

**CITY OF MENASHA
SUSTAINABILITY BOARD
January 27, 2022**

Minutes

A. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting Called to order by Linda Stoll at 4:04PM

B. ROLL CALL/EXCUSED ABSENCES

Attending: Kyler Arndt, Kyle Coenen, Austin Hammond, Roger Kanitz, Roni Kaspernek, Kelsey Perry, Linda Stoll, Kathy Thunes

Also Attending: Mayor Donald Merkes, Sandra Dabill-Taylor, Ald. James Taylor

C. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON ANY MATTER OF CONCERN TO THE SUSTAINABILITY BOARD

Sandra Dabill-Taylor spoke regarding the long agenda noting that most items were just for discussion. Specific items addressed included the Energy Innovation Grant application should have included UWO-Fox Cities, Village of Fox Crossing, and Neenah-Menasha Sewerage Commission because they have a presence within the City of MJSD, hydro power should be considered for the community, current street lighting isn't sufficient for safety in her neighborhood, and spreadsheet for transportation had too many bike-related items.

Ald. James Taylor spoke regarding hydro power potential at Whiting and Lawson Canal that the City should explore. City should lead by example with electric vehicles and electric vehicle charging stations.

Sandra Dabill-Taylor left the meeting.

D. MINUTES TO APPROVE

None

E. COMMUNICATIONS

1. City of Menasha Sustainability Accomplishments

The City of Menasha Sustainability Board has been active since 2007 and played a role in significant energy reduction in City building and facilities since that time. Projects listed showed over 1 million kwh saved annually. The board has also spearheaded an electronics recycling program diverting waste from landfills, supported additional home recycling pickup, improved raingardens, and advocated for environmentally friendly policies and services in Menasha.

2. WPPI Energy Annual Report

Menasha Utilities purchases its electricity from WPPI Energy, a group of 51 municipal utilities. Power purchased is 40.9% carbon free (renewable or nuclear). WPPI goal is to be 100% carbon free by 2050 with advances in technology. Menasha Utilities customers can purchase additional blocks of renewable energy to offset their carbon footprint.

F. REPORTS

G. ACTION ITEMS

H. DISCUSSION

1. Welcome to new Members

Attendees introduced themselves, backgrounds, and interests in sustainability.

2. Sustainability Plan, Benchmarking, and Comparison with other communities
The recently submitted Energy Innovation Grant will provide benchmarking data for City, Utility, and MJSD facilities including current usage and energy star (or similar) average use for similar buildings. Energy plan will then focus on improvements to current facilities and equipment including vehicles and opportunities to self-generate power. If successful, \$100,000 would be grant funded and the remaining \$40,000 would be split between City, Utility, MJSD, and WPPI.
 - a. [GTLC](#)
Benchmarking categories for GTLC were included in the packet, benchmarking provides opportunities to compare Menasha to our peers in other communities and show comparisons in community desirability. There is a desire to learn from other communities data and share ours.
 - b. [Appleton Climate Action Plan Proposal](#)
Appleton produced a draft plan; there may be opportunities to benchmark or promote.
3. Transportation
 - a. Bike Friendly Community Designation
Menasha was named a bronze level Bike Friendly Community in 2021 by the League of American Bicyclists. Sustainability Board would like to participate in meeting benchmarks provided by the League to reach silver level in 2026. Menasha is a member of the Wisconsin Bike Federation, which helped file the City's application. The City does not have a paid membership in the League of American Bicyclists. The Sustainability Board members collectively requested a listing of requirements to take the city's current Bronze level status to Silver status.
4. Land Use
Menasha recently updated its Comprehensive Plan including the Land Use and Transportation chapters which included sustainability components. The Housing Chapter is scheduled to be updated in 2022. There may be opportunities for collaboration with the Sustainability Board during that process.

Questions if there were opportunities to better integrate natural and protected areas into the fabric of the community and everyday life of residents and visitors.

5. Natural Resources
 - a. 2021 Urban Forestry Grant – EAB Plan
It was noted Urban Forestry is a low cost way to help climate change and reduce the negative effects of heat islands and stormwater while increasing property values and community image. There are existing programs through Menasha Utilities (tree power) that assist in planting trees on private property to reduce energy usage.

EAB plan completed with financial assistance from DNR grant in 2020-21 ash trees either removed or treated. City plans to apply for a grant to produce an Urban Forest Management Plan in the next grant cycle.
6. Energy
 - a. [PWF Solar installation](#)
There was an overview of solar project completed at the Public Works Facility in Fall of 2021 and public web page of production/consumption at the facility. Reduction in solar costs have made ROI on facilities much more attractive with this installation estimated at 10.6 years. There is still sufficient space for a public solar garden on this facility if PSC rates would make it attractive for residents. Current rates have not generated public interest in other communities that they have been installed.

Third Party Financing Solar options

There was an overview of financing options to install solar at City facilities; third party financing allows non-profit entities to benefit from tax incentives on solar that they would otherwise be ineligible for and improve ROI on non-profit or municipal solar installations.

b. Potential Streetlight upgrades

There was an overview on potential streetlight LED conversion for remaining HPS lights. These lights are mostly located on the eastern portion of the City. Payback of 5.68 years was considered positive for the community by those in attendance. Even the overall 9.85 years was considered worthy of additional exploration if funding is available through the WPPI member loan program at 0% interest.

Discussion ensued on potential of solar trail lighting on future projects if the technology has improved to the point of being affordable and providing suitable lighting output.

7. Water

a. Downtown Underground Stormwater treatment facility

The downtown Brin mixed use project has started construction and will feature underground stormwater detention/treatment. This facility will allow for stormwater to be treated effectively while providing parking on the same site maintaining walkability of the downtown. Completion is set for spring of 2023. Being that this was a new process for stormwater, educational signage would be appropriate to better inform the public.

b. Stormwater educational signage

Education is a portion of the City's permitting process for stormwater regulation. Signage at visible locations along the Province Terrace Trail and boardwalk will allow for pedestrians to gain knowledge of three processes (natural wetlands, rain gardens, and wet ponds). Heckrodt already has similar signage to the sample draft signs included. Sample draft signage will be reviewed to provide consistent information at both locations. Final draft signage will be reviewed at a future Sustainability Board meeting before installation.

There was a desire to include a stormwater education panel on the 2022 City calendar.

8. Waste

a. 2021 Refuse and Recycling tonnage

Recycling and Refuse totals and percentages diverted remain fairly constant. Future discussion on strategies to increase diversion percentage to State average of 29%.

b. 2021 Electronics Recycling Event

Participation and quantities remain similar to fall 2019 event. Location at the Public Works Facility worked well and Board recommended to continue at that location. Sustainability Board should review notification list to encourage more involvement as contacts have changed.

c. 2022 Electronics Recycling Event May 7 and Sept 17, 2022

Motion by Kyle Coenen, second Linda Stoll to schedule the 2022 Electronics recycling event on Saturday May 7, and Saturday September 17, 8AM – Noon at the Menasha Public Works Facility.
Motion carried.

d. 2022 Spring Cleanup FWWA May 7, 2022

Fox Wolf Watershed Alliance has an annual clean-up day in early May. There could be opportunities for expansion in areas around the City that are not waterfront or to partner with neighborhood groups.

e. America Recycles Day November 15, 2022

This day provides the city with an opportunity to promote recycling and education.

9. Health

Health, Housing, Neighborhoods, and Economic development are part of the three-legged stool of sustainability. Programs such as the Strong Neighborhoods program would be part of this category.

Upon review of current efforts of the City and interests of the Board, recommended topics for further discussion and action at future meetings included:

Energy reduction/benchmarking, bike friendly designation, natural landscaping, maintenance of greenspaces and natural areas, stormwater education, urban forestry.

I. Future Meeting Dates

Meetings will be on the fourth Thursday of the month at 4PM at Menasha City Center. A calendar will be provided to members.

J. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Kathy Thunes, second Austin Hammond to adjourn at 6PM

Motion carried