



City of Farmers Branch

Minutes

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

Sustainability Committee

Wednesday, October 9,
2024

6:30 PM

Fire Station #2

Meeting held at 6:30 PM

Presiding: Loren Rives, Chairperson

Present: Price Trosin (Vice-Chair)
Ted Spradley (Secretary)
Val Clark
Suzette Vaquera
Al Mahesh
Lisa Massey
Jasper Morse

Absent:

Staff: Alex Pharmakis, Sustainability Manager

A. CALL TO ORDER

Loren Rives called the meeting to order at 6:33pm on October 9th, 2024.

B. CITIZEN COMMENTS

None.

C. AGENDA ITEMS

C.1 Consider approval of minutes for the September 11, 2024 meeting; and take appropriate action

Lisa Massey motioned to approve the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Suzette Vaquera. Motion passed unanimously.

C.2 Receive a staff update on sustainability initiatives.

- The Compost 101 Workshop was held on Saturday, September 14. Nineteen residents participated.
- The Tree Giveaway Event will be held on October 12 at Dallas College- Brookhaven. All trees are claimed.
- The Shredding Event will be held on Saturday, October 12 at City Hall.
- The Haunts and Houses Event will be held on Thursday, October 24 at the Historical Park.
- The landfill solar project is on hold, pending sale of the property as discussed during the September 17 Council meeting.
- The City purchased an electric truck using the Department of Energy's EECBG funding. The City has ordered another EV with the funding and is awaiting the shipment.
- Alex Pharmakis will present information about the SolSmart designation to the Planning & Zoning Commission on October 28.
- The Consultant is working on the first draft of the Active Transportation Plan with the updated project list.
- Staff from GIS, Planning, Public Works, and Parks will meet to discuss the impervious surface and tree canopy data on October 15.
- Water Rebates
 - 102 toilet replacements approved.
 - 11 irrigation checkup applications approved.
- The Power Switch program is accepting signups until October 22.
 - The contract switch window is September 23, 2024 to February 28, 2025.
 - The program is transitioning from three auctions per year to two per year. This is due to volatile summer electricity prices.
- Alex will attend Urban Sustainability Director's Network Conference on October 20-23.
- The next Sustainability Committee meeting will be November 13.

C.3 Receive an update on grow zones and wildflower gardens

Sustainability Committee members have discussed the grow zones and wildflower gardens in past meetings. Alex Pharmakis provided a presentation to update the committee. Alex provided information on the butterfly garden that is already in place between the Rose Garden and Historical Park. He also mentioned that Parks is planning a wildflower garden at Holiday Park. Staff are also discussing the opportunity for a grow zone along rawhide creek to provide erosion control and gabion support.

Loren Rives and Ted Spradley were interested in learning more regarding flooding and stormwater data along Rawhide Creek. Ted Spradley also mentioned that Dallas College-Brookhaven is having discussions regarding wildflower plantings along the campus. This might be beneficial with the planned planting nearby at Holiday Park.

Lisa Massey also mentioned how permeable surfaces are listed in the Code of Ordinances. Loren Rives mentioned that there is a non-residential permeable surface code and would like it to apply to residents as well. Loren requested confirmation on that regulation.

C.4 Discuss impervious surface and tree canopy data

Alex Pharmakis provided the impervious surface and tree canopy data to the Sustainability Committee. These maps were the same that were presented to the Committee at the September Meeting.

Jasper Morse and Al Mahesh mentioned that they were interested in getting more information about heat island surveys.

Lisa Massey mentioned that Oncor also provides two free trees to customers. Lisa mentioned that helping to market this program to Farmers Branch residents could also help increase the tree canopy. She also mentioned looking into incentives for businesses to increase tree canopy or rooftop gardens.

Loren Rives went to the P&Z Meeting and spoke with some of the members. She mentioned some members of the commission were also interested in the impervious surface maps and tree canopy map.

Jasper Morse mentioned that Boston has an Adopt-A-Tree Program, where residents will offer to take responsibility to water and care for trees. He mentioned that something similar might benefit Farmers Branch. He also noted the correlations with heat and industrial areas. Alex will research what nearby cities have done in these areas to reduce impervious surfaces.

C.5 Receive subcommittee updates

- Built and Natural Environment – Val Clark and Loren Rives met and are planning a presentation early next year for the committee.
- Communications – The subcommittee is looking to identify events at the library that the Sustainability Committee could promote. There may be other opportunities through the Parks Department or at nature preserve.
- Water Conservation – No updates.

C.6 Receive an update from Committee members on activities attended

- Loren Rives attended a Planning & Zoning Commission meeting and volunteered at the Household Hazardous Waste recycling event.

C.7 Discuss agenda items for future Sustainability Committee meetings

Members mentioned learning more about the city's guidelines for social media, water bill mailers, and other outreach mechanisms.

D. ADJOURNMENT

Suzette Vaquera made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Al Mahesh. Motion approved unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:36 p.m.

Chair

Secretary