

**DRAFT June Meeting Minutes**

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|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION</b> | <b>HYBRID MEETING</b>        |
| <b>THURSDAY</b>                  | <b>STAFF CONFERENCE ROOM</b> |
| <b>June 27, 2024</b>             | <b>AND MICROSOFT TEAMS</b>   |
|                                  | <b>211 WEST ASPEN AVENUE</b> |
|                                  | <b>4:30 P.M.</b>             |

**Vision:** The City of Flagstaff is a culture and community that thrives in response to the Climate Crisis.

**Mission:** To advise Sustainability Division Staff on matters related to climate and sustainability, support community projects through Neighborhood Sustainability Grants, and provide feedback to the City Council on sustainability issues.

Members of the public may join the meeting online, via Microsoft Teams.

**1. Call to Order**

Chair Wolkowinsky called the meeting to order at 4:31 P.M.

**2. ROLL CALL**

*NOTE: One or more Commissioner may be in attendance through other technological means.*

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Chair Amy Wolkowinsky – Present         | Commissioner Tom Lammie – Present      |
| Vice Chair Mary Ellen Metzger – Present | Commissioner Rodger Scurlock – Present |
| Commissioner Noah Baker - Present       | Vacant                                 |
| Commissioner Kristen Konkell – Present  |  |

Others present: *Austin Aslan (Vice Mayor), Shannon Jones (Water Services Director), Nicole Antonopoulos (Sustainability Director), Kallie Klein (Staff), Tia Hatton (Staff and Commission Liaison), Marisa Miller (Staff), Katie Seals (Staff), Sam Wiley (Staff), Professional Energy Auditor with Cozy Home (Public), Kylie Hansard (Public, Online)*

### 3. Land Acknowledgment

The Sustainability Commission humbly acknowledges the ancestral homelands of this area's Indigenous nations and original stewards. These lands, still inhabited by Native descendants, border mountains sacred to Indigenous peoples. We honor them, their legacies, their traditions, and their continued contributions. We celebrate their past, present, and future generations who will forever know this place as home.

### 4. Public Comment

At this time, any member of the public may address the Commission on any subject within their jurisdiction that is not scheduled before the Commission on that day. Due to Open Meeting Laws, the Commission cannot discuss or act on items presented during this portion of the agenda. To address the Commission on an item that is on the agenda, please use the Teams Chat function: simply type in "public comment" to indicate to the Chair that you would like to comment. The Chair will then recognize you when it is time for public comment, and staff will unmute your microphone if needed.

**No public comment.**

### 5. Approval of Minutes (April)

Vice Chair Metzger moved and Commissioner Konkel seconded to approve the April minutes. **Approved by vote: 6-0**

### 6. Business

#### A. **Water Rate Study Update** – Shannon Jones, Water Services Director

Water Services conducted a water rate analysis, which resulted in a recommendation for a water rate increase.

1. The Rate Study was under the City Council's direction; Council crafted the approach to minimize impacts on fees and give back some control to customers over their bills. September 1, 2024 will be the effective date of the rate change if approved by the Council. There were many questions from Commissioners:

- i. Mr. Jones clarified that the debt would come from municipal bonds and low-interest loans.
- ii. He mentioned ongoing discussions for discounting/assisting high water-use customers by offering community benefits (such as community gardens). Water Services will continue working with Sustainability, looking into outside funding strategies, and working with the Finance Department on what resources are available to those consumers.
- iii. When asked if there would be sufficient funds given the expected cost reductions and continued growth, Mr. Jones said they might seek state and federal funding and that the business model assumes some grant awards.
- iv. Mr. Jones described some considerations for pipe replacement. The age of the pipe is one indicator, but also its failure risk, size, and prioritized City initiatives.
- v. Capacity fees will more strongly impact larger homes than smaller homes and second homes than permanent residences, since there is now a base monthly wastewater fee whether the consumer uses water or not (for example, summer homes and short-term rentals).
- vi. There has not been much need for remediation for lead pipes in Flagstaff, but some for galvanized pipes. Water Services has about two years left to complete the inventory work before the deadline and is progressing well.
- vii. There is not one set rate for all consumers. There are miscellaneous fees for heavier loading and different customer classes (commercial vs. Industrial, for example) that consider the type of loadings, peaking, and water use patterns. However, the rate calculator available to consumers does not take these variable costs into account.
- viii. Mr. Jones clarified that the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) was not reduced; it is higher than the current expenditure level, but the increase was lower than expected. The investment of \$163 million over ten years in water infrastructure is significant and adequate.

**B. Equity Assessment and Neighborhood Sustainability Grant Program: Benefits, Barriers, and Action Steps – Sam Wiley, Resilience Hub Coordinator**

Mr. Wiley introduced himself as part of the Sustainability Office Climate Team and Climate Corps Member and said he recently completed an equity assessment for the Community Resilience Hubs program. He requested that each Commissioner share their thoughts on the major sections of the assessment, which were recorded during the discussion.

1. Mr. Wiley asked Commissioners about the benefits of the Neighborhood Sustainability Grants (NSGs) as they see them, as well as who besides grant recipients are and are not receiving these benefits.
  - i. The program provides concrete, substantive tools that put the power of ownership in the hands of grantees, encourages collaboration with other agencies and volunteers, and is effective for community-based research and development.
  - ii. Improvements are seen from the bottom up rather than the top down; they help counter the feeling of hopelessness and contribute to reaching Flagstaff Carbon Neutrality goals. They provide a good example to young people, as well as other municipalities/counties interested in replicating the results.
  - iii. In terms of who is not benefitting from the program, some of this is unknown as we do not know who is not applying; we know there are more institutions and organizations applying, versus everyday citizens without connections, so those citizens may be missing out on the benefits, to some degree.
2. The Commission discussed barriers that might exist and brainstormed possible solutions.
  - i. The application requires applicants to state their partnerships/connections, if any, so solo applicants who lack connections/relationships may have a more difficult time. A former grant project that ran into difficulty providing community fridges was offered as an example.
  - ii. The penalty for not completing a project is that funds must be returned, and the grantee may not apply for an NSG again for another year. However, grantees can apply for a time extension. Perhaps these rules are a barrier because people might be afraid to take risks. A name change from “grant” to “giveaway/gift might be less intimidating, if allowed under the funding rules.
  - iii. Commissioners discussed minimizing the intimidation factor by hosting a pitch kick-off competition, networking event or round robin for the final grant presentations, and/or offering an event with grant opportunities from other organizations like a career fair, options to minimize the formality of meetings. Individuals could form partnerships and access expertise while more of the community could get involved. Events like Earth Day are an opportunity for physical (rather than written) outreach. Also, the grantees could do more to acknowledge and advertise the program as their funder.
  - iv. They discussed providing templates so that applicants do not have to start from zero, offering suggestions and showing other projects that have been successful. The final presentations/slideshows should be available on the website, and printed applications should be available.

- v. Language barriers and a lack of familiarity with grant applications will likely be addressed this year with website translation services and grant workshops.
- vi. A potential barrier might be the uncertainty of how an individual's taxes would be affected if they win the grant.
- vii. One suggestion was to offer self pay for grant administration for grant recipients.
- viii. For equity reasons, submission options should include paper and pencil applications or video submissions. Demographic information should be requested on the questionnaire (age, race, gender, neighborhood being impacted).

**C. Neighborhood Sustainability Grant 2024-2025 – Planning and Working Group - Tia Hatton, Staff Liaison**

Ms. Hatton described this group's work as taking priority items from the Commission for the grants and updating materials, if needed, using Google Docs. Regarding time commitment, members would likely have some independent work at first, then meet once or twice for an hour before Commission meetings. Commissioners Lammie and Scurlock, as well as Vice Chair Metzger volunteered as NSG Planning and Working Group members. Vote: 6-0

## **7. To and From**

There is a pop-up community fridge demonstration at the Murdock Center on Saturday, June 29<sup>th</sup>, at 10:30 A.M.

## **8. Future Agenda Item Requests**

No requests were made.

## **9. Chair Wolkowinsky adjourned the meeting at 6:37 P.M.**