

City of Lawrence
Sustainability Advisory Board (SAB)
July 10, 2013 minutes

MEMBERS PRESENT: Boog Highberger, Matt Lehrman, Michael Morley, Daniel Poull, Ian Spomer, Scott White, Steve Vukelich

MEMBERS ABSENT: Adam Ritchie, Kathleen Nuckolls, Dale Nimz

STAFF PRESENT: Tammy Bennett, Eileen Horn

PUBLIC PRESENT: Jim Regan, Michelle Milburn, James Duft, Jenny O'Brien

Item #1: Call Meeting to Order (Scott White, Chair person)

Take roll call to determine quorum of members.

Item #2: Approval of Meeting Minutes

Motion and second to approve the June 12, 2013 minutes. (Michael Morley / Boog Highberger). Vote: Motion was passed unanimously.

Item #3: Mother Earth News Fair (James Duft, Operation Manager for Fair)

SAB received an update on Fair plans from James, and discussed how Mother Earth News and the City could collaborate to ensure that the elements of the former Energy Conservation Fair are incorporated into the Mother Earth News Event (Oct. 12-13).

Discussion included plans for a sustainable homes/solar energy tour, which will be coordinated in part by Cromwell Solar and other business partners. There was also interest in highlighting downtown businesses and restaurants that have made a commitment to sustainability, and highlighting City of Lawrence sustainability projects.

Table Item: At the August meeting, SAB will receive updates on progress towards these initiatives, and discuss any additional SAB involvement.

Item #4: Presentation by Jenny O'Brien, Lawrence OnBoard.

Jenny O'Brien presented a program she is piloting in Lawrence and Douglas County: www.lawrenceonboard.org

Lawrence OnBoard is a nonprofit organization that seeks to transform hitchhiking into a safe, mainstream and reliable form of public transportation. Lawrence OnBoard is based on a club membership system. The club is organized and owned by its members, who can sign up as riders or drivers or both. All

participants will be registered and issued a photo ID. Riders receive a white board with the club logo. Riders can go to any safe road side, write their destination on the white board, and catch a ride with any willing driver.

Post-presentation, key discussion points included: Safety mechanisms for ensuring rider/driver safety, and the recent research results showing an average wait time of 7.5 minutes. Jenny requested that the SAB support her work by writing letters of support for grants, or inviting her to present to the City Commission, but that no additional formal support from local governments is needed at this time.

No Further Action Needed.

Item #5: E-billing for municipal water/wastewater billing.

Steve Vukelich requested additional information about the city Utilities Dept's e-billing capabilities. Currently, the City offers e-billing for customers, but only 3% of Lawrence residents have signed up for the service. 15% are enrolled in automatic bill pay, but many still receive paper bills. One issue raised was the difficulty of finding the e-billing information on the website.

Eileen Horn provided the update that she had spoken with the City web developer, and he added extra links to the e-billing page to make it easier for customers to find. In addition, the Finance Dept. is open to improving their promotion of the program, and will begin that soon. They are currently changing their software company, and will be in a better position to promote e-billing service after that transition takes place.

No Further Action Needed.

Item #6: Unintended sustainability consequences of 2-hour parking and ramifications.

Steve Vukelich relayed concerns that, in many of the 2-hour parking lots, employees of downtown businesses park, and then re-start and move their car throughout the day. This leads to multiple car starts and short drives as employees move their cars. One idea proposed would be to have the city sell permits for long-term parking in the short-term lots.

SAB discussed the issue, and declined to pursue it.

No Further Action Needed.

Item #7: Permitting and inspection fees for installations of renewable energy.

Ian presented a potential barrier to residents who wish to install solar panels may be the cost of the permitting and inspection fees. Prior to the meeting, SAB received a letter from Aron Cromwell of Cromwell Solar that explained:

"Up until a few years ago solar permit fees in Lawrence were calculated based upon the actual work being performed to the home's electrical system (the AC portion which is done by a licensed electrician), at some point this shifted to encompass the entirety of our project (panels on the roof etc). The difference between the calculation methods resulted in a residential system permit fee going up from about \$50 to over \$500."

SAB discussion revolved around how/why the city had changed their permitting fees for solar installations. It was posed that if want to be a city promoting solar we should do everything possible to reduce the costs of install. SAB decided to move this discussion to the August meeting agenda, pending additional information from City staff. Key questions include: Has the change been an actual change in policy or an interpretation of the policy? How feasible is it to change these fees?

Table Item: At the August meeting, SAB will receive staff updates on context and policy options, and discuss any additional SAB involvement.

Staff Reports

Eileen Horn addressed all items on the Sustainability Coordinator report. Highlights include a recently awarded USDA and Kansas Health Foundation grant to fund a "food hub" feasibility study for locally/regionally grown foods, ACEEE's selection of Lawrence as a pilot community for their energy efficiency scorecard, and City Commission passage of a rental housing registration and inspection program. *Eileen asked SAB members to review the STAR communities rating tool for a potential future agenda item.* The City can pay to join, and have access to the sustainability ranking and benchmarking tools.

Prior to the meeting, **Kathy Richardson emailed the Solid Waste Division Report.** City-wide residential curbside recycling program UPDATE: the City finalized an implementation plan and we are working on the communications plan.

Miscellaneous Announcements and/or Public Comments

Boog discussed an individual in the city saying that their home owners association told them they had to take out their vegetable garden.

Michael Morley and Daniel Poull recently attended the KSU Community Garden conference to support their work with the Common Ground community gardening program.

Meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Next meeting: August 14, at 5:30 p.m.

Attachments:

Sustainability Coordinator Report

Waste Reduction and Recycling Division Report