summer in the City - Next Steps

Other Business

6. Staff Updates
7. Chair and Commissioner Comments

Adjourn



Sustainability Commission - Regular

1.

Meeting Date: 05/16/2024

SUBJECT: Approval of Minutes

Approve Minutes from April 18 meeting.

Attachments

April 18 Minutes

COON RAPIDS SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES FOR APRIL 18, 2024

The April 18, 2024 meeting of the Sustainability Commission was called to order at 6:34 p.m.

Commission Members Present: Kate Anderson, Chris Backes, Kelsey Brodt, Peter Butler, Elzaki Ishag, Keygan McClellan, Lynne Riley, Josh Zeller

Commission Members Absent: Eve Commerford

Staff Present: Olivia Dorow Hovland

1. Adopt Agenda & Approve Minutes

Motion by Commissioner Brodt, seconded by Commissioner Anderson to adopt agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Commissioner Brodt, seconded by Commissioner Butler to approve minutes of the February 15, 2024 Sustainability Commission meeting, as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Approve Landscape Standards Report

Staff presented the final draft of the Landscape Standards Report. Commissioners had no edits to the final draft.

The motion to approve the final report passed unanimously.

3. Earth Month – Next Steps

Staff reminded commissioners of the upcoming park clean-up event and asked for feedback on Earth Month for next year.

Commissioner Riley suggested creating a sign to use for tabling that spells out the commission's accomplishments and highlights actions that people can take. She suggested an additional or broader sign that explains what sustainability is and notes the existence of the commission.

Commissioners suggested tabling at the park clean-up event on the topic of water use reduction. They noted to limit tabling if the weather is going to be bad, and also noted that if people are coming to the clean-up event, they may already be engaged and not be the target audience for engagement efforts.

Commissioner Brodt suggested locating the park clean-up event at a dirtier park next year. She noted that one of her neighbors consistently picks up trash along Sand Creek already and that a different location may be more effective. Staff said that the Parks Director recommend the Lions Coon Creek Park location.

Commissioner Riley suggested Al Flynn Park and adjacent areas as they have a lot of trash.

Commissioner Brodt also suggested focusing on cleaning up the creek, perhaps in collaboration with the watershed district.

Commissioners are interested in continuing the Earth Month proclamation, awards, and weekly messaging in the future.

Commissioner Riley asked if there is a way to get weekly communications out more broadly. Staff outlined current communications efforts.

Commissioners suggested using QR codes to link people to the sustainability webpage and newsletter in engagement materials at Summer in the City.

4. Summer in the City – Tabling and Engagement

Staff asked commissioners what information they wanted to provide at Summer in the City events this year.

Commissioners outlined the following items:

- Recruitment for the sustainable garden tour
- Water use reduction education including information on:
 - The city's odd-even watering ban
 - Drip irrigation
 - Drought tolerant landscaping
 - Low flow water fixtures
 - Where to purchase rain barrels
- A poster educating residents on what sustainability is

Commissioner Backes asked if Colleen's table will cover organics education. Ms. Dorow Hovland said she thought it would.

Commissioners signed up to staff Summer in the City events:

- June 11: Kate, Peter
- June 25: Peter, Chris
- July 16: Kelsey, Kate, Keygan

Commissioner Riley volunteered to staff farmers market engagement efforts.

Commissioner Brodt asked if the city would be composting popsicle sticks at the event this year.

5. Water Use Reduction Education

Commissioners want to provide water use reduction education at Summer in the City events. Staff noted that the city's communications team can put together materials if the commission provides the research and text.

Commissioner McClellan volunteered to provide information on drought tolerant plants.

Commissioner Backes suggested reaching out to the city's utilities supervisor to get his advice on best practices to promote and to ensure that we aren't being redundant with the outreach he will be doing at Summer in the City.

Commissioner Brodt shared that she had found a "top five water wasters" article that could be a good framework for outreach.

6. Pollinator Week

Commissioners decided on July 27 as the date for the sustainable garden tour.

Commissioners suggested the following ways to recruit participants in the sustainable garden tour:

- Have promotional cards or a sign-up available at the native plant sale pick-up
- Have a sign-up available at the June Summer in the City events

Commissioners suggested the following ways to get the word out about the tour:

- Promote the tour date at the July Summer in the City event

Commissioners suggested the following educational materials to go along with the sustainable garden tour:

- Information about plants and habitats
- Information about types of pollinators
- Coloring sheets for kids
- A circle the pollinators activity sheet or quiz for kids
 - Commissioner Riley volunteered to put this together
- Lawn signs
- A story map online

Commissioners decided on next steps for the sustainable garden tour:

- A promotional article in the June Coon Rapids Connection newsletter
- A webpage and online form for people to sign up to be stops on the tour
- A sign-up sheet or card to use at the native plant sale pick-up
- Decide on educational materials and how they will be presented

4. Staff Updates

Ms. Dorow Hovland shared the following list of updates:

- The city has kicked off its Active Transportation Plan process. The commission will participate in a focus group in May.
- The city is applying for the state's Solar for Public Buildings Grant program.
- The city is waiting to hear back on if it received funding through the Metropolitan Council's Water Efficiency Grant program.
- The city was approved to be a GreenCorps host site for the 2024-5 service term.

- The Native Plant Sale is open through April 30.
- The Commission Appreciation Dinner is Monday April 29.
- The Commission will take a hiatus in June and July.

5. Chair and Commissioner Comments

Motion by Commissioner Brodt, seconded by Commissioner Butler to adjourn the meeting at 7:27 pm.
The motion passed unanimously.



Sustainability Commission - Regular

2.

Meeting Date: 05/16/2024

Subject: Active Transportation Plan - Focus Group

From: Olivia Dorow Hovland, Sustainability Planner

INTRODUCTION

The Coon Rapids Active Transportation Action Plan will build on the community's ongoing efforts to increase miles of trails and sidewalks by identifying new opportunities to enhance and expand all active modes of transportation. The plan will identify gaps in Coon Rapids sidewalk, trails, and bicycle network and opportunities to safely connect those facilities to key community destinations such as schools, retail centers, transit stations, and open spaces. The final action plan will include a list of priority projects, phasing, and funding opportunities to efficiently implement strategies.

DISCUSSION

This project is led by a coalition that includes representatives of the City of Coon Rapids, Anoka County, City Commissions, and Anoka Hennepin School District. This Active Transportation Plan is funded through MnDOT's Active Transportation Program. As part of the planning process, staff are conducting focus groups with stakeholders to get feedback on active transportation needs and priorities. Staff will lead the commission in a discussion on the planning process and in an engagement activity.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends commissioners participate in the focus group discussion and activity.



Sustainability Commission - Regular

3.

Meeting Date: 05/16/2024

Subject: Water Use Reduction Education - Next Steps

From: Olivia Dorow Hovland, Sustainability Planner

INTRODUCTION

Initiative #5 in the Sustainability Commission's 2024 work plan is Water Use Reduction Education.

DISCUSSION

At their April meeting, commissioners decided to focus water use reduction education on:

- The city's odd-even watering ban
- Drip irrigation
- Drought tolerant landscaping
- Low flow water fixtures
- Where to purchase rain barrels

Commissioner McClellan volunteered to provide information on drought tolerant plants. Commissioner Brodt shared that she had found a "top five water wasters" article that could be a good framework for outreach.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the commission finalize engagement materials so that they are prepared for the June 11 Summer in the City event.



Sustainability Commission - Regular

4.

Meeting Date: 05/16/2024

Subject: Sustainable Garden Tour - Next Steps

From: Olivia Dorow Hovland, Sustainability Planner

INTRODUCTION

Initiative #6 in the Sustainability Commission's 2024 work plan is Pollinator Week. The work plan includes the following deliverables:

- Educational messaging around protecting pollinators
- Potential tour or map of best pollinator gardens around the city, with awards or recognition

DISCUSSION

At their April meeting, commissioners decided on July 27 as the date for the sustainable garden tour. Commissioners suggested the following ways to recruit participants in the sustainable garden tour:

- Have promotional cards or a sign-up available at the native plant sale pick-up
- Have a sign-up available at the June Summer in the City events

Commissioners suggested the following ways to get the word out about the tour:

- Promote the tour date at the July Summer in the City event

Commissioners suggested the following educational materials to go along with the sustainable garden tour:

- Information about plants and habitats
- Information about types of pollinators
- Coloring sheets for kids
- A circle the pollinators activity sheet or quiz for kids
 - Commissioner Riley volunteered to put this together
- Lawn signs
- A story map online

Commissioners decided on next steps for the sustainable garden tour:

- A promotional article in the June Coon Rapids Connection newsletter
- A webpage and online form for people to sign up to be stops on the tour
- A sign-up sheet or card to use at the native plant sale pick-up
- Decide on educational materials and how they will be presented

There may be more sign-ups than would make an effective tour. Staff suggests limiting the number of tour stops to about 10, and determining a way to choose participants.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends commissioners decide on educational materials and how they will be distributed. Staff also recommends deciding on tour stop selection criteria and categorization.



Sustainability Commission - Regular

5.

Meeting Date: 05/16/2024

Subject: Summer in the City - Next Steps

From: Olivia Dorow Hovland, Sustainability Planner

INTRODUCTION

Initiative #1 in the Sustainability Commission's 2024 work plan is Tabling and Engagement. The work plan includes the following deliverables:

- Engagement materials to distribute at tabling events.
- A table/presence at 3-6 public events in 2023 including Summer in the City and the Native Plant Sale

DISCUSSION

Each year the city hosts three Summer in the City events at public parks. The Commission has a table at each of these events, and typically decides on a topic/focus for their engagement each year.

At their April meeting, commissioners outlined the following items:

- Recruitment for the sustainable garden tour
- Water use reduction education including information on:
 - The city's odd-even watering ban
 - Drip irrigation
 - Drought tolerant landscaping
 - Low flow water fixtures
 - Where to purchase rain barrels
- A poster educating residents on what sustainability is

Commissioners signed up to staff Summer in the City events:

- June 11: Kate, Peter
- June 25: Peter, Chris
- July 16: Kelsey, Kate, Keygan

Commissioners also discussed having an ongoing presence at the city's farmers market.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends commissioners discuss what a sustainability overview poster should have on it. Staff also recommends commissioners discuss other engagement opportunities and what topics they would like to cover there.



Sustainability Commission - Regular

6.

Meeting Date: 05/16/2024

Subject: Staff Updates

From: Olivia Dorow Hovland, Sustainability Planner

INTRODUCTION

Staff will provide an update on sustainability-related work going on at the city.

DISCUSSION

NA

RECOMMENDATION

Receive the update.



Sustainability Commission - Regular

7.

Meeting Date: 05/16/2024

Subject: Chair and Commissioner Comments

From: Olivia Dorow Hovland, Sustainability Planner

INTRODUCTION

Commissioners are invited to share any new or relevant sustainability-related information with the group.

DISCUSSION

NA

RECOMMENDATION

Receive the comments.
