

City of Athens Environment Sustainability Commission Meeting Minutes
11-6-19 | 6pm
Athens City Building, 1st floor conference room
Minutes taken by Sarah Conley-Ballew

Commissioners in attendance: Member Elaine Goetz called the meeting to order at 6PM. Members present included Goetz, Stefan Gleissberg, Caitlin Garrity, Austin Babrow, Ed Newman, Sarah Conley-Ballew, Sam Crowl. Members absent included Paul Logue, Cliff Hamilton, and Aimee Delach. One seat is vacant. Quorum was established.

Guests in attendance: Students from MPA 6200 Foundations of Public Administration, Dr. Gilbert Michaud, Instructor.

Introductions - Commissioners; Public Administration class

Disposition of Minutes: Elaine asked commission if there are any comments or corrections of minutes. *Ed made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted, Stefan seconded the motion. All in favor, none opposed. The motion was approved.*

Next Meeting Date: December 4th - next meeting. No proposed changes to this date.

Old Business

- A. **Commission membership** - to date we have not filled student commissioner position. Jasmine Facun could not be appointed because she lives outside the city.

Abbey Rodjom is the current candidate. Sam reported that she is currently a grad student in Environmental Studies. Anticipated to graduate next year. Voinovich scholar, worked on a NASA internship; currently working with Sarah Davis and Dave Bayless on Triple bottom line cost-benefit analysis. Works also with Ohio State master gardener. Bachelor of science in plant bio.

Elaine made a motion to recommend her and Sam seconded. Sam will follow up with Abby to extend the offer, and will make a recommendation for her appointment to the City Council.

- B. **William Morgan - citizen inquiry about Athens Community Center solar array**

Overview: Mr. Morgan is interested in solar farm at the Community Center. Coming upon the 10th year of the project, and he is an advocate for this project. He is an architect who has done solar projects over the years. As a community member, he is interested in its performance. Looking over reports, it is operating effectively. Providing 40% of the energy needed at the Athens Community Center. The city has little or no money upfront in this project; they have provided the parking beneath and “donated the airspace” - buying energy from a private corporation that’s in charge of the reporting and monitoring. The City sends company check for electricity. The city pays for power at a 15% discount. Providing energy, and even if it broke even, it's still offsetting city carbon generation. City can audit the project every year if they would like to. Used to receive monthly reports, but they are sketchy - used to be online dashboard, faded away. City then calculates cost of energy vs. production. Some of the reports include

other projects the city is doing. William's general goal is that City should ask the question: Would we do it again? \$1.5 million project. 1/3 bank, 1/3 federal grant, 1/3 investors. Would we replicate it on top of parking garage? Or maybe Court St. rooftop array? To get the answers, someone will have to study this - forensic engineer, accountant, someone with solar background. We need an objective look at the options. Gathering information, has called numerous city officials to gather info. Doesn't know if anyone is fully aware of how it works. Website was provided, shows activity, doesn't understand all the metrics. Would like to encourage City Council to consider another project.

Discussion: The Commission agreed that the City does have an interest in solar growth on publicly owned buildings. The carbon fee is a critical step forward. A great starting point is studying the solar array of the Athens Community Center. Given that it is now a 10 year old array, the equipment should be inspected to determine if inverters are still operating efficiently. Another issue with the ACC solar array is that we don't collect the REC's, thus we don't get the carbon offset attributes. The City should request an audit of the system, ROI timetable, and feasibility of long term ownership of the asset.

Task: Sarah will write a proposal for the commission to consider at the next commission meeting that may result in a recommendation to the City Council regarding the future of the solar array at Athens Community Center.

New Business

Green Apple Day of Service (Elaine): Last year we decided that we wanted to sponsor a US Green Building Council to work with school districts to teach kids about sustainable initiatives. We reached out to the high school; they were too busy last year. This year, ASCD funded a student to work at the Office of Sustainability and she decided to work on the Green Apple Day of Service.

January 13th - GADS -- students from the YCAT team will pair with University students, teach kids about three six grade classrooms. We have some kilometers to measure energy load, waste, transportation survey, calculating emissions in class. Our commission said that we would help, but they may not need our help this year. This should be promoted as something

50th anniversary of Earth Day in April 2020 (Elaine and Sam): OU is doing some events, does the commission want to have a role in Earth Day? Could we have a press event announcing a carbon neutrality goal or carbon emissions reduction goal? Our sustainability plan does need a reboot - maybe this is a good opportunity.

Student Class Project: class has reached out from Global Leadership Center, Prof Matthew LeRiche- had a project in Cambodia, then study a local problem. One group is looking at sustainability profile and comparing it with other cities/communities around the world. Commission will be the client - they will present to the commission. Commission would like to have them come to the December meeting.

Reusable Bag Giveaway (Sam): Sam was contacted by ReThink Plastics and they are interested in what could be done to provide reusable plastics to the general community. Currently sewing reusable bags. HB 242 is an impediment to local ordinances that ban plastic bags. Sam will forward email from Janalee on details.

Data collection for reporting on 2018 data - subcommittee met (Elaine, Caitlin) and didn't make much progress. We should clarify whether the class is working on 2019 or 2018 data. If we can ask the class to work on 2018 data, that would be ideal. Elaine will report back on how the class will engage with the Commission.

Meeting adjourned at 7:14pm.

Respectfully submitted by Sarah Conley-Ballew