

Sustainability Council
August 12, 2015

A meeting of the Sustainability Council was held on Wednesday, August 12, 2015 at 3:00 p.m. at Brookings City & County Government Center with the following members present: Bob McGrath, Norma Nusz Chandler, Holly Tilton Byrne, Jane Hegland, Mike Lockrem, and Alvaro Garcia. Absent: Ben Kleinjan, Stephanie Aure, Betty Beer, and Paul Peterson. Others present included: Shari Thornes, Bonnie Foster and Morgan Vetch.

Chair Tilton Byrne called the meeting to order at 3:04 p.m. A motion was made by McGrath, seconded by Nusz Chandler, to approve the agenda. All present voted yes; motion carried. A motion was made by McGrath, seconded by Lockrem, to approve the July 22, 2015 minutes. All present voted yes; motion carried.

Schedule next meeting. September 24 at 2:00 p.m.

Third Annual Mayor's Big Sioux River Water Summit

The event will be held on Thursday, September 10th, from 2-5 p.m. at the Day's Inn. Registration is free. Council agreed to do a booth. Hegland to setup/staff from 1:30-3:00 p.m. and Nusz Chandler to staff/tear down from 3:00-5:00 p.m.

2015 Public Education Campaign

The Council has 11 completed posters as part of its marketing campaign. Last year's promotion included traditional posters, utility bill inserts, advertising in special issues of the Brookings Register, Facebook ads, website, and public access channel. Lockrem reported the Brookings Register costs will be the same as 2014. Budget is \$5,000. Thornes to send to the council the previously designed posters. Not all of the posters have been published.

Future Utility Bill Insert ideas shared were: recycle locations for batteries, paint, etc., link to the Recycling Guide, and Storm Water information.

Discussion was had that Brookings Municipal Utilities may be a good funding partner. The Utility Bill Insert for Storm Water is being paid for by Engineering Dept. as part of their Storm Water Project. Direction was given to look at Utility Bill Insert availability for rest of 2015-2016.

Community Common Read Presentation Request

The council is interested in doing a presentation at the Hunger Banquet on November 8th at 7:00 p.m. General topic choice was 'the working poor.' Nusz Chandler and Vetch were selected to do the presentation.

The City Manager requested the council to present a report of their findings by November 1st. It was suggested to present the report to the City Council at the October 20th Study Session.

2015 Financial Report

Reviewed the current financial report and discussed potential travel expenses for the Dubuque Conference, and advertising for "Green Drinks."

Reports – 2015 Action Plan Projects

Education Efforts / Public Outreach

The first “Green Drinks” to be held September 24 at 5:00 p.m. Nusz Chandler will be the first speaker, presenting an overview of the Indicator Project. Future “Green Drinks” topics could be taken from the Indicator Project and be more topic specific. Need to identify the October speaker. “Green Drinks” will not be held in November or December due to the holidays. Presentation should be 10-15 minutes in length, allowing for Q&A time following.

Education Efforts / Staff

McGrath and Tilton Byrne chosen to visit with City Dept. heads. Nusz Chandler willing to step in for Tilton Byrne if needed. Consensus was to put together Sustainability Packets of information geared towards each individual city department. Subcommittee members: Thornes, McGrath, Nusz Chandler. Thornes to research for current information available. Nusz Chandler and McGrath will reach out and talk to Brookings Municipal Utilities Board and staff. Visits with city staff and BMU to be scheduled after Vetch has completed the report.

Legislative Support

The council’s executive committee, consisting of chair and vice-chair, will monitor pending legislation, and respond quickly on sustainability related topics/issues. It was mentioned Rapid City has a similar council which has provided legislation comments to Pierre legislators. It was also suggested to work more closely with the South Dakota Municipal League.

(Hegland left at 4:20 p.m. No longer have quorum.)

Strategic Planning Options

Thornes to send out a doodle entertaining evening planning sessions, with the first meeting date in October. Tilton Byrne asked this item to be placed earlier on the next meeting agenda.

Summer Intern Project

Vetch shared with the council a spread sheet which displayed the 2013 individual earnings and compared those figures for what is considered an affordable house payment (30% of their monthly income) on a 30-year mortgage at a 3.375% mortgage rate. She also compared 2013 household and family incomes. Brookings County data for 2013 was used because as that is the most recent and most local data available.

It was clarified at the August 11th Census Training with Kimberly Davis, Census Analyst, that people living in institutions (jail, school, care facilities) do not affect the poverty data as they are assumed to have a roof over their head and a meal plan of some sort. Vetch does not have the number of students living off campus from Residential Life. Davis also explained that small city data (ex: male single parents) are often not public, because it could be a violation of privacy. Therefore, some city data is simply not available and county data will be used.

Vetch will note County Welfare and Veteran Affairs programs in the body of the report, as they are not assistance programs. Most veterans are assisted through the welfare program and the money given is required to be paid back to the program. Most veteran’s welfare recipients

expire before their debt is repaid. The county will then put a lien on their estate, or the debt will become an expense to the veteran's family members. It is difficult for many welfare recipients to pay back medical assistance because they often do not have health insurance and welfare only assists with emergent medical costs which are most always expensive.

The Farmers Home Administration and the USDA will not be contacted for data, because data is not available at a local level.

Vetch was directed to request 5% interest rates from Jennifer Loomis at First Bank and Trust to show a more realistic mortgage interest rate.

Discussion was held on what is considered affordable housing. The \$140,000-\$150,000 provided is still an expensive home for younger families and first-time home buyers. Tilton Byrne questioned if there is a definition of what an affordable home is, and the price limits in order to qualify for homes to be considered 'affordable.' These numbers would be based on an individual's income, which would also change for first-time home buyers.

Bike Friendly Designation

Lockrem provided an update. This topic has come up with the University's Executive Committee, as well as Student Affairs, and Students Association. Lockrem to serve as the liaison between SDSU and the council. Lockrem has submitted an online application as an individual on behalf of the university to gather information on what is needed to achieve the Bronze level.

Thornes, McGrath and Tilton Byrne met with City Manager Weldon on July 24th. The goal is to resubmit the Bike Friendly Designation Application in February 2016. The City Manager has designated Recreation Managers Darren Hoff and Mitch Pederson as key staff on the Bike Master Plan. The City Manager will be working directly on the Bike Master Plan and is looking for examples, suggestions, and recommendations. Tilton Byrne mentioned a draft document of related bike items created in 2008. Thornes and Tilton Byrne will research Bike Master Plan examples.

Bike Advisory Committee. This is an ad hoc committee which has never met. Need to contact those individuals to see if they are still interested; Tilton Byrne to contact Megan Thoreau and Emily Dotson; Garcia to contact Van Fishback; and Thornes to contact Steve Clark, American League of Bicyclists. Brittany Kleinsasser, currently serving on the Park & Recreation Board, may be a good liaison between the Bike Advisory Committee and the Park & Recreation Board. Lockrem will serve as council liaison. City staff to coordinate the first meeting in early September.

Tilton Byrne mentioned for the council to encourage individual businesses to apply for Bicycle Friendly Business Designation. Businesses mentioned were: Bike Shop, Nicks, Wooden Legs. It is unsure if entities, such as Hillcrest Aquatic Center, Fishback Soccer Park, etc., could apply for this designation.

Storm Water Public Education Committee

Nusz Chandler, McGrath, Peterson and Thornes visited with City Engineer Jackie Lanning. Lanning will be completing an annual report to the Dept. of Natural Resources. The council could use this report to help identify areas for public education. They will be meeting again on September 2.

Membership – Vacancy and Student Position

Vacancy. Tilton Byrne and Mayor Reed will be interviewing four applicants over the next couple of weeks. Appointment is scheduled for the Sept. 11 City Council Agenda.

Student member. Council wants the draft Ordinance adding the council student position for review at their next meeting. Term would be from May-May.

Announcements

Census Training on August 11th was well received.

“Green Drinks.” First one to be held September 24th at 5:00 p.m.

Dubuque Conference. Nusz Chandler to attend.

Adjourn

Meeting was adjourned at 4:43 p.m.

Submitted by Bonnie Foster.