

West Linn Sustainability Advisory Board

WebEx Virtual Meeting

DATE: 6-7:30, March 16, 2023

Attendance: Mike Carlson, Greg Smith, Victoria Meier, Charity Hudnut, Ranjini Sridhar, Dan Reesor. Kate Jaspers (absent)

Council Liaison: Mary Baumgardner

Staff Liaison: Dylan Digby

Mission: The Sustainability Advisory Board is committed to collaborating with government and residents to improve the quality of life in West Linn by advancing stewardship of our environment, social, and economic resources that is equitable for all present and future generations.

Public comment No one from public present.

Approval of January minutes (meeting not held in February because of no quorum): Motion to approve minutes by Charity Hudnut and seconded by Victoria Meier was approved unanimously.

Introductions/Check-ins:

- Mike: Continuing to help remove invasive species at Mary S. Young Park. Working independently to uproot invasive holly. Mentioned meeting with staff person at Tyron State Park about funding opportunities for environmental restoration. Some money available for tree planting. This could be an option to pursue further down the line. Data regarding the city's use of natural gas is now available.
- Dan: Newest member of SAB. He has completed OSU Master Gardener program. Attended Vermont Law School and is interested in contributing his legal expertise to the board. He is currently very concerned about tolling on I-205 and the consequences for residents along Borland Road and the Willamette neighborhood. He will write a letter and circulate it to SAB members to see whether we would like to enter it into the public testimony regarding ODOT's decision about tolling.
- Charity: Reports on planning for the SAB Earth Day Event at the Ale and Cider House on Willamette Falls Drive. She sees this as an opportunity for West Linn citizens to meet members of the SAB as well as representatives from different local sustainability-focused organizations and businesses. She also describes recent work at Rosemont Ridge Middle School to organize service activities for students. She is planning to organize a "no idling" campaign for Earth Day week.
- Greg: Replaced plastic on hoop garden so he could begin spring planting. Mentions Civic Ecology Workshop taught on-line from Cornell University in April. Sent link to SAB members in case others interested. Met with Kate Jaspers who will be able to join board in July.

- Ranjini: She is attempting to create a dashboard to show progress made on sustainability metrics in West Linn over the past decade. Asks for help locating data.
- Dylan: Supports the sending of a letter from SAB about tolling. Other city entities are doing the same thing in an effort to influence ODOT decision.
- Mary: Spent day in Salem meeting with legislators from West Linn and Lake Oswego about getting \$17 million in funding to pay for new water lines associated with I-205 improvements and traffic mitigation.

Film screening in February: What did we learn?

This showing of “A Scientist’s Warning” was our first in-person event in three years. 60-70 people were present, although most were high school students. Aside from people associated with the SAB, there were not many other adults from the community. Mike said that his wife, a librarian in LO with experience in organizing public events, observed that it’s important to meet people where they are; fewer people are going out for events in the aftermath of covid. Mike has envisioned the possibility of placing plaques about invasive species in Mary S. Young Park, for example. Victoria said that one of the lessons from the film showing is the value of organizing events with the schools. Kids will take message home to parents. Charity and Ranjini observed, however, that the success of such events depends on teachers. It’s important to find educators who support activities like these. There would also be value in organizing family friendly activities related to sustainability through the library.

Other SAB sponsored educational activities

- Old Time Fair. Greg has submitted application. We will need to spend some time thinking about how we want to organize and staff this event at our April and May meetings.
- Charity brings up the possibility of having a booth at the Farmer’s Market during the summer that could be staffed by different SAB members with the intention of sharing information about sustainability topics. This would be a way to bring our educational offerings to people where they are.
- Another possibility is to hold some tours open to the public to provide information about invasive species, net-zero or high efficiency homes, solar systems, heat pumps.
- Victoria describes program in Boulder, Colorado that gives kids “lucky bucks” when they ride or walk to school. These can be used to purchase items at cooperating stores. Dan will reach out to Willamette Main Street merchants to see if any would be interested in participating in something like. Kim Bria might be interested in helping reach out to these folks, as well. It’s also possible that working with merchants at the summer Farmer’s Market would be a way to organize something like this.
- Greg asks about Linda Woodley’s request to sponsor an hour-long presentation about EVs. Board members are OK doing so and scheduling a presentation during May as an in-person event. A number of members of the SAB indicate they will attend. City Council members will also be invited.

- Mary suggests finding a way to share information about the problem of wood smoke on days when there is an atmospheric inversion, something that apparently happens with some frequency in the Tualatin Valley. Although fewer people are burning wood in fireplaces, the use of outdoor firepits is becoming more common. She will find article link she recently read about this topic and send to SAB members.

Sustainability Strategic Plan

Greg discusses the value of using the 2015 Sustainability Strategic Plan and the 2021 amendments as a way to organize the work of the SAB this year, focusing in particular on items that are either low- or no-cost. Some of these include things like the following:

- Propose resolution to replace all city-owned natural gas furnaces and stoves with heat pumps and electric appliances when they are no longer serviceable.
- Propose resolution to replace all city vehicles with electric vehicles or hybrids when they are no longer serviceable.
- Propose resolution to replace fossil-fuel powered landscaping tools with electric tools when they are no longer serviceable.
- Propose amendment to comprehensive plan and building codes to require new homes and apartments to have the capacity to support heat pumps and charge EVs (include apartment parking spaces equipped with charging stations).
- Propose local ordinance to control priority invasive species such as English ivy, blackberries, canary reed grass, and clematis.
- Adopt local design criteria and associated codes that require proactive green infrastructure practices (rain gardens, permeable pavements, green roofs, infiltration planters, rainwater harvesting systems)
- Change contract with trash hauler to incorporate food scraps in yard debris. Develop public education campaign to persuade voters that this is something important to do.
- Establish a West Linn Garden Team to work to convert available residential and commercial lots into community gardens throughout the city.
- Reinvigorate the community mapping program to enhance neighborhood resilience.
- Identify public and private facilities that meet code standards to be used as shelters, electronic recharging stations, and command centers in the event of emergencies that result in widespread power outages like the 2021 ice storm..

Victoria suggests taking one of these topics a month for discussion and possible action. Mike mentions the value of looking at building codes and considering amendments to recommend to the City Council. We ask Dylan about whether applicants for open positions with the city are asked about sustainability, how sustainability issues are raised in different city decisions, or whether city staff are offered training workshops on sustainability. He said that these issues are frequently considered with regard to decision making, but that sustainability training is not offered nor are issues related to it brought up in hiring interviews.

Experts/organization representatives to invite to future SAB meetings

Greg mentions that Susie Peterson from Backyard Habitats would like to join us for our April meeting to describe the current status of this program. SAB is OK with having her join us. Greg also mentions the possibility of inviting Lisa Adatto from the Lake Oswego Sustainability Network to our May meeting to share what this group is doing and help us think through strategies for both educating the public and advocating for policy changes. Members give him OK to do so. Charity will speak with a friend involved in energy trading to see whether he may be able to offer us any useful information related to the work of the SAB. Greg will see whether Green Hammer may be able to share information about the way city building codes can encourage the construction of more net zero homes in West Linn.

Action items

- Greg will invite Susie and Lisa to speak at April and May meetings, respectively, and learn what he can about speakers knowledgeable about green building codes. Charity will check with friend about making presentation about energy trading.
- Ranjini will continue her work on the creation of a citizen-friendly dashboard.
- Charity will share language about Earth Day event with Dylan who will create a publicity poster.
- Dan will draft letter about tolling and share with SAB prior to our April meeting so that it can be forwarded to ODOT the next day (the final day for receiving testimony)
- Victoria will investigate right-of-way rules that apply to community gardening.
- Greg will work with Linda Woodley to schedule presentation about EVs in May.
- Mary will forward link to article about wood burning during air inversions.