



Meeting Minutes

Sustainability Commission

Friday, February 9, 2024

8:00 AM

Development Services Room

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Mike Cassity called the meeting to order at 8:00 AM.

Board Members Present: Brian Stone, Eric McElroy, Keith Gordon, Anna Timme, Al Pramuk, Christina Christiansen, and Mike Cassity,

Board Members Absent: Alderman Beverly Burger and John Brevard

Staff Members Present: Tia Holden, Kelly Dannenfelser, Eric Conner, Teresa Anderson, and Andrew Orr

Others: Micah Wood and Ned Dannenburg

CITIZEN COMMENTS (Open for citizens to be heard on any issue or concern, including those related to items on the agenda. Please submit a Speaker Card at the beginning of the meeting if you would like to address the Commission. If you would like to speak on an agenda item, the Chair will hold your comment until the public comment period associated with the item. As provided by law, the Commission shall make no decisions or consideration of action of citizen comments for items not on the agenda, except to refer the matter to the Planning Director/Staff for administrative consideration, or to a schedule the matter for consideration at a later date. Those addressing the Commission are requested to come to the microphone and identify themselves by name and address for the official record. The Chair may restrict the period for public comment, including the length of the public comment period, the number of individuals who can speak and the length of time each individual may speak. When time allows, the standard individual public comment time is two minutes.)

Chair Cassity asked for citizen comments. There were none.

Comments on agenda items may be made in person at city hall or by emailing planningintake@franklintn.gov before noon on the day of the meeting. Emailed comments will be provided to the Commission and included in the minutes, but not read aloud in their entirety during the meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Consideration Of Approval Of Minutes

Sponsors:

A motion was made by Commissioner Christiansen, seconded by Commissioner Gordon, to Approve the Minutes from the January 12, 2024 meeting. The motion carried 7-0.

NEW BUSINESS

2. (8:05-8:10) Elect Chair and Vice-Chair

Sponsors:

CHAIR

Commissioner Timme nominated Mike Cassity as Chair for the 2024 Sustainability Commission. Mike Cassity was

unanimously elected as Chair.

VICE CHAIR

Commissioner Stone nominated Christina Christiansen as Vice Chair for the 2024 Sustainability Commission. Christina Christiansen was unanimously elected as Vice Chair.

3. (8:10-8:40) Bee City USA Presentation and Discussion

Sponsors:

Staff: Teresa Anderson. Mrs. Anderson stated The Xerces Society runs the Bee City USA program. The goal of The Xerces Society is to protect the life that sustains us. Bee City USA brings communities together to protect native bees by increasing native plants, providing nest sites, and reducing the use of pesticides. Pollinators are rapidly declining across the globe with 40% of species at risk of extinction in the coming years. More than a quarter of bumblebees in North America are in decline. The principles of pollinator conservation are as follows:

1. Increase the availability of native flowering species.
2. Provide appropriate nesting substrates.
3. Find alternatives to harmful pesticides.
4. Educate and spread awareness.

Bee City USA would require commitments from the City of Franklin to establish a committee to advocate for pollinators, which would be the Sustainability Committee. The committee would be responsible for staying up-to-date on rules and enhancing pollinator habitats within the community. Staff has started working with the Parks Department and Streets Department to expand pollinator habitats throughout Franklin and reduce the use of pesticides. The goal is to create a realistic Integrated Pest Management (IPM) plan to prevent pests and expand the use of non-chemical pest management methods. Another commitment would be incorporating pollinator-conscious practices into city policies and plans. The committee would also be required to host one pollinator awareness event each year. There is discussion of partnering with the Parks Department during their Arbor Day event to increase awareness with the maximum amount of impact while not taking away from other current green efforts. Pollinator gardens would need to be publicly acknowledged with Bee City USA affiliated signage and an online presence. Lastly, Bee City USA participants are required to pay an initial application fee, an annual renewal fee, and report on previous year's activities. Franklin would pay \$400 annually with a maximum payment of \$500 if the population increases to over 100,000.

Chair Cassity asked if citizen or individual beehives are incorporated into Bee City USA.

Mrs. Anderson responded that it is not a requirement.

Mr. Wood said there could be some potential connections in the future. Bee City USA typical does not focus on an individual citizen level.

Commissioner Christiansen stated the awareness event could be incorporated with the city's safe digging month initiative. before a pollinator garden is planted, citizens could call 811 for a safety check before planting.

Commissioner McElroy asked what pesticides the Parks Department currently uses.

Mrs. Anderson responded that the Parks Department has a good record of pesticides used and staff has sent them example IMPs. The Streets Department uses fairly clean pesticides since much of their work runs into waterways.

Commissioner Timme asked if the city has strategies to communicate with HOAs.

Commissioner Gordon commented that the problem is larger than just pesticides. it also includes herbicides, pesticides, fungicides, and the coating on grass seed. This makes lawns a desert for pollinators.

Commissioner Stone responded that Bee City USA is focused on the city level not specifically HOAs.

Micah Wood, Community and Economic Development Director at Town of Thompson's Station. Mr. Wood presented on Thompson's Station Bee City USA. They have been a member since 2021. The Parks Board is their Bee City Committee. He explained that Bee City USA is a very easy application and renewal process. They predominately focus on parkland and public lands. Thompson's Station has eliminated pesticides as part of parks maintenance, focused on increasing the use of native plants, and sees this program as an easy low-cost enhancement of public spaces. Bee City USA has been a beneficial educational opportunity and has allowed Thompson's Station to network with communities nationwide. The public has been receptive and completely positive to the Bee City USA program. Overall, they have seen increased opportunities for community involvement through this initiative.

Mr. Wood discussed some community involvement such as a pollinator garden through an Eagle Scout project. Thompson's Station's focus this year will be the Mars Petcare Sensory Garden. This will create an opportunity for a local business partnership while enhancing the park.

He moved to explain TDOT's interest in pollinator habitats. TDOT has a program that provides seed packs of native plant to citizen or municipalities. Thompson's Station is looking to follow the lead of TDOT by planting pollinator gardens in right-of-ways. Mr. Wood explained an upcoming project to plant a pollinator garden in the center of a roundabout. Thompson's Station will also be implementing a demonstration pollinator garden near their new town hall in a preserved open space.

Commissioner Gordon asked if the pollinator gardens need irrigation.

Mr. Wood explained that they choose hearty, native plants that can naturally survive in Tennessee's climate

Commissioner Stone asked if any significant budget impacts have stemmed from Bee City USA.

Mr. Wood stated the program, seeds, and plants are extremely inexpensive, resulting in minimal budget changes. Pollinator projects have also utilized volunteers that keep costs low.

Commissioner Christiansen remarked that local fire departments have had an interest in planting pollinator gardens on their unused facility land.

Mr. Wood explained that a specific type of equipment exists that can remove turf grass without the use of herbicides. However, the equipment is expensive and difficult to find.

Chair Cassity asked for a motion to Approve and move forward with Bee City USA. A motion was made by Commissioner Christiansen, seconded by Commissioner McElroy, to Approve and move forward with Bee City USA. The motion carried 7-0.

4. (8:40-8:50) Litter Pick-Up Surveys

Sponsors:

Staff: Teresa Anderson. The Sustainability Commission conducts litter surveys, typically in February when trees are scarce and show the most litter, along roadway stretches throughout Franklin. In March, there is a city lead litter pickup day when information from the survey is used to direct cleanup efforts. Mrs. Anderson explained there is no meeting in March so commissioners can participate in the cleanup.

Mr. Orr stated over 80 city employees participated last year and two full dump-trucks were filled with trash. He then explained the litter survey grading scale which goes from 0-4. Zero would be in perfect condition and no visible trash, while 4 would be covered in trash and very poor condition. He then asked for commissioners to volunteer for roadways to survey. Mr. Orr hopes to have surveys completed and returned within the next two weeks.

5. (8:50- 9:00) General Discussion

Sponsors:

Chair Cassity stated it would be beneficial to discuss the work plan for Honeybee Glass Recycling which was presented at the previous meeting.

Commissioner McElroy commented that a sentiment survey would be conducted soon.

Mr. Orr explained that the city does a standardized survey every two years which includes questions about city government operations. The survey does have questions regarding sustainability. Previous surveys were used to help create current policy guides. The Sustainability Commission will create a report and presentation for BOMA regarding progress made over the past year.

Commissioner Stone asked if the city is able to approve the \$75,000 requested by Honeybee or if there is an approval process.

Mr. Orr said there is an approval process that is required for any amount over \$50,000.

Commissioner Stone said he would want assurance and knowledge of what happens to the glass after Honeybee takes it to the recycling center. He felt the previous Honeybee presentation did not discuss the results and wanted to ensure the glass would not ultimately be taken to a landfill.

Commissioner Gordon asked for an update on the solar panel project discussed at the previous meeting.

Mr. Orr said the last presentation was very high level but Ron Merville plans to have a more detailed discussion.

Commissioner Stone asked when a decision must be made on the solar project.

Mr. Orr responded no, not at this time.

OTHER BUSINESS

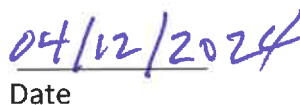
Chair Cassity asked if there was any further business. There was none.

ADJOURN

A motion was made by Commissioner Pramuk, seconded by Commissioner Stone to Adjourn. The motion carried 7-0.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:55 AM.


Chair


Date