Keep Winter Park Beautiful & Sustainable Advisory Board Virtual Minutes

August 16, 2022, at 11:45 a.m.

Commission Chamber
401 S Park Ave, Winter Park

Present

KWPB&S: Stephen Pategas, Catherine (Kay) Hudson, Carey Bond, Ben Ellis, Mark J Yonker, Rishona S Teres

City Staff: Gloria Eby; Director of Natural Resources and Sustainability, Sara Miller; Sustainability Manager, Mia Brady; Sustainability Specialist, Johnny Miller; Event Manager, Victoria Tabor; Admin Coordinator/Recording Secretary

Guest: Jenny Jaegal, Sustainability Coordinator for Orange County Public Schools

(1) Call to Order

Meeting called to order by Kay Hudson at 11:50 AM.

(2) Consent Agenda

Stephen Pategas motioned to approve the July Meeting Minutes. Ben Ellis Seconded and the motion passed.

(3) Public Comment

Mikayla Miller, Community Outreach Librarian, from the Winter Park Library provided updates on library projects. The Teen Advisory Board did a cleanup at MLK Park and picked up over 25 pounds of trash. On the 27th of September, they are hosting a climate panel for the public and Fix It! Don't Pitch It is coming up soon. They have collected many yard signs from summer reading to recycle. The seed library seeds for fall include basil, bell pepper, broccoli, bush bean, cherry tomato, collards, cilantro, cucumber, rosemary, and thyme.

(4) Staff Updates

No staff items.

(5) Non-Action Items

No non-action items.

(6) Action Items

Jenny Jaegal, who is the Sustainability Coordinator for Orange County Public Schools, attended the meeting to present on their Green Schools Program and upcoming fundraiser. Jenny asked the board to help support the program by becoming a sponsor for the Green Schools Recognition Program. This is the ninth year of this program and schools apply by showing their sustainable efforts in areas like resources conservation, curriculum integration, community involvement, schoolground enhancement and others. Community judges, including Sara Miller, judge the schools and they are celebrated at an annual banquet on October 20th. There are four levels to the sponsorship, with the lowest level, Bronze, starting at $1000 dollars, and then going up to Silver at $3000, Gold at $5000 and emerald which his $10,000 and above. The sponsorship money would go directly to the schools as cash awards to continue their programs, which is very necessary especially for those schools that lack the proper resources, and would help OCPS work on their 2030 plan, which is published online. Jenny and OCPS would greatly appreciate the board's donation.

Kay Hudson asked how many schools that are participating are located in the City of Winter Park and Jenny shared that there are three schools that are involved with their program: Aloma Elementary, Killarney Elementary, and Winter Park High School. There is a total of five schools in Winter Park that are OCPS. Ben Ellis asked staff for clarification about the difference of OCPS' program and Winter Park's Green Schools Grant program. Sara clarified that OCPS' program is similar but more extensive in ranking. Sara also shared that when she came on board, she did not get to experience granting the schools monetary funds, as that process had already happened. However, our program only awards Winter Park schools between $200 and $300, whereas OCPS's program helps more schools. There is no guarantee that this program will help schools in Winter Park, however, Sara thinks there is opportunity to collaborate more in the future to expand our program. Our program is also different because we award local public and private schools, where OCPS is only awarding public schools. Ben shared that he doesn't think we should be taking different routes to achieve the same outcome and he shared that he was torn between helping Winter Park schools exclusively, or taking a broader approach. He would rather go with one option for schools. Sara shared that staff have a deadline to check in with the schools by the end of October to see where each school is with their project and applications for this coming year will open soon. Sara and Mia Brady are planning to restructure the rubric to take a more extensive approach and work with each school to help develop their plan to have the most impact. Jenny reiterated that the goal of their program is to centralize the sustainability efforts from the different schools and give them one easy option where they can be awarded up to thousands of dollars for programs. They do have smaller grants that they give out throughout the school year. Gloria Eby further explained that OCPS' program is a more global approach, where ours is a more local approach. Stephen Pategas mentioned the option of using the $1000 OCPS is asking for and putting it into Winter Park's Green Schools recognition, to give our local schools more money. Kay said that Winter Park could show leadership as a sponsor by showing other communities that Winter Park is invested in Orange County as a whole. Carey Bond also chimed in about how it is important to support public schools and how the board could still support local schools even if they chose to be a sponsor. Sara plans to work with Jenny to expand the City's green school recognition program to work more closely with our schools in the future. Kay asked if other municipalities are already showing support or if we could be the first and be "leaders". Jenny shared that no other local governments are sponsors at this time but it is a fairly new program so she couldn't say who would eb a sponsor by the time the banquet happens in October. Employees from City of Winter Park, Orlando and Winter Garden have been judges in the pat for this program. Stephen asked for clarification about the banquet and Jenny explained that at this event, all of the schools, the judges, the sponsors, and OCPS leadership come together to recognize the school's sustainable initiatives and give out awards. There are three grand prizes, with the first being $5000, the second being $3000, and the third being $1000. Additionally, there are seven judge choice awards. Because there are thirty-eight applicants this year, they are working closely with a nonprofit called Authentic Exploration Matters to review the applications and judge them in seven categories (schoolgrounds enhancement, resource conservation, health and wellbeing, curriculum integration, community involvement, innovation, and one other). The winner will get $1000 for each category and there are also conservation incentive awards depending on their water and energy consumption, which can be $100, $300, or $500. Their consumption is compared among the schools as well as to the national median.

Stephen asked if the board needed to become a sponsor in order for staff to collaborate with OCPS on future projects and Jenny answered no. Ben also asked if all of the schools that apply win a prize or if it is only the top ten. Jenny clarified that not all thirty-eight schools will get a part of the award, however, in terms of the conservation incentive award, almost all of them will receive some recognition, depending on their usage. Ben voiced his opinion that because potentially none of the schools in Winter Park would win anything, then the board would be funding other schools outside of the city. Even though he supports education, Ben wants to take a more local approach. However, he wants to see how Winter Park and OCPS could work together to take the same approach in the future. He also wants to have a better understanding of the budget before funding this project. Mark Yonker wondered if funding this program would incentivize the schools to commit to more sustainable action items. He asked Jenny where the funding comes from aside from sponsorships and she shared about rebates that Orange County gets through projects like energy and water conservation and solid waste. Through Waste Management, they get money back per pound of recycling that they send in. Those rebates fund other projects, like the Green Schools Recognition. They've had sponsors for the last two years that help pay for this program. Mark also asked for clarification on the two OCPS in Winter Park that are not participating in the program, which are Brookshire Elementary and Lakemont Elementary. Mark wanted to know how to get those schools to participate, so all OCPS in Winter Park would be part of this program, and Jenny shared that many schools use community partnerships to help get the necessary resources. She suggested that the board could be a community partner for these schools, which would be another valuable contribution. Jenny talked about a school in OC that is nationally recognized by the US Department of Education with a green ribbon and how their community partnerships (with SeaWorld and City of Orlando) have really helped them. Kay wanted to know more about available Board funds, but due to time constraints, Sara suggested they revisit the subject in the September meeting. Gloria did briefly mention that the funds are available if the board wanted to contine with this. Carey Bond made a motion to become a sponsor and spend the $1000 and Mark Yonker seconded. The motion did not pass, as the board was split. Rishona S Teres made a motion to table the discussion and vote again at the next meeting and Ben seconded. Gloria asked the board what they would like to see before the next meeting and Rishona asked for more budget information. Ben also wanted to know what other goals are set to be achieved this year that the funding could be used towards instead. Stephen also asked that the staff become more familiar with the Winter Park program to see if the funding could be used better for that program. The motion to table the discussion passed. Mark also asked Jenny for more information about what funding provides the schools.

The board was sent the current draft of the Sustainability Action Plan two weeks prior to this meeting to review and they will now go through their edits. Sara prefaced that two sections of the indicators were not complete but most of it is finalized. The Plan will go in front of the City Commission at a work session on September 29th where it will then hopefully be brought in front of the commission at a later meeting to be potentially adopted. Gloria explained that the first portion is just the history of the program and where the board and community is at today. She also explained that this version is meant to be a snapshot of where the city is, now that Sustainability is in a department and has new staff. The first section of the SAP, Climate Resiliency, was reworked to emphazie having a climatic action plan, which the city received an $100,000 grant for. The indicator section is still being updated to show current conditions. Ben asked about how the targets for 2025 and 2035 were selected and Gloria said they are based on a reviewed process from staff and realistic figures vs. aspirational, which is the reason 100% renewable energy is not on the Plan. The renewable energy feasibility study agreement had just been approved that morning and would provide staff with better target goals and more information. Kay expressed displease in seeing the renewable energy goal go down from 100% because the city controls its electricity and city vehicles.

Gloria shared that staff has consolidated some of the action items in the tables and removed repetitive verbiage. Stephen asked about the status of an artificial turf ordinance that he had been working on, which has been marked in the SAP as not initiated. Gloria shared that the ordinance was brought in front of the commission the previous week, but had been tabled due to definition that needed to be added. Within the next two sessions, it will hopefully go back in front of the commission. Stephen also wanted to know about the expiration date on the Backyard Chicken Ordinance and Gloria explained that staff had completed field work, specifically Johnny who had interviewed people in the pilot program, and the next step is to get it passed as an ordinance. Before it goes to commission, the draft should go before this board and this is set to be completed this year. Ben asked about projects related to food security and Gloria shared that it had been added to the SAP because staff think its extremely important. A project for food security would require a policy, community partner, program, and revenue. This is a primary goal for the department. Stephen asked if that would be related to the CR-4 indicator, which shows the proportion of residents living within a half a mile of affordable, healthy food options. Gloria clarified that, yes, those are all related under food security.

Under the Energy Section, there are blank indicators and some marked “TBD” that are highlighted, signifying that they still need to be filled in. Sara shared that although these indicators had been in the previous plan, there had been inconsistencies so she had been working on getting current information and recalculating old data. Staff could not come up with some realistic targets until they received up to date 2021 data. Gloria shared that a major change for the energy section is going to be dependent on a large-scale energy audit of the city buildings which is currently in the works. Gloria also clarified the organization of the action item tables. At the bottom of the table are the ongoing programs and at the top, it lists projects that will start this year and then over the next few years to show what will be done. Rishona asked about the timelines for some of the projects and if the SAP should include a more thorough explanation of where each project is at in the process, other than just if they were “initiated” or not. Gloria explained that they had added the status column because it had not previously been listed. Stephen suggested maybe creating a 1-5 scale for how close the projects are to completion. It can be hard to track some of these actions because they fall under other departments, such as with water and wastewater, or they depend on funding sources and available funds at the time. Kay shared that she likes the idea of a more in-depth tracking system of the projects. She also asked how often the board would be reviewing the SAP and Gloria shared that, after its adopted, she hopes to see it reviewed on an annual basis. Kay suggested that the board may be able to help initiate some of these goals and should therefore review the SAP quarterly instead of just annually in front of the city commission. That will be added to the agenda in the future.

Under the Water Section, indicators still need to be updated, but staff did meet with the Director of Water and Wastewater to go over the table. Their department is unable to take on water conservation programing so our department is taking that over. The rebates program has been restarted. Verbiage in the action table was redone to be accessible and understandable to the public. The Community Engagement and Green Economy Section had the most edits. Stephen suggested adding the Communications Team onto the "Responsible Departments" tab for the "Participate in America Blooms" Action Item, as they are a key playing in informing the public about that program. Gloria clarified that that action is in the "initiated" status because the board had just approved to move forward with that. Stephen also mentioned that he thought the Parks and Recreation Department should be added as a "Responsible Department" for the Action Item "provide volunteer opportunities for litter cleanups", as the parks are mainly where these volunteer events take place. Moving down to the Local Government Operations Section, Gloria shared that electric vehicles and charging stations were added to this section. Stephen asked about a previous city policy to eliminate the use of single-use water bottles that was different than the single-use plastics policy. Kay asked about electric city vehicles and goals for the different departments to own all EV's. She wanted to see a goal that went further than just "increasing ownership" or a method for purchasing more. Gloria asked to hold off on the EV conversation until they got through the SAP edits for the sake of time. Stephen asked to go to the transportation section and discuss TUF-5, which shows the number of public and private EV charging stations. He suggested that the number of public and private be split up between two indicators. He also thought that the target for number of charging stations in 2035 seemed very low and should be bumped up. Gloria clarified that they had changed the table from just stating "maintained" to an actual number. That number needs to be revisited by staff but it had been based on not knowing how many charging stations existed in the city and the baseline number. The charging stations are very expensive, so that must be considered in terms of target numbers as well. Sara shared that she still needs to complete this section but it will be done before the work session. Kay wanted to see the completed document before the board votes to approve the Plan, but Ben wants to make sure that there is time to make any major changes, should that be necessary. Stephen also brought up the issue of there being quorum to vote and voiced his opinion of feeling that the document is ready to be voted on. Ben made a motion to recommend approval of the Sustainability Action Plan after all final edits are made. Carey Bond seconded. The motion passed.

Gloria Eby provided updates about replacing city vehicles with electric. She shared a table which highlights vehicles getting replaced and their electric or hybrid possibility. It is not possible for every vehicle to be EV because some vehicles do not have electric alternatives, which is why the city can't commit to 100% EV. Kay wants to make the statement that we are 100% renewable unless there is no option. There is also difficulty acquiring EVs, especially with supply chain issues. Even after a vehicle is purchased, the timeframe is close to two years to actually get that vehicle. Therefore, contracts are getting pushed into the next year (a 2023 contract even though they're trying to buy the vehicle in 2022) and then the vehicle is being priced higher. This isn't just for electric vehicle, but gas-powered too. The Natural Resources and Sustainability Department is in the processing of acquiring an electric vehicle, but will not see the car for one to two years. The Lakes Division is hoping to get the new Lightning Truck, which is an EV, but they wouldn't have that for over two years.

Chart showed 2023 vehicle replacements, but there are no guarantees about when they will arrive. Stephen asked for clarification on the work "possible" under EV/ Hybrid option and Gloria clarified that 6 vehicles have been confirmed with the budget but other depend on the job description and position. Some people may need a different vehicle based on their tasks and their vehicles may not be able to be electric. All of the Police cars are set to get electric or hybrid replacement vehicles. Stephen asked for clarification on the charging station at the Public Safety building and if they would be included on the SAP under "Public and Private" if they are only for police use. On our website, there is a link to a map that shows all the charging stations in Winter Park. Mark Yonker asked about the higher cost of EVs and Gloria clarified that this would be somewhat offset by fuel and less maintenance costs. Kay asked about Orange County's five-year vehicle turn over, which wouldn't be enough time for the EV's maintenance costs to catch up, but Winter Park retains vehicles much longer.

(7) Public Hearings

No Public Hearings.

(8) Board Comments and Green Minute

Stephen asked about adding items to the agenda and Gloria Eby clarified about the policy. The whole board must vote to have an item added to the next meeting agenda but there does not need to be quorum.

(9) Adjournment

Ben Ellis made a motion to adjourn and Stephen Pategas seconded. Meeting adjourned at 1:12 PM

Minutes approved the board on 09/20/2022.
/s/ Recording Secretary Victoria Tabor