



## Meeting Minutes

### Sustainability Commission

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Friday, September 13, 2024

8:00 AM

Development Services Room

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#### CALL TO ORDER

Chair Cassity called the meeting to order at 8:02 AM.

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

Commissioners Absent: None

Staff Present: Tia Holden, Kelly Dannenfelser, Eric Conner, Andrew Orr, Annette Dalrymple, Blake Harper, Dillon Gaster, and Trevor Hannon

Other: Ron Merville, Jim Porter, and Ned Dannenberg

**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](mailto: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 Pramuk, seconded by Commissioner McElroy, to approve the Minutes from the August 9, 2024, meeting. The motion carried 8-0 (Commissioner Stone arrived after the vote).

#### NEW BUSINESS

##### 2. Consideration of 2025 Meeting Schedule

Sponsors:

A motion was made by Alderman Burger, seconded by Commissioner Gordon, to approve the 2025 meeting schedule. The motion carried 8-0 (Commissioner Stone arrived after the vote).

### 3. Bee City USA Update

#### Sponsors:

Mrs. Dalrymple stated nine sites were reviewed for placing the first pollinator garden. Ultimately, Fire Station 1 was chosen for its location and visibility. Fire Station 1 is also located near a school and the pollinator garden could be used as a learning opportunity for students. Mrs. Dalrymple displayed her designs for the three pollinator garden beds at the fire station. Each design includes a mixture of shrubs and seeds. Atmos Energy has volunteered to help prepare and plant the first garden beds.

Commissioner Brevard asked how many square feet of garden bed were available to plant at the fire station.

Mrs. Dalrymple responded that there are around 800 square feet at the front of the station and another 800 square feet near the back.

Commissioner Brevard wanted to know if plant plugs were considered over seeds.

Mrs. Dalrymple commented that only seeds and shrubs had been looked at due to their lower cost.

Mrs. Dalrymple presented new pollinator gardens and native plants installed around downtown Franklin. The Bee City committee has worked with the Streets department in locating areas downtown which can be used for native plants. The Streets department has been fast acting in planting pollinator gardens downtown on 4th Avenue, 3rd Avenue, and 2nd Avenue. The Streets department has used pine straw to prevent weeds and remove the use of herbicides.

The Bee City committee recently visited Battle Gound Academy to see their large pollinator gardens planted along the stream bed. They have over 100 native seeds planted. The committee used it as a learning experience and planning for future large projects around the city.

Mrs. Dalrymple discussed the maintenance needed for the Fire Station 1 pollinator gardens. The initial installation and bed preparation will be completed by Atmos Energy. The fire station will water plants as needed. The Bee City committee will maintain the gardens once a month for the first year. The second year will be maintained by volunteers.

The next steps will be finalizing the design and size of pollinator gardens. Then, a date will be set for installation between Atmos Energy and the Bee City committee. Finally, seeds and container plants will be ordered and planted.

Commissioner Brevard asked if there would be any grasses planted.

Mrs. Dalrymple responded Little Bluestem grass would be used along with New Jersey Tea and Dense Gayfeather flowers.

Commissioner Brevard asked how the beds would be prepared for planting.

Commissioner Christiansen, who works for Atmos, said grass would be removed, and no chemicals would be used.

Commissioner Pramuk stated volunteers could be found at the Master Gardeners Association.

Alderman Burger said volunteers could come from city employees and community members to help everyone get involved.

Mr. Conner does not want to be completely reliant on volunteers and hopes to learn how much maintenance is needed for the garden as time goes on. This first pollinator garden will be a learning process and will be helpful in determining how much maintenance is needed over time.

Chair Cassity asked what the signs would look like.

Mr. Orr explained the signs will have the Bee City logo and will be created by the Streets department. The language and writing of the sign is still being discussed.

Commissioner Brevard noted digging up the grass for the pollinator garden can often lead to seeds being spread from unwanted plants versus spraying the site for preparation.

Mr. Conner responded that BGA had to spray since the pollinator garden is located in a riparian buffer. Since the seeds have been planted, they have grown very well.

Alderman Burger suggested any volunteers are trained beforehand on pollinators. Additionally, she recommended connecting with new developers to add pollinator gardens in their neighborhoods or community if they are interested.

Commissioner Brevard said other counties require at least 50% native plants for developments.

#### 4. **Solar Expansion Update**

##### Sponsors:

Mr. Orr discussed that BOMA had been given an update on the sustainability commission and the solar expansion project. He explained that Mr. Merville believes a 3 megawatt solar expansion project will be too large. He proposes starting with 1.5 megawatts and updating the contract to include the ability to install 3 megawatts in the future. They have been working on final details of the lease and how much land will be used.

Commissioner Pramuk asked if batteries would still be installed.

Mr. Merville answered yes, batteries would still be used. The project starts by leaving the current solar panels, then building the new panels. Once completed, the old panels will be removed and batteries installed. He will be working with the landscape architect on planting pollinator gardens. He then introduced his lawyer, Jim Porter, who would work on the final details of the contract.

Alderman Burger stated BOMA will need a short and simple description of the project, including benefits and costs, before moving forward.

Mr. Orr said it might be possible to get this on the agenda for BOMA in October. It would first go to the BOMA work session, then move to the actual BOMA meeting.

Alderman Burger stated she would like it on the agenda for the early October meeting.

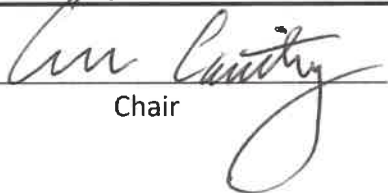
#### **OTHER BUSINESS**

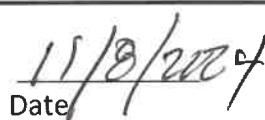
Mr. Orr stated the fire department is working to move the EV charging stations inside the 4th Avenue parking garage to an outside location. Facilities have asked for the charging stations inside the 3rd Avenue garage to be removed completely, since they are used less and cannot be used during the construction of the new city hall. These changes are being made due to the possible threat of EV charging station fires. As the new city hall develops, more discussions can be had about how many EV charging stations are needed.

#### **ADJOURN**

A motion was made by Alderman Burger, seconded by Commissioner Pramuk, to Adjourn. The motion carried 9-0.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:37 AM.

  
Chair

  
Date