Sustainability Commission Meeting
November 1, 2021

Meeting called to order at 5:36 pm by Renee Ruchotzke

Roll Call: Wilder Hritz, MaryJane Stone, Renee Ruchotzke, Andrew Scholl

Absent: Rick Hawksley

Ms. Ruchotzke made a motion to excuse Mr. Hawksley. Motion was seconded by Ms. Stone, motion passed 4-0

Staff: Patti Long, Assistant to the City Manager

Approval of the agenda:

Ms. Ruchotzke made a motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Ms. Stone. Motion passed 4-0.

Meeting Summary Minutes:

Dr. Scholl moved to approve, Ms. Stone seconded. A discussion ensued, prompted by Ms. Ruchotzke asking if all the detail was necessary. Ms. Long asked if there was an issue with the minutes. Dr. Scholl stated that due to the nature of the format of the meeting, it was good to have all of the details included. Ms. Ruchotzke asked Ms. Long if there concerns for how the minutes were written. Ms Long said there were none reported. Ms. Ruchotzke expressed appreciation for the transparency of the details. Motion passed 3-0.

Ms. Ruchotzke shared with the group that the agendas and minutes are posted on the City's website. Posts are from 2016 forward.

Public Comment

None

Old Business

Ad Hoc update – Ms. Long stated that the GHG report is not yet in hand but should be by Thursday (11/4/21) and copies will be available at the joint meeting on November 5th. Ms. Ruchotzke asked members who could attend Friday and all except for Mr. Hritz will be present. He requested an email copy but Ms. Ruchotzke stated that will not occur so he decided a hard copy at the police lobby window would work.

Dr. Scholl stated that the document will be around 70-80 pages but that much of that will be graphs. Ms. Ruchotzke went on to explain that the document will be based on the ICLEI template and that Mr. Boateng will review it with us and hopefully stop to allow for questions as he presents the data. The Ad Hoc, who has been in place for four years, will also be there. Ms. Long asked how many members there are on the Ad Hoc. Ms. Ruchotzke listed, Dr. Scholl, Mr. Hawksley, Mr. Boateng, Mr. Wilan, Ms. McCarty, Ms. Nelson, Ms. Knowles and Ms, Graham. Ms. Nelson was on the Commission and Ad Hoc. The Ad Hoc was formed as part of the resolution that Council passed in support of the Paris Climate agreement. It was adopted October 18, 2017, under emergency. The Ad Hoc was created in November of 2017. The work soon became technical, causing the need for ICLEI and the ClearPath program in order to get the GHG inventory. Ms. Ruchotzke would like to dissolve the system and and form a new Ad Hoc committee for each sector. Ms. Long asked if the desire is to terminate the volunteer group and start all new or if the plan is to allow volunteers to continue if they choose and add other members. Ms. Ruchotzke stated the latter is the preference. Dr. Scholl asked if the Ad Hoc can be dissolved and Ms. Ruchotzke said we ought to be able to if we created it. She also explained her vision for intentional onboarding of new members. Ms. Stone asked what tasks the Ad Hoc committee was charged with. Dr. Scholl stated the Ad Hoc was to collect the data and to start with a plan to align with the goals of the Paris Accord. Dr. Scholl added that the Ad Hoc committee needs to have a clear leader to keep things on track, maintaining forward momentum. The group agreed that a manager is needed. Ms. Long asked if the manager position like this is what the Commission discussed last month regarding asking Council for a position in the City. Ms. Ruchotzke suggested that we look at the report and decide how to divide it up in components that are manageable and doing the things the group is able to do to promote changes leading to emissions reduction. One suggestion she offered was to use a booth or table to help educate residents on how to reduce emissions. Once the Commission determines the next steps then the Ad Hoc could be reformed base on the specifications of the plan.

Ms. Stone expressed concern over hurting feelings of those who want to continue and asked about the legality of dissolving a group and starting over. Ms. Ruchotzke stated the Ad Hoc was put together for a specific purpose and now that purpose has been met. Moving forward there is a new need. This gives volunteers the ability to decide if they want to continue or not since they have been involved for four years. Ms. Ruchotzke would like there to be clear roles for the next Ad Hoc group.

The Commission and Ad Hoc committee will have a work session to determine the goals of that session will be to reorganize and refocus the Ad Hoc committee to meet the goals that come out of the work session.

Further discussion occurred to clarify again that the research and report so far is the data for the action plan. The Ad Hoc will come up with strategies for the plan. When it is time to implement the plan, Ms. Ruchotzke would like to have a staff member in place to keep that moving forward. Dr. Scholl suggested it would be better to have a staff member hired earlier than that because that person should be coordinating committee and community efforts to come up with the strategies and keeping the focus where it should be. Resistance is expected, therefore a softer approach will be a better strategy than implementing legislation right away.

Next steps (as developed by the group)
1. Review Draft Report
2. Working session with Ad Hoc for questions, reflection and discussion to develop a shared sense of what is needed.
3. Reorganize the goals of the Ad Hoc Committee
4. Appoint/Reappoint members of the Ad Hoc Committee, with possible term limits?

A motion was made to adopt the next steps by Dr. Scholl, seconded by Ms. Stone. MR. No discussion. Motion passed 4-0.

Dr. Scholl added that if more specific tasks are identified, then we can determine the necessary skillsets needed and we can add people with those skills into the committee.

Pending Business

Ms. Long suggested the Commission discuss how to handle the Pending Business items since the Ad Hoc updates are consuming the meeting time. Dr. Scholl asked for clarification on what is old business vs. pending. Ms. Long stated that pending items are things that have been tabled and old are items the group is still actively working on.

Ms. Ruchotzke presented a tool to help us decide what we can move off the agenda or clean up the pending business list. Dr. Scholl gave the back story of how the list started growing. Ms. Ruchotzke added that some of the items will fit into the Action Plan.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Ruchotzke made a motion to adjourn and Mr. Wilder seconded it. All in favor, 4-0. Meeting ended at 6:32.

Next Meeting

December 6, 2021 in person at the Kent Police Department Community Training Room, 1st Fl. Joint meeting with the Ad Hoc Commission.