



2017 Advisory Group & Neighborhood Association Annual Reports

Sustainability Advisory Board

Group Leadership

Alex Mihm & Sara Weihmann: co-chairs

Meeting Times, Dates & Location –

Third Thursday of every month, 6-7:30pm at City Hall; November meeting was instead a board retreat held from 12-3 pm at the ACC on November 11.

2017 Accomplishments

- With staff liaison assistance, wrote a board charter as a guiding document that states the group's mission, vision, and strategies. (Expected submission to City Council in early 2018.)
- Supported and recommended a resolution to City Council to eliminate the use of neonicotinoid insecticides in City operations; provided input to Resolution 2017-16, adopted by City Council on June 19.
- Began research into feasibility of a community solar project and recruited students at the Oregon Institute of Technology to assist. (Expect completion of research in 2018.)
- Wrote letter of support for West Linn resident Sharon Selvaggio's 'Raindrops to Rivers' grant proposal submission to the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation, aimed at securing funding for community education on healthy waterways in West Linn.
- Promoted the Backyard Habitat Certification Program, which expanded into West Linn in 2017, to residents; wrote letter of support for the City to provide funding for additional West Linn homes to participate in the program.
- The City continues to purchase 10% of its buildings' energy from renewable sources, and recruitment of residents and businesses to participate continues.
- Started the West Linn Neighbors Harvest Share, a Facebook page created to connect West Linn residents who have excess fruit growing on their property with others who can either help them pick it, preserve it, or otherwise put it to good use, reducing food waste.
- Researched logistics and established relationships for holding a sustainability fair.
- Two Board members attended the GoGreen Conference to learn about regional sustainability resources and programs.
- Added three new board members who bring valuable expertise and fresh perspectives.

2017 Challenges

- The writing of the SAB's charter is an effort to eliminate some of the confusion and uncertainty over the SAB's role and responsibilities that was experienced in 2017. Challenges faced this year include:
- Retaining consistent organizational support for the SAB in our efforts to help implement the Sustainability Strategic Plan.
- Understanding the organizational structure of the City, with some miscommunication about process and decision-making roles, specifically as it related to a proposed sustainability event.
- Lack of clarity in understanding the process to request funding for sustainability-related projects.

- Three board members resigned for various personal reasons, including the chair and vice chair.

2018 Goals

- Be more involved with City projects and initiatives, including direct participation in ad hoc committees and groups.
- Complete the community solar feasibility study and present the findings to City Council.
- Identify specific areas of the Comprehensive Plan that are supported by the Sustainability Strategic Plan.
- Organize a sustainability education series of presentations and field trips.
- Strengthen relationships with other advisory boards and committees, including scheduling an annual work session with City Council.
- Help revitalize an annual get-together for all of the advisory boards.
- Update the City's sustainability web page to include more current resources for residents and businesses, as well as more about the SAB (minutes, ongoing projects, etc.).
- Promote community sustainability efforts, such as repair fairs at Robinwood Station, recycling events, habitat restoration work, etc.
- Research ways for Metro's discounted backyard compost bins to be offered closer to West Linn. (Discounted bins are currently only sold at Metro's recycled paint store in North Portland.)
- Adopt an equity lens for SAB projects and recommendations.
- Research feasibility of community agriculture in some City-owned spaces.
- Continue research into and promotion of efforts to reduce the use of toxic pesticides and herbicides.
- Promote sustainability events throughout Earth Month that encourage residents to learn more about West Linn.
- Research avenues for community development that encourage the inclusion of more sustainability features in construction and landscaping.

Any additional feedback to share with the City Council?

We look forward to continuing our support of the City's sustainability efforts in 2018 and beyond. We hope to strengthen our working relationship with City Council and play a more active role in assisting your decision-making. Without a City staff person whose sole focus is sustainability, the SAB serves a critical role in providing the City Council, City staff, and residents with informed recommendations on policies, programs, and projects. Mayor Axelrod has been a great advocate for us and makes valuable contributions to our discussions. We hope that all Councilors understand we are here to be a resource that enhances your work.