



CITY OF NOVI  
Environmental Sustainability Committee Meeting  
**October 29, 2024, 6:00 p.m.**  
Mayor's Conference Room | Novi Civic Center | 45175 Ten Mile Road  
(248) 347-0445

**CALL TO ORDER:** 6:00 p.m.

**ROLL CALL:** Council Members Gurumurthy, Heintz, and Smith

**PRESENT:** Council Members Heintz, and Smith  
*\*Councilmember Gurumurthy arrived approximately 6:03 p.m., just before the Remarks from the Chairperson*

**STAFF LIAISON:** Danielle Mahoney, Assistant City Manager

**ALSO PRESENT:** Katherine Oppermann, Recording Secretary  
Kathy Spillane, Northville Sustainability Team Chair  
Dave Gutman, Northville Sustainability Team Member

### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Motion: Smith, Seconded: Heintz; Approved 2:0

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES – October 15, 2024 Minutes**

Motion: Heintz, Seconded: Smith; Approved 2:0

### **REMARKS FROM THE CHAIRPERSON**

Chairperson Smith welcomed the members of the Northville Sustainability Team and invited them to bring their presentation to the group.

### **PRESENTATIONS**

#### 1. Northville Sustainability Team Guest Speakers

Ms. Spillane and Mr. Gutman of the Northville Sustainability Team spoke to the Committee about their team's efforts in the City of Northville including:

- Three Pillars of Sustainability: Social, Economic, and Environmental
  - All of the team's efforts have been created with keeping the three pillars in equilibrium, in alleviating or decreasing the tension between them.
- The Importance of Placemaking and Walkability
  - Mobility Network Study
  - Recommended *Walkable City Rules: 101 Steps to Making Better Places* by Jeff Speck
- Tree Conservation and Northville Tree Champions

- Also noted the Pocket Forest Project in Ann Arbor, including the one at Buhr Park
- Their Sustainability plan which was presented to the Northville City Council in 2020
  - This process included presenting to City Council, the Planning Commission, Downtown Development Authority (DDA), and Historic District. They answered a LOT of questions before the plan was accepted.
  - Their plan was developed entirely in-team, without the use of consultant
  - They are still working to involve more residents but noted that the high visibility of the Northville Downs projects has helped with their visibility and interface with the community, as well as the Northville City News.
  - Stressed that Credibility and Trust are key to moving forward, especially with anything requiring money/investment
- Their 2021 – 2024 emphasis has been on “low-hanging fruit” projects and the larger project of working with the Northville Downs Development impacts
- Various accomplishments and Successes over their years of operation including Bio-Diesel Street Sweepers, DDA EV Self-Pay Charging Stations, Grants for tree planting, educating on tree care through their tree walks, Northville Downs “Central Park”, 7 Mile/Sheldon Round-about (1<sup>st</sup> in Wayne County), a Porous Pavement Pilot Project (and their struggles with maintenance and costs), daylighting the Rouge River and establishing River Park
- Green Ordinance Audit
- Unique team make-up, nine members including both Northville residents and outside individuals. They are not a formal Committee/Commission of the City of Northville to allow this. Members have a variety of expertise including energy, sustainability, architects, engineers, DDA, financial, etc.
- Recommended that, when seeking grants, it helps to present a regional benefit or work in a regional cooperative. SEMCOG suggested as a good resource. They have benefitted from the City of Northville have skilled grant writers on their staff.

The Commission thanked the Northville Sustainability Team guests for their presentation and insights. They asked that the Team keep Novi in mind for an possible future program or event collaborations.

## **MATTERS FOR COMMITTEE DISCUSSION**

1. Surveys, Focus Groups, & General Communications to Residents  
*with Director of Communications, Sheryl Walsh*

This item was postponed to a future meeting date, due to lack of time.

## **REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMS**

The Committee will focus on their mission/purpose verbiage and plans to have a working session at their next meeting.

## **ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION**

Councilmember Gurumurthy presented some skeleton framework slides for the Committee's upcoming presentation to Council. She would like to include a definition for sustainability,

layout where the committee currently is progress-wise, highlight council goals as they related to sustainability, and a mission statement. She will share the draft document with the other Committee members so that they can give their own input and wordsmithing at the next meeting.

As next steps/recommendations she wants to discuss bringing in additional committee members, establishing a list of desired skillsets for potential members. Assistant City Manager Mahoney confirmed that she will be clarity from Mayor Fischer as well as the City Clerk about what the exact timing would be for new member appointment and work backwards from there as to when they should advertise/hold interviews/etc.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mr. Velmurugan Kandasamy stated that this was his first time attending the committee meeting. He enjoyed hearing Northville's presentation and looks forward to attending more meetings in the future. He works in sustainability solutions for manufacturing companies.

**ADJOURNMENT:** 7:33 p.m.

Motion: Smith, Seconded: Heintz; Approved 3:0