

West Linn Sustainability Advisory Board – October 19, 2023

In attendance

West Linn Sustainability Advisory Board: Greg Smith, Michael Carlson, Victoria Meier, Ranjini Sridhar, Kate Jaspers

West Linn City Staff Liaison: Dylan Digby

Kahut Waste Companies: Josh Brown and Kris Wright

Not in attendance:

West Linn Sustainability Advisory Board: Charity Hudnut, Dan Reesor

West Linn City Council Liaison: Lou Groner

Minutes approved without comment

No public comment

Check-ins

Greg – still getting string beans and tomatoes, despite late in season. Tree summit in Lake Oswego at Mountain Park clubhouse Saturday 10/21

Mike – Pumpkin patch quite productive, expecting about 60 pumpkins.

Ranjini – Camp Holland Eco-School Network annual meeting was an excellent experience.

Victoria – Had heat pump installed, happy to have heating not from natural gas. Community garden is ongoing success. Learned West Linn has cheapest and largest community garden plots.

Dylan – Noted that West Linn has new Parks and Rec director, Megan Big John.

Food Compost Pickup - Discussion with Kris Wright and Josh Brown from Kahut Waste.

Curbside compost pickup would require a material to be taken to METRO disposal location, which has an estimated increase in disposal costs of about \$300,000 per year. Change would also increase turnaround times for trucks. Education and outreach efforts needed, along with re-stickering carts.

Overall cost increase of about \$5 per household, or about \$500,000 per year across all residents, with potential to save millions of pounds of carbon emission equivalents.

Service would be for all accounts, not on a subscription basis.

Greg asks about Lake Oswego, which has voluntary pickup through Republic Services, and how they are able to provide a-la-carte composting. Josh says separate, subscription-based service is achievable, but would require extra truck, driver, and bins.

Victoria raises concern over smells. Josh notes that food waste carts must be cleaned and replaced more often.

Kahut Waste does offer curbside composting for city of Portland. Portland offset increased cost from this service by decreasing frequency of garbage collection.

Moving food from garbage to compost would not necessarily change overall disposal volume but does change distribution of disposal costs.

Metro has regional control over waste flows, so choosing a different disposal site that offers lower disposal costs not likely a cost reducing strategy. Current proposal is likely best available within Metro's jurisdiction.

Mike commits to providing more in-depth review of potential environmental benefits of diverting food scraps to compost.

Main Street Recycling Bins

Kahut Waste would provide no-cost pickup if City can provide bins.

Biggest concern is contamination. Bins should be clearly marked.

Trial of can and bottle only bins suggested. Discussion needed with Willamette Main Street.

Potential Council Resolution Draft

General idea is for council to commit to replacing old fossil-fuel appliances and landscape maintenance equipment with electric or battery-powered options when existing equipment reaches end of life.

Draft to be revised to break apart sections for appliances and landscaping equipment. Language should be cognizant of the lack of available alternatives for some technologies (like large riding mowers).

Parks and Rec has demoed battery-powered options, but space is limited in their current facilities. A new Parks and Rec facility is being designed, and this could present an opportunity to integrate charging infrastructure into the design. Conversation with Parks and Rec staff about how to enable a transition to new technologies would be beneficial.

Dylan to forward current draft of resolution to Parks Department.

EV Charging Station Locations

Greg reports that DC fast-charging stations cost about \$50,000 for equipment and \$15,000 for installation, while Level 2 charging stations cost significantly less.

City would appreciate recommendations from the SAB for EV charging locations.

Potential commercial sites include Downtown Willamette, Parkrose Hardware, Safeway on top of hill, Market of Choice, Wal-Mart. Potential public sites include near City Hall, WLPD station, and the library.

Desire to see charging stations placed evenly throughout city so certain areas aren't under-served compared to others.

Siting sub-committee to meet to review requirements and make suggestions – Mike, Victoria, and Kate.

Kate expresses interest in recruiting businesses to invest in chargers at their locations, as opposed to the City paying to install chargers. Group acknowledges that these chargers may be a useful means of attracting customers for these businesses.

Greg shares that a group of auto manufacturers has publicly committed to a multi-year, billion-dollar investment in charging stations after determining that EV sales would suffer without them.

Gas-Powered Leaf Blower Ban

Other cities have acted to ban the use of gas-powered leaf blowers, citing their noise and the dangerous emissions they produce. The Board supports the idea of such a ban. Dan has expressed a willingness to develop potential language for the city to adopt.

Cooperation with Lake Oswego Sustainability Network

Greg has had discussions with Lisa Adatto of the Lake Oswego Sustainability Network, a community interest group in Lake Oswego. They discussed the possibility of co-sponsoring in-person events focused on the challenges of electrification, particularly with respect to upgrading the electric grid and workforce planning. Robinwood Station is raised as potential location.

Lisa has had discussions with State Representative Mark Gamba about the potential to create a regional transmission authority that could have wider decision-making responsibilities regarding future development of the electrical grid.

Greg notes that the electrical grid, as it is today, is not ready to accept large increases to renewable energy generation. Group discusses need to identify ways to aid and advise on this effort. One major difficulty is the diversity of ownership of grid components across many different utility companies.

Miscellaneous Initiatives

Baseline Energy Audit – Mike – City has provided some data regarding the City's purchases of liquid transportation fuels. If this data is suitable, it would enable the completion of the baseline energy audit.

Tree Code Update – Dylan – planning commission has not yet met to discuss prioritizing updates to the Tree Code.

Sustainability Consultant – Dylan – City Manager John Williams has contacted The Good Company to begin conversation.

November Meeting

Room reserved at Adult Community Center for next meeting. Group to have a potluck style gathering to discuss year's accomplishments and goals for the coming year.

If the room is not suitable for the State's Hybrid meetings regulations, Board or Dylan will look into meeting at City Hall.

Action Items

Mike – Prepare estimate of environmental benefits to shifting to curbside composting.

Mike – revise resolution to include more specific language about natural gas-powered appliances and gas-powered leaf blowers.

Mike, Kate, Victoria – meet to discuss the potential locations for EV charging stations.

Dylan – inform Board of best location for November meeting.

Dylan – arrange contact between WLSAB and Parks and Rec, forward draft resolution.

Dylan – alert Mike and Greg when planning commission meeting is scheduled.