

# DRAFT MINUTES UNTIL APPROVED BY THE SC

## REGULAR SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION MEETING

Thursday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021

Held virtually over WebEx

<b>PRESENT</b>	<b>COMMISSIONERS:</b> Carolyn Engeldinger, Amanda Kueper, Alyssa Sanden, Jeremy Barthels, Brian Shaw
	<b>STAFF:</b> Rachel Lindholm, Amy Markle
<b>ABSENT</b>	<b>LIAISONS:</b> Jenna Hanson (CSC)
	Laura Durenberger-Grunow, Kameron Murray, Ben Whalen (City Council)

### Call to Order

Kueper called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.

### Approval of Minutes/Agenda

Engeldinger moved to approve the agenda and previous minutes, seconded by Shaw, approved by all.

### Public Comment

Kathleen Balaban submitted a written public comment about toxic air emissions related to laundromats being considered a nuisance. The full letter can be seen in the meeting recording or online.

### Staff Reports

#### **Organized Collection**

Lindholm gave an overview of the process, noting that the City is nearing the end of the negotiation/review process. Several meetings will be held in May, including 2 work sessions (5/11 and 5/25) and a public hearing for the community to share their feedback on the proposed contract. More information will be shared with the Commission and the community when possible.

#### **Earth Day**

Earth Day Commissioner and Staff clean-up had to be rescheduled to May 20<sup>th</sup> but Earth Day continues! Social media posts and Wood Lake Nature Center's event are still on. The City is hoping residents identify the topics they're interested in and figure out related action steps (litter clean-up, gardening, storm drain adoption, etc.). Related, Hennepin County's Zero Waste Challenge runs from 5/1-5/31. Residents can sign up, join a team, and learn about behavior changes they can make to decrease their waste. Link:

[hennepinzwc.ecochallenge.org](http://hennepinzwc.ecochallenge.org)

### Discussion Items

#### **Tree Preservation Policy**

Commissioners shared their feedback on the presentation and expert comments from the last meeting. Kueper thought it was good advice that Dr. North suggested separate policies for heritage tree and tree preservation policy. She hadn't thought about that before. She also noted that the replacement policy ideas were good to think about (inch for inch replacement, monetary fund contributions). Both speakers talked about the importance of maintaining trees and investing in them.

Barthels wants to see some guidance on the City's sustainability website for residents to plant new trees (characteristics, varieties, etc.). Lindholm commented that it's in progress – can put maintenance guidelines on the Sustainability webpage.

Sanden: what is the scope of this? What if I lost a tree on my property? Lindholm said it depends on where the tree was – boulevard or private lot? Barthels commented on the distinction between regulating commercial versus residential properties. He doesn't feel too comfortable telling residents what to do.

Engeldinger seconded Kueper's point about legacy trees vs. preservation. The discussion validated her energy about this topic; she thinks it's far more important than she thought it was before. She is more invested in maintaining bur oaks, but wants to look at seed sources from warmer climates. She wants to see the City start researching those options.

Shaw pointed out the importance of preserving groupings of trees. He also echoed Barthel's points about sharing education with residents so they don't have to interact with staff. Some of his research shows cities can be heavy-handed. He is worried about adding more red tape and making it more expensive for developers, passing costs down to residents, and creating a division of who can live where. He did say that he thinks the addition of multiple policies could achieve this, not a tree policy on its own.

Engeldinger wants everyone to consider the value of trees and green space and their natural benefits. She wants culture to be created instead of rules imposed. Shaw and Kueper agree that that is more sustainable.

Kueper wants to do a round-up program with adding a checkbox on utility bills to help fund forestry initiatives.

Markle commented that this might take a while to do it right but we are starting those conversations internally. She agrees that online info can be strengthened and in-person education in the future can help too. She also mentioned that benefits of a mature tree start at 20 years of age, so when it's cut down, you lose 40 years of benefits.

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Lindholm talked about the rough timeline of this project and the next steps in talking to other city departments. She also talked about the potential scope of the policy re: residential, commercial, number of units, etc. There are legal questions around regulating residential trees.

Barthels wants to see photos and stories of residential or public tree plantings to engage residents around the importance of planting trees.

Lindholm explained the Administrative Review Committee process for commercial projects, and the existing steps/staff who look at trees on these sites.

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#### Action Items

None

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#### Committee Reports

Hanson reported on the CSC's last meeting, giving an update on:

- Pool, Farmer's Market, and RWB Days mitigation plans
- Inclusive playground construction started in Augsburg
- New Wood Lake Building Pre-Design progress
- Fremont and Christian Park playgrounds being redone this summer
- Other park projects: hammock stations, Vets Park parking lot resurfacing, Madison Park tennis court renovations
- 2021-2026 CIP budget approved by CSC

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#### Other/Next Meeting/Adjournment

**Next Meeting:** Thursday, May 27<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 pm, will be held virtually over WebEx.

**Adjournment:** Motion to adjourn by Sanden, seconded by Barthels. Meeting adjourned by Kueper at 8:04 pm.