

Sustainability Council

July 22, 2015

A meeting of the Sustainability Council was held on Wednesday, July 22, 2015 at 3:00 pm at Brookings City & County Government Center with the following members present: Norma Nusz Chandler, Ben Kleinjan, Holly Tilton Byrne, Paul Peterson, Bob McGrath, Betty Beer, Jane Hegland and Alvaro Garcia. Absent: Mike Lockrem and Stephanie Aure. Others present included: Shari Thornes, Bonnie Foster and Morgan Vetch.

Vice-Chair Kleinjan called the meeting to order at 3:03 p.m. A motion was made by Nusz Chandler, seconded by McGrath, to approve the amended agenda adding Census Training to the agenda following scheduling the next meeting date. All present voted yes; motion carried. A motion was made by McGrath, seconded by Tilton Byrne, to approve the May 27, 2015 minutes. All present voted yes; motion carried.

Schedule next meeting. August 12 at 3:00 p.m.

Census Training. Kimberly Davis, Census Data Specialist, will be in Brookings August 10-13. A public training will be held at the Public Library on August 11 from approx. 2:00-5:00 p.m.

Nomination Committee Report / Election of New Chairperson. A motion was made by McGrath, seconded by Nusz Chandler, to nominate Holly Tilton Byrne as Chair. A motion was made by McGrath, seconded by Nusz Chandler, to close nominations. All present voted yes; motion carried. On the nomination of Holly Tilton Byrne as new Chairperson, all present voted yes; motion carried. Clarification was made on Tilton Byrne's term is to fulfill vacated position and will end on 12/31/2015.

8th Annual Growing Sustainable Communities Conference; 10/6-7/2015. The 8th Annual Growing Sustainable Communities Conference will be held in Dubuque, IA on October 6-7, 2015. The conference is hosted by the City of Dubuque, Iowa and Sustainable City Network, and the Growing Sustainable Communities Conference. Registration is \$100 for one day, \$135 for two days. Members were asked to submit their requests to attend not later than August 14th. If interest exceeds available funding, the Executive Committee will determine how many members can attend.

Reports - 2015 Action Plan Projects

Summer Intern Projects: Housing, Poverty. Morgan Vetch reported on her preliminary findings to date. A subcommittee of Garcia, Nusz Chandler, and Beer was formed and will meet with Vetch and Thornes early next week to review the current data and make recommendations on additional research. Vetch also wants to circulate an informal questionnaire to get a sampling of current public knowledge and awareness on local assistance programs. One area of concern is the difficulty of finding and learning about the programs available. Beer recommended creating a one-page narrative of what is being found in statistics to distribute with the questionnaire along with public awareness with an article in the Brookings Register.

Future Intern Projects/Schedule. The current summer intern received a \$5000 Fenn Scholarship from the SDSU College of Education and Human Sciences. The Council hopes to continue this relationship with the College of EHS for future summer internships. Hegland noted the scholarship recipients for this internship must be College of Education and Human Sciences students. The awarding of the scholarship for next summer and school-year would not be until spring 2016.

In addition, the Sustainability Council's 2015 action plan indicates submittal of a budget proposal for 2016 funding for a SDSU intern during the school year. Thornes submitted a funding request of \$4,000 for calendar year 2016 (1/1-12/31) is currently under consideration by the City Council. Half of the funding would be used for an intern to assist with an ADA compliance review during summer 2016. The City Council is scheduled to make its final decision on this funding request in September. The Sustainability Council was asked to begin a preliminary identification and prioritization of 2016 intern projects. Continuing research in housing/poverty was suggested. The Council will review the 2015 action plan and the five year action plan at a future meeting to select the 2016 intern projects.

Bike Friendly Designation Status. League of American Bicyclists announced that the City of Brookings has received Honorable Mention recognition for their application to become a Bicycle Friendly Community. This was the city's first attempt at becoming a Bicycle Friendly Community (BFC), and the application was submitted in February. The BFC program provides a roadmap for building a Bicycle Friendly Community. Since the program's inception, more than 800 distinct communities have applied and the five levels of the award - diamond, platinum, gold, silver and bronze - provide a clear incentive for communities to continuously improve. The League of American Bicyclists has outlined the following steps Brookings can take in order to become a Bronze Level Bicycle Friendly Community:

- Develop a comprehensive bike plan.
- Bicycle Advisory Committee should meet monthly to step up your Bicycle Friendly Community efforts.
- Adopt standards for bike parking that conform to APBP guidelines.
- Upgrade non-compliant bike racks and continue to increase the amount of bike parking throughout the community.
- Upgrade your on-street bicycle network. Ensure that all bicycle facilities conform to current best practices and guidelines.
- Adequately maintain on and off street bicycle infrastructure to ensure usability and safety.
- Increase the frequency of sweepings (particularly in the spring) and address potholes and other hazards faster.
- Offer regular bicycling skills training opportunities for adults. There are options from short videos and 1-2 hour courses to more in-depth training incorporating in-classroom and on-bike instruction.
- Promote cycling throughout the year by offering or supporting more family-oriented community and charity rides and bicycle-themed festivals, parades or shows.

- Encourage South Dakota State University to promote cycling to students, staff, and faculty and to seek recognition through the Bicycle Friendly University program.

The Council discussed ways how it can support the City in moving forward in this effort. Identifying a city staff lead and assembly and meeting of the bicycle advisory committee was recommended. Thornes will schedule a meeting with City Manager Jeff Weldon, McGrath and Tilton Byrne to discuss moving this forward with city staff.

Outreach / Presentations. Tilton Byrne has been working with Seth Koch, Wooden Legs, to organize a speaking and educational event called “Green Drinks.” The presentations would be 10 minutes with questions and answers. The talks will be held the last Thursday of the month, commencing on September 24th with a presentation by Nusz Chandler on the Brookings Benchmark Indicator Project.

(Tilton Byrne left at 4:00 p.m.)

Next Steps for other Plan Projects.

Review Status and Project Timelines.

- Trash/Refuse Generation - McGrath mentioned the Board of Health is working on some of the projects on the list. One particular item is the garbage receptacles at parks. The Landfill is willing to provide the receptacles; however, the Park & Rec Dept. needs to put them out and empty them. Tilton Byrne asked for information on the Board of Health and what they do and suggested working with them on mutual projects. The 2015 Goals will be discussed in greater detail at the next meeting.
- Promote Sustainability Philosophy - McGrath volunteered to speak to the City Leadership Team and also meet with new department heads.
- Supporting Legislation - Action to support pending legislation often occurs very quickly and it would be impossible to gather full Council support during the Legislative Session. There was a preliminary discussion regarding designating a legislative spokesperson or the executive committee to speak on behalf of the Council if time doesn't permit discussion at a monthly meeting.

Strategic Planning Options. A facilitated day-long session has been proposed as a means for the Council to further define its function and role and develop a unified vision, message and branding. However, there have been challenges in securing a facilitator and date for full Council participation. An alternative would be for the Council to hold evening planning meetings (5:30 p.m.) three to four times per year, which would enable a deeper discussion on key issues. This approach has worked for other city boards. Meetings during other months would be held during regular, daytime hours. The first topic the Council would tackle would be making progress on the 2015 Action Plan. This item will be added to the August meeting for final action.

(Garcia left at 4:14 p.m.)

Storm Water Public Education Committee. The committee of McGrath, Peterson, and Thornes met on July 1st and have identified potential primary and educational partners, funding sources, informational/educational materials, resources, kits, and promotional opportunities. Peterson reported on behalf of the committee and reviewed the draft report and requested suggestions and ideas. Beer suggested pulling the Leadership Brookings Class members, who initially brought up this project idea, to assist with the creation and follow-through. Nusz Chandler noted a Brookings Public Library book club is currently discussing environment issues, specifically water. The committee's next steps will be to talk to potential partners and then meet with Jackie Lanning, Brookings City Engineer, to prioritize the projects.

(Hegland left at 4:30 p.m.)

Membership

Vacancy. Advertising on the current vacancy closes on July 31. Tilton Byrne will review the applications and make appointment recommendations to Mayor Reed.

Student Member Position. Some city boards have a student member that serve one year terms commencing in May. If the Council wishes to add a voting student member, it would require City Council action to amend the enabling ordinance. The Council could also have students as liaisons.

Urban Ag Scan Committee. The committee of Tilton Bryne, Nusz Chandler, McGrath, Thornes have assembled a draft outline of current urban ag practices and possible challenges to implementation. The summer intern will be gathering additional data in these categories. The information will be provided to the Heartland Sustainability Coordinator's Network to be discussed in detail at a half-day workshop this fall.

Mayor's Volunteer Coffees. Kleinjan and Jackson attended. Thornes noted that the Benchmark Indicator Project Report will be provided to all committee chairs and vice chairs on an annual basis. Sending to all volunteer members was suggested.

Adjourn. A motion was made by Peterson, seconded by McGrath, to adjourn. All present voted yes; motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 4:44 p.m.

Submitted by Bonnie Foster.