

Sustainability Commission
Meeting Minutes

MEETING DATE	October 18, 2021
PLACE	Zoom/In Person Meeting
MEETING CALLED TO ORDER	4:01 p.m.
MEETING ADJOURNED	5:18 p.m.

ROLL CALL

<u>NAME</u>	<u>PRESENT</u>	<u>ABSENT</u>
Jamie Hasemeier	X	
Michael Stauss	X	
Padraic McGrath	X	
Elizabeth Schappe	X	
Jeffrey Tomich	X	
Paul Barrs	X	
John Berendzen	X	
Jeffrey Mazur	X	

Also Present: Laura Arnold, City Council Liaison, Todd Rehg, Public Works Director

1. Meeting was called to order at 4:01 p.m.
2. Minutes from last meeting were reviewed. Jeff motioned to approve; Padraic seconded.
3. Two new members have been added to the Commission: Aamna Anwer and Karla Armbruster (ad hoc member)

Douglas Hill Presentation-Discussion.

4. Phil Hulse, Larry Chapman and Liz Austin with SG Collaborative were present to discuss their previous work and the Douglas Hill proposal.
5. SGC inquired into the history of the Sustainability Commission. Jamie noted that in the past we have acquired grants for the composting initiative, are currently working on a campaign for reducing plastic bag use, have advocated for bike lanes and are currently working on developing a Sustainability Strategic Plan for the City.
6. Larry Chapman noted SGC's approach to development is about "creating experiences", mostly at pedestrian level. He discussed his experience redeveloping the Auto Beauty building into the Olive and Oak facility. Phil Hulse noted they have learned about sustainable design by listening to others, noting their experience with redeveloping the old Nooter building downtown for their own offices.
7. The question was asked at to much of the floodplain are you planning to retain? SGC noted "there's been a floodplain there for a longtime. SGC noted that now every drop of rain runs into Shady Creek (*some absorbed into existing pervious areas, some flowing into the creek directly,*

author note). Their development will filter the stormwater through a large underground tank and slowly release this back into the creek. Currently there is a constriction point at Shady Creek at Gore. SGC noted they are going to rebuild the bridge to improve the situation and thereby lower the floodplain level.

8. The Commission asked about how their development will change the creek. Will it be more like the River Des Peres? SGC noted it will not be concrete like River Des Peres. When done it will look like a “living, breathing creek”. North side will have a retention pond that will sometimes hold water. SGC will go through FEMA, MSD and Army Corps of Engineers for design approvals. The Townhomes will be in a flood hazard area and will require flood insurance, as do other homes in Webster along Kirkham. They noted they will also remove invasive species.
9. The Commission asked about the comments of Professor Emeritus Robert Criss on the KETC Donnybrook program September 2nd, in which he noted that the Douglass Hill proposal is not sustainable in terms of its hydrology, just pushing the problem of flooding further downstream. SGC noted everything they have done has been designed by a professional civil engineer, who is putting their seal on the documents. They defer to his professional experience.
10. The Commission inquired about the height of the project, being significantly taller than any building in Webster Groves. SGC noted it is not economically feasible to reduce the height/density of the project and finance it. SGC noted the only view with excessive height is from Kirkham road. If you stand on north side of Kirkham looking at the site, view line shows the townhomes closest to your view. SGC noted this is the same impact visually as looking at a 2 ½ story building. Also, since they are on the side of a hill, with 50’ of drop, if you put in a new main street, it is 5 floors in height, not 7. The garage makes this a seven-story building. SGC notes they are creating a lot of public space. They could delete that space to go lower, but they do not believe this is a good idea.
11. SGC noted they want to build up Webster’s population to help our businesses, tax base and add to the communities’ amenities. They noted it is a balancing act of how to get the right things into the project, such as creating a bridge across the UP tracks to get people into Old Webster. They want outdoor patio’s for the restaurants, like Paris or Little Italy in NYC. They believe the overall feeling will be that of a smaller street. Their parking is designed such that if the parking demand drops, this can be turned into mercantile space.
12. SGC noted some buildings will have green roofs, some will have rooftop PV. Final design TBD.
13. SGC noted there will be some EV charging stations in the garage. Details on number, location TBD.

Old Business

14. Jeff will resend the notes from the subcommittee meeting to Commission Members.
15. Mayors for Clean Energy: Mayor Welch signed the proposal, and this is now listed on City Website.
16. Green Cities Challenge update: we have just finished submitting data points to Earthways Center. The Challenge is now closed for the year.

17. Reusable Bag Program update: The Grant has been reopened and we are rebidding the bag contract. This will probably happen next spring. No vendor for bags has been selected yet. We should know by next meeting.

New Business

18. Pumpkin Composting: Elizabeth noted that WG citizens should NOT put pumpkins into the yard waste bins. We are working out a way to get a one day drop compost bin for residents. Cost was discussed – potentially \$350.00. There was discussion of placing the dumpster in the Rec Center parking lot. Todd will discuss this with Scott Davis to receive his approval, or potentially find another spot.
19. Jamie noted that we have two candidates for our one unfilled Commission seat. They are both highly qualified. The commission agreed by unanimous vote to suggest to Council one voting member, and one ad hoc member.
20. Laura noted Saturday is make a difference day: please refer to the Parks website for more info. The City Council has started strategic planning. They discussed the Commission's concept for a sustainability strategic plan. A petition for a public referendum has been filed with the city that requires a public vote on eminent domain use, approval of variance to any stream buffer zone and voter approval for any change of zoning usage. More info on this TBD
21. Next meeting: November 15th
22. Motion to adjourn by Elizabeth: Jeff seconded. Adjourned at 5:18.

End of minutes.