



City of Franklin

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Meeting Minutes

Sustainability Commission

Friday, April 12, 2024

8:00 AM

Development Services Room

CALL TO ORDER

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

Commissioners Present: Mike Cassity, Christina Christiansen, Keith Gordon, Eric McElroy, Jon Brevard, Brian Stone, Anna Timme, and Alderman Beverly Burger

Commissioners Absent: Al Pramuk

Staff Members Present: Emily Wright, Kelly Dannenfelser, Tia Holden, and Eric Conner

Others: 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 the February 2024 Minutes

Sponsors:

A motion was made by Commissioner Gordon, seconded by Commissioner Stone, to Approve the Minutes from the February 9, 2024, meeting. The motion carried 8-0.

NEW BUSINESS

2. Presentation and Consideration of Bee City Resolution (8:05-8:40)

Sponsors:

Staff: Eric Conner. Bee City USA is a national program that helps bring communities together to support pollinators by increasing native plants, providing nesting sites, and reducing pesticide use. The city has applied to take part in this program

run by The Xerces Society. This organization started in 1971 and works to protect wildlife through conservation. Pollinators are declining globally and across North America, which is why it is important to support programs such as these. Pollinator conservation principles include increasing the availability of native flowering species, providing appropriate nesting substrates, finding alternatives to harmful pesticides, and educating and spreading awareness. Five Tennessee municipalities are currently part of Bee City USA. There are commitments required to qualify for a Bee City USA partnership:

1. Establish a standing Bee City USA committee to advocate for pollinators
2. Create and enhance pollinator habitat on public and private land by increasing the abundance of native plants and providing nest sites.
3. Reduce the use of pesticides.
4. Incorporate pollinator-conscious practices into city policies and plans.
5. Host pollinator awareness events.
6. Publicly acknowledge Bee City USA affiliation with signs and online presence.
7. Pay an initial application fee and annual renewal fee.
8. Annually apply for renewal and report on the previous year's activities.

Mr. Conner made a point that this program is not about beekeeping or producing honey. This program goes beyond just bees. It is about increasing native plants, reducing pesticides, and sharing information. Additionally, it helps reduce maintenance and irrigation costs and makes planting areas more visually exciting.

Chair Cassity asked if carpenter bees are pollinators.

Commissioner Gordon responded yes, carpenter bees are fifty times more effective pollinators than other bees. Honey bees are inefficient pollinators.

Mr. Conner discussed Tennessee Department of Transportation's involvement with pollinator habitats. TDOT is supportive of native landscaping and has created educational material to spread awareness. They have build and maintain pollinator habitats along 13,000 miles of state roadways and welcome centers. TDOT had modified mowing schedules to be compatible with pollinator cycles and will also send out native seed packets to citizens who ask.

Mr. Conner stated that, as a next step, the Sustainability Commission would need to make a recommendation vote to BOMA on Resolution 2024-15. The Bee City presentation will also be discussed at the next Tree Commission meeting. Then, the resolution would go to BOMA for approval. The Bee City USA application would need to be completed and annual fee paid for. It would need to be decided how to best implement the program. Finally, locations would be identified for potential pollinator habitats. The Planning Department believes this would best be implemented through interdepartment staff teams and the Sustainability commission, potentially partnering with non-profit groups, and working through budget implications for annual habitat expansion on city property.

A sample pollinator habitat was displayed including a variety of native plants that are visually appealing.

Mr. Conner discussed continued next steps including a statement of support and encouragement in Envision Franklin, submitting an Integrated Pest Management Plan, and increasing pollinator habits and host at least one annual event. He then open for discussion and questions.

Commissioner Brevard stated he works with Friends of Franklin parks and are working to improve a 10-acre tract with pollinators.

Alderman Burger said it would be a good idea to add a pollinator garden to the park beside the proposed new city hall. Additionally, she feels the Bee City USA presentation should be shown at the Williamson County Chamber meeting. Lastly, she stated the interstate exchange on Cool Springs Boulevard would be a great spot for a potential pollinator garden since it would create a beautiful sense of space and welcome tourists.

Commissioner Timme agreed that Cool Springs Boulevard would be a great location for a pollinator garden.

Commissioner Stone commented that solar fields are a convenient place for pollinator gardens since its inexpensive and cuts

down on mowing costs.

Alderman Burger asked what the \$500 Bee City USA fee covers.

Mr. Conner responded that it provides the artwork for pollinator garden signs and allows the city to be affiliated with Bee City USA. he then restated that the commission needs to vote on recommending the resolution to BOMA.

Alderman Burger asked if a commission must be create for Bee City USA or if someone needs to be appointed.

Mr. Conner responded that the facilitation of the Bee City USA program will be the responsibility of the Sustainability Commission.

Commissioner Stone stated that the Sustainability Commission would work with the Planning and Parks departments and the Tree Commission.

Mr. Conner readdressed that BOMA must approve of the resolution for financial commitments can be made for Bee City USA.

A motion was made by Alderman Burger, seconded by Commissioner Timme to Approve Recommendation of the Bee City Resolution to BOMA. The motion carried 8-0.

The Tree Commission will have the same presentation in April and then the resolution will then go to BOMA for approval.

3. Litter Survey Review (8:40- 8:45)

Sponsors:

Staff: Eric Conner. All surveys have been returned and sent to the streets department for review. He asked others to discuss what they saw and for general feedback.

Chair Cassity said his area seemed in better shape than last year.

Commissioner Stone mentioned the area between the interstate and the mall was awful.

Alderman Burger said she has received many calls about the trash around the mall. She believes the worst place in her ward is at Thoroughbread Theater.

Commissioner Timme agreed that the theater has only gotten worse since COVID. She commented that it looks abandoned and is visually unappealing outside.

4. Package Recycling (8:45-8:50)

Sponsors:

Staff: Eric Conner. Lisa Anderson from Greater Nashville Regional Council has a personal recycling program where people bring her boxes which she reuses at her business for shipping. She had been promoting this on Facebook and at sporting events. She reuses packaging materials for her personal business instead of people throwing them away or recycling them. She has offered to talk with the Sustainability Commission about her program.

Alderman Burger stated that she knows someone who also asks for boxes for their small business. This individual picks boxes up or allows people to drop them off at their house. She stated that social media posts could be used to spread awareness for small business owners looking to reuse boxes.

Mr. Conner said Lisa has never had to purchase packaging material for her business due to this program. He said she can present to the Sustainability Commission at any time if the commission asks.

Alderman Burger said she could present on Zoom if needed. She again stated the importance that social media could help connect the public with people wanting boxes.

Commissioner Timme mentioned reduce, reuse, recycle and how reusing is more important than recycling. This program helps achieve reusing and reducing.

Alderman Burger discussed a local artist who asked the public for old magazines which is a similar program.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Conner stated the EECBG application was approved by the Department of Energy and the project can move forward with the Parks Department.

Commissioner Stone asked for an update on EV charging.

Mr. Conner is not responsible for this project and did not have an update at the time.

Commissioner McElroy asked for an update on the glass recycling program.

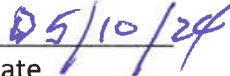
Mr. Conner said he has not heard an update on the glass recycling program.

ADJOURN

A motion was made by Commissioner Gordon, seconded by Commissioner Brevard to Adjourn. The motion carried 8-0.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:52 AM.


Chair


Date