



CITY OF NOVI
Environmental Sustainability Committee Meeting
October 15, 2024, 6:00 p.m.
Mayor's Conference Room | Novi Civic Center | 45175 Ten Mile Road
(248) 347-0445

CALL TO ORDER: 6:01 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Council Members Gurumurthy, Heintz, and Smith

STAFF LIAISON: Danielle Mahoney, Assistant City Manager

ALSO PRESENT: Katherine Oppermann, Recording Secretary
Ezekiel Chojnacki, Graduate Management Analyst

APPROVAL OF AGENDA *as amended*

Chairperson Smith noted that there would be no presentation, it will be rescheduled for a future meeting.

Motion: Heintz; Seconded: Gurumurthy; Approved 3:0

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – September 26, 2024 Minutes

Motion: Gurumurthy; Seconded: Heintz; Approved 3:0

REMARKS FROM THE CHAIRPERSON - None

PRESENTATIONS

MATTERS FOR COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

1. Feedback from HOA breakfast

Councilmember Heintz though the HOA Breakfast was a great practice run for future efforts. He noted that the HOA leaders seemed interested in speaking with them and the handouts provided but didn't yet have many ideas of their own to offer the Committee.

Councilmember Gurumurthy thanked Assistant City Manager Mahoney as well as Councilmember Heintz for their efforts on the table display, handouts, and game at the event. She thinks that, for future events, additional education items and giveaway/freebies would be good to have. She agreed with Councilmember Heintz that the HOA leaders were interested but that they were largely unaware of the Committee, so a lot of their conversations were spent educating them on what the Committee was. She believes that once we have gotten past this initial education stage with residents then ideas will come about more readily.

2. Surveys, Focus Groups, General Communications to Residents

Following the previous discussion topic, Chairperson Smith opened this topic by stating that he thinks that educating the public on the Committee and their purpose is an important 1st step. Councilmember Gurumurthy agreed, saying that the group will need to solidify their ideas in order to present them.

Councilmember Heintz noted that he is interested to hear the input from Communications Director Sheryl Walsh at the next meeting regarding the format of the upcoming Survey as well as other community discussion. Chairperson Smith agreed that he was interested in hearing from Sheryl at the next meeting. Councilmember Gurumurthy thinks that they should make sure to solidify their pillars/goals ahead of meeting with Sheryl. Ms. Mahoney noted that it would be a good idea but also that Sheryl and the Community Relations team excel at wordsmithing and will be able to assist with the verbiage used.

The Committee briefly discussed the timing for opening the group to introduce members of the public as Committee members. Ms. Mahoney stated that there are set times throughout the year that Board and Commission interviews and appointments take place. Additionally, they will need to make an amendment to the Committee Resolution in order to add members. She affirmed that they would aim for the next application/interview cycle for this purpose.

3. Solarize timeline

Chairperson Smith noted that under the Ann Arbor program guide there is a 6-8 week timeline. He thinks that we should get started early in the 2025 year, working with the Community Relations team to get the word out. He did note that he isn't currently sure how to identify vendors or the process of getting City Council's approval but will be working towards both. Ms. Mahoney stated that, procedurally, Committees will typically make a recommendation to Council. If said recommendation is accepted then Mayor Fischer can instruct staff to proceed further. Such staff action would include the Community Relations team being involved and also designating a staff person to be responsible for program facilitation.

Councilmember Gurumurthy asked if we need to create everything for the program including our own design and proposal. Ms. Mahoney replied that we could utilize the Ann Arbor plan as our proposal. Chairperson Smith agreed and pointed out that presenting a framework alone may be sufficient, with other details being determined following Council approval.

Councilmember Gurumurthy then asked if Solarize would be its own project separate from the Environmental Plan, noting it would fit neatly under one of the established pillars. Ms. Mahoney stated that, yes, it could be implemented as its own pilot program but that does not preclude it from also being included in the Environmental Plan, once developed.

4. Michigan Green Communities

Councilmember Heintz opened this section by stating that the topic could be a whole meeting/presentation by itself. He asked if there would be any additional write-up for those items which had already been shared with the Committee, noting

he would be interested in a greater depth of data. Ms. Mahoney replied that Rob Petty and Matt Turco could both be brought into a future meeting to give a presentation. Councilmember Heintz would like to be able to share completed as well as currently in-progress items. Chairperson Smith agreed that have Mr. Petty and Turco on a future meeting would be beneficial. He also agreed with Councilmember Heintz on sharing the information with residents where appropriate, noting that they could use the Community Relations team to facilitate this.

5. Schedule Upcoming Meetings

The Committee discussed the matter and determined their upcoming meetings would be held on Tuesday, November 12th and Monday, December 2nd at 5:30 PM. Both meetings will be prior to a City Council meeting being held the same evening. Chairperson Smith also noted that December 2nd will tentatively be their day to report out to City Council and that meeting the same day will be beneficial for preparatory purposes.

REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMS

Chairperson Smith intends to talk with Mayor Fischer and City Manager Cardenas about the procedure for the Solarize Program and will report back to the Committee.

Engagement, Education and Surveys are all topics to be discussed with Communications Director Sheryl Walsh at the next meeting. Chairperson Smith suggested the Committee come prepared with questions as well as ideas for their Mission Statement.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Anand Pappuri stated that he has been a resident of Novi for many years and is glad to hear that this Committee has been started. He is part of an organization engaged with sustainability efforts including energy efficiency and solar.

Mr. Santosh Rangarej was present representing the US KPIT Novi Office. The company is interested in opportunities to contribute back to the community as part of their social/corporate responsibility efforts.

ADJOURNMENT: 6:49 p.m.

Motion: Heintz; Seconded: Gurumurthy; Approved 3:0