

Sustainability Council
October 31, 2014

A meeting of the Sustainability Council was held at 8:30 a.m. on Friday, October 31, 2014 at Brookings City & County Government Center with the following members present: Norma Nusz Chandler, Ben Kleinjan, Holly Tilton Byrne, Paul Peterson, Trisha Jackson, Betty Beer, Jane Hegland and Mike Lockrem. Absent: Alvaro Garcia and Bob McGrath. Others present included: Meghan Thoreau, Laurie Johnson from the SDSU Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability Committee, Shari Thornes and Laurie Carruthers.

Chair Nusz Chandler called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. A motion was made by Peterson, seconded by Beer to approve the agenda. All present voted yes; motion carried. A motion was made by Lockrem, seconded by Jackson, to approve September 26, 2014 minutes. All present voted yes; motion carried.

Schedule next meeting. November 21, 2014 at 11:00 am.

Earth Day 2015. The committee discussed the large undertaking and lack of volunteers for the 2014 Earth Day event. Johnson from the ESSC advised the SDSU event would be April 20-24, 2015. The Habitat event has not been set. Tilton Byrne will not be available April 25 & 26, 2015. Hegland advised April 17-19 is SDSU Mother's Weekend.

Members discussed collaborating with Habitat for a one-day Earth Day event. The Council could promote picking up trash or planting a tree. Parks, Recreation & Forestry Director Pete Colson joined the meeting and advised that Brookings has been designated as a Tree City USA for the past 32 years. The Park & Recreation Department is planning a dedication of the Dakota Nature Center for Earth Day 2015. Colson also advised the volunteer tree planting project was a success and planted 50-60 trees. The program required education of the volunteers, but in the end it was very effective with the number of people participating and their commitment.

Summer Student Intern Program Report. Beer advised about the possibility of a summer internship through a grant program with Oberlin College. The deadline for the application is February 2, 2015. The intern would work 8-10 weeks. Beer drafted a program to study fuel savings through reducing emissions. The intern would then educate groups about the subject. Beer would supervise and provide accountability. She questioned if the city could provide a vehicle.

Thoreau advised that she worked on this issue in another community. The city required new construction to build plug-ins at homes and hotels. Thoreau also advised that she was an intern. An intern provides a free service and she suggested any tasks you assign, should be attainable in order for the intern to succeed. She cautioned to not be overly ambitious.

Many questions were asked: Who selects the intern? Who has control of the program? Why are we not using SDSU for an intern? A subcommittee of Beer, Hegland and Jackson was created to develop a job description and detail the tasks.

Updates/Final Reports:

Reports on Growing Sustainable Communities Conference. Nusz Chandler's takeaway was to avoid the word 'sustainable' as it is intimidating and scares people. She learned that we need to work together to develop system thinking that impacts the entire community. Thornes advised there was not a good selection of topics and presenters. Her takeaway was Madison, Wisconsin's action plan. They took on sustainability through departmental project teams and worked on how to change mindsets that survived administration changes. Thornes will send out the Madison Action Plan to the Council.

The Council discussed a possible Strategic Planning Meeting to define our goals, purpose and where do we go from here. The meeting would be facilitated by a neutral party and at least 3 hours in length. Carruthers will email out the last 3 City Strategic Plans to the Council and work on finding a facilitator.

Brookings Benchmarks Indicator Project Action Plan. The Action Plan was well received by the City Council on October 21, 2015. We need to focus on working on the plan as a whole and not producing dramatic activity and keep our sustainable approach to sustainability.

There are still questions on the poverty indicators. Lockrem recommended preparing all youth for higher education. Nusz Chandler advised that the workforce needs skilled workers too. Tilton Byrne reminded everyone that just because you have a job does not mean you're out of poverty. The poverty problem is so big, we need to educate without getting in over our heads. First, we need to admit it is a problem, but how do we prove this? Thoreau suggested taking the City Council Members on a tour through Brookings to see the community as a whole. A poverty subcommittee was formed with Lockrem, Beer and Brandenburger (suggested). The subcommittee needs to look at the subsidized lunch program; Brandenburger may have this information.

Bicycle Friendly Community. The city committee is meeting on November 3, 2014.

2014 Community Common Read Project with Human Rights Committee. Tilton Byrne advised the Community Common Read Projects were a success with a good mixture of community members as well as SDSU students.

Announcements/Correspondence/Communications/Calendar

- Thoreau distributed materials regarding local foods and farms initiative she is working on. She will provide updates as her work progresses.
- November 14 & 15, 2014 – South Dakota Local Foods Conference, Sioux Falls
- December 18, 2014 – Brookings Holiday Celebration, Swiftel Center, 5-7 pm
- **Membership:** Members' terms were staggered with one, two and three terms when the Council was created on September 15, 2011. Terms for Lockrem, Hegland and McGrath expire on 12/31/14. All are eligible for a full three year term.
- Future topics: Bike racks for BATA buses, bike patrol, East Brookings industry traffic concerns, Plain Green 2015, legislative issues.

Adjourn. A motion was made by Lockrem, seconded by Jackson, to adjourn. All present voted yes; motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 10:10 a.m.

Submitted by Laurie Carruthers.