



City of Farmers Branch
Minutes
Sustainability Committee

Fire Station #2
13333 Alpha Link
Farmers Branch, TX, 75244

Wednesday, January 11,
2023

6:30 PM

Fire Station #2

Meeting held at 6:30 PM

Presiding: Joseph Riegel (Chairperson)

Present: Soren Thomsen (Vice Chair)
Loren Rives (Secretary)
Suzette Vaquera
Al Mahesh
Shelby Anders
Val Clark
Price Trosin
Lisa Massey

Absent: None

Staff: Alex Pharmakis, Sustainability Manager
Robert Diaz, Deputy Director of Sustainability and
Public Health

A. CALL TO ORDER

Joseph Riegel called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, January 11, 2023.

B. CITIZEN COMMENTS

No comments received.

C. AGENDA ITEMS

C.1 Consider approving minutes for the December 14, 2022 meeting; and take appropriate action

Al Mahesh made a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Soren Thomsen. All in favor. Motion carried.

C.2 Receive a staff update on sustainability initiatives

- Solar Switch Auction – 57 registered prior to auction
- Power Switch – Deadline for signups is January 17th
- Grant work
 - Received reimbursement from SECO for LED lighting retrofit. \$75,000
 - Working on submittals for EV chargers. \$18,000
- EV Charging and Solar Ready Ordinances sent to Legal for Review
 - Meeting with developers next week
- Now accepting small batteries at CCC for recycling
- Grease Collection: 24 gallons to be recycled into biofuel
- Food waste: Almost 5,000 pounds collected in 2022. 1,000 more than last year.
- Clothing Collection: 1,328 pounds collected in 2022. Slightly down from last year.
- Save the Date: Board and Commissions dinner February 17th
- Up next – Water rebates and Active transportation plan

C.3 Consider recommending the City move forward with the passage of the Sustainable Procurement Policy; and take appropriate action

The committee reviewed the Sustainable Procurement Policy. Staff reviewed the minor edits since the committee's last review. Al Mahesh made a motion to approve the policy as written. Soren Thomson seconded the motion. All were in favor, motion passed.

C.4 Receive an update on light pollution initiatives

Loren Rives provided an update on the light pollution initiatives. The subcommittee is working on getting a meeting together with a member of the Texas Chapter of the Dark Sky Association. She provided an update on the various designations and criteria to meet them. She noted that the group was interested in seeing if some of the City parks might meet the Urban Dark Sky designation. There are also some items in the model outdoor lighting ordinance that might be worth looking into. The subcommittee is also interested in pursuing a "Lights Out Texas" proclamation in the Spring.

C.5 Receive an update on the water conservation rebate pilot program

Alex Pharmakis shared that he will be working on next steps for the toilet water bill rebate program. Eligibility has been established, such as household age and gallons per flush. The group discussed the dollar amounts for the rebates and provided some recommendations. The marketing for this will likely coincide with water bills. The group also discussed what supporting documentation would be needed for the rebate. The group discussed potential avenues to pursue in the future if demand for this program is high.

- C.6 Receive subcommittee updates**
- **Built and Natural Environment**
 - **Communications**
 - **Earth Day Runner's Race**
 - **Water Conservation**

Built and Natural Environment

- Most work has been focused on light pollution, but the group is interested in learning more from staff about grow zones.

Communications

- The subcommittee met with the City's communication to learn more about channels and opportunities to be engaged. The group also discussed suitable venues and events that the group could feature sustainability. They are interested in partnering with the committee to help develop content. One suggestion was to highlight the community garden.

Earth Day Runner's Race

- The subcommittee didn't receive approval for the route, so it has been postponed to the following year.

Water Conservation

- Al Mahesh has started to research information on the irrigation audit and would like to present in March. The program is designed to identify leaks in irrigation systems for homeowners. He noted that there is a lot of federal money coming out around sustainability.

- C.7 Receive an update from Committee members on activities attended**

Shelby Anders visited a green rooftop while traveling for work.

Val Clark suggested seeing if there was a role for the committee at Earth X.

Other suggestions were to see about attending conferences or visiting other educational facilities (i.e., TAMU Ag Extension's Water University, Hydroponic Farms, school learning gardens, etc.).

- C.8 Discuss agenda items for future Sustainability Committee meetings**

Committee suggested agenda items for future meetings:

- March - irrigation audit
- Rewilding/Landscaping
- Review current subcommittee objectives and considering restructuring as appropriate
- Group is interested in learning more about where items go from the CCC
- Cardboard baler at Brookhaven

D. **ADJOURNMENT**

Al Mahesh made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Shelby Anders. All were in favor. Motion approved unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:44 p.m.

Chair

Secretary