

**Sustainability Council**  
**March 16, 2016**

A meeting of the Sustainability Council was held on Wednesday, March 16, 2016 at 3:00 p.m. at Brookings City & County Government Center with the following members present: Holly Tilton Byrne, Nels Granholm, Alvaro Garcia, Jane Hegland, Bob McGrath, Norma Nusz Chandler, Betty Beer, Stephanie Aure and Mike Lockrem. Absent: Ben Kleinjan, Paul Peterson and Riley Larson. Others present included: DBI Executive Director Elliot Johnson, Shari Thornes and Laurie Carruthers.

Chair Tilton Byrne called the meeting to order at 3:04 p.m. A motion was made by McGrath, seconded by Garcia, to approve the agenda. All present voted yes; motion carried.

A motion was made by McGrath, seconded by Aure, to approve the February 17, 2016 meeting minutes. All present voted yes; motion carried.

**Schedule Next Meeting.** Wednesday, April 16, 2016 at 4:00 p.m.

**ReStore Earth Day Event – May 14<sup>th</sup>**

Thornes advised the Historic Preservation Commission and the Bicycle Advisory Committee are hosting a table at the event and asked if the Sustainability Council would like to join. Tilton Byrne and McGrath are out-of-town this weekend. Garcia can take the afternoon shift. Granholm and Aure are tentatively scheduled for the remainder of the day. Items to have at the table include: posters, indicator and poverty/housing reports, Green Drinks promotions and ice cream.

**Pop Up Park Earth Day Event – April 22<sup>nd</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup>**

Downtown Brookings, Inc. Executive Director Elliot Johnson presented on a pop up park to be located in the parking lot west of the Old Market for the Earth Day weekend (April 22 & 23). Pop up parks have been temporarily installed in many cities. The idea is to recreate a public space (parking lot, street, etc.) as a park or green space. Medary Acres has agreed to provide plants. Johnson is asking the Sustainability Council for support in this project. He needs ground cover (turf, sod, wood chips), benches, picnic tables, etc. In the past, a 'before I die' chalkboard has been very successful downtown. The Council discussed support for the event and requested native plants be at the event. A motion was made by McGrath, seconded by Hegland, to support the event in the amount of \$500 towards a chalkboard and advertising. All present voted yes; motion carried.

**National Wildlife Federation's Mayors' Monarch Pledge**

Tilton Byrne advised the Mayor was asked to support the Mayors' Monarch Pledge by promoting pollinator plants. Cross promotion with the Parks Department was discussed. A motion was made by Granholm, seconded by Beer, to support a call to action and endorse the Mayors' Monarch Pledge, promote planting pollinators including agricultural areas along waterways. All present voted yes; motion carried.

## Updates / Reports

Liaison report – Lockrem advised the Poverty and Housing Report will assist the Affordable Housing Task Force with understanding the 30% of homeowners who are living beyond their means. Thornes reported the bicycle lane hearing for parking removal is scheduled on the March 22<sup>nd</sup> City Council agenda. Additionally, the Bicycle Advisory Committee is working on a Request for Proposals for a Bicycle Master Plan as well as several public education events throughout May and June.

Subcommittee reports – Thornes advised the Green Building Practices Policy meeting has been rescheduled. The Urban Ag Subcommittee has been approached to join a collaboration between the Parks & Recreation Department, Disability Committee and an Eagle Scout to build a raised bed plot that provides accessible gardening at the community gardens. They are working on plans and implementation.

Poverty & Housing Presentation to the City Council – Chair Tilton Byrne presented the report to the City Council on March 15, 2016, which verified the data collected from the Brookings Benchmark Baseline Sustainability Report (22.4% poverty rate and 33% of homeowners and more than 50% of renters are living beyond their means). Chair Tilton Byrne advised the Sustainability Council needs a plan to move forward with the report. It was noted that housing is on the frontline with the Affordable Housing Task Force in place. Additionally, Brookings has the highest poverty rate among the surrounding counties. Thornes noted that a result of the Brookings Economic Development Corporation Charrette, a wage comparison is being performed. McGrath advised the Watertown Utilities just performed a comparison study of utility rates across eastern South Dakota.

Succession Planning – Chair Tilton Byrne advised that the Council needs to develop a plan for the chair/vice-chair terms. Since the vice-chair was not present, only the chair position was discussed. A motion was made by McGrath, seconded by Aure, to draft bylaws, which outline two-year chair terms. All present voted yes; motion carried. Staff will draft the bylaws to be presented at the next meeting.

6<sup>th</sup> Street Ad Hoc Design Committee – Thornes advised a Sustainability Council Member is still needed on the Committee and to contact her if interested. The deadline is March 31.

STAR Pilot Project – Brookings is conducting a reduced version of the assessment for smaller communities with 21 indicators. The deadline is March 16 and a member of the City Clerk's staff has completed the assessment. It was noted the poverty numbers remained consistent from the initial indicator report.

Budget – Budget projects include: Earth Day pop up park, ReStore event, Green Drinks posters, new public education campaign posters and potential training opportunities for department heads.

Proposed Internship Project – Hegland advised that the College of Education and Human Sciences at SDSU has funds available for a \$5,500 scholarship. Ideas for internship projects include: providing information to Kleinjan for Master Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee, focus on a current objective or goal, stormwater education or grant opportunities. The funding could provide internships for one full-time or two part-time students with a split between summer, fall and/or spring semesters.

**Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 5:02 pm.

Submitted by Laurie Carruthers